

## Introduction

Welcome to Week 5 of the 2018 Certified Green Office Program! If you missed last week's newsletter, or any of the prior ones, feel free to catch up on their content [here](#). This week, we will go over Elective Actions #5 & #6, which will conclude the Energy Conservation section of the program's actions.

5. Pull down window shades in at least one room when AC is on, and pull them up when heat is on.
6. Keep lights off when natural light is sufficient to light your workspace.

As a reminder, completion of five Elective Actions beyond the Required Actions will earn you Bronze level certification, completion of ten will earn Silver level certification, and fifteen Elective Actions will earn Gold level certification.

## Instructions

***Elective Action #5: Pull down window shades in at least one room when AC is on, and pull them up when heat is on.***

Did you know [that about 30%](#) of indoor heat comes from sunshine coming in the windows? As pleasant as the summer sunshine might be, blocking it out will go a long way to helping to cool your office rooms, with or without the air conditioning on. This is [especially helpful](#) for windows that face west and south, because these windows receive the most direct sunlight. Reducing your AC reliance is a major step for cutting back on your carbon footprint (and energy costs)! To go an extra mile, you might consider investing in blackout curtains to more fully block sunlight and naturally insulate your office.

Conversely, opening up your window shades to receive sunlight during the winter can help reduce the need for additional heating. Make sure to close them for the night though -- otherwise, the office will probably be quite chilly in the morning. Also, make sure your windows are all closed properly and have no leaks! Otherwise, it will certainly be difficult to stop the cold air seeping in.

***Elective Action #6: Keep lights off when natural light is sufficient to light your workspace.***

If your office has an abundance of large windows facing the outside of the building, there's a pretty good chance at least part of your office could be lit with natural light. It doesn't even necessarily have to be a sunny day for enough light to come in --

some of rooms here at the iSEE office almost never have their lights on, even when it's cloudy and despite the fact our windows face north. It might be a bit of an adjustment to get used to working in somewhat dimmer light, but the adjustment should be well worth it even for reasons outside the vast energy savings. Studies have found a [number of advantages](#) of natural light for office workers. Among them are an average of 46 minutes more per night of sleep, gains in office productivity and creativity, as well as better moods and less stress.

Both Elective Actions #5 & #6 are simple actions with a lot of potential for energy conservation. Remember, it doesn't always take a huge lifestyle change to be more eco-friendly -- building small habits like this will make a difference, no matter how inconsequential they might sometimes feel!