

Introduction

Welcome to Week 8 of the 2018 Certified Green Office Program! This week we will go over Elective Action #10. If you need to review the contents of any past newsletters, you can find them online [here](#).

10. Record your annual paper purchases and commit to reducing your next purchase by 10% or 25%.

Reducing by 10% will earn one point, and reducing by 25% will earn two points.

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 #10: Record your annual paper purchases and commit to reducing your next purchase by 10% or 25%.

In last week's newsletter, we discussed how it would be an unreasonable expectation to ask that anyone reduce their office supply usage completely to zero. This includes paper, which we know is expensive, and also that it is not uncommon for offices to have paper shortages. So we absolutely understand that it may be difficult for an office that already buys as little paper as seems possible to cut back consumption even further.

But we have also discussed the dangers of deforestation in past newsletters, which we hope have made an impression. This is a problem that obviously can't be solved by one office's decision to go paperless -- it wouldn't even be solved if the entire University of Illinois, or even every school in the state of Illinois, were to go paperless tomorrow. Those facts may sound grim, but they also do not mean that any small amount of paper reduction doesn't help. Without small steps of progress, we are unlikely to make our way to any larger steps.

Besides, it is easier now than ever to go digital with documents and other papers that previously had to be printed out. Once you've recorded your total annual purchases, take a critical look at what this paper is used for. (This may also require that you make a record of major print jobs throughout a specific timeframe). Consider which documents could feasibly have been distributed digitally instead. Ask your coworkers to consider which documents they printed for themselves that

they could also have viewed just as easily on their computer. If flyers for events or other advertising are a big portion of your printing, consider how you could effectively replace this strategy with digital marketing instead. Chances are, with a little bit of creative thinking, you can find at least one instance where your printing needs aren't as great as they might seem. Use these instances to cut back on your paper purchases -- the planet will thank you for it! (And consider another advantage of having less paper around: that's a lot less clutter and mess on your desk!)