

Paper Towel Reduction Campaign

Business name: _____

Part One: Determine Your Baseline

Ask your janitorial company or admin team:

How many paper towels does our workplace go through on average?

Answer: In an average **week/month/quarter** (*circle one*), our workplace goes through _____ rolls/boxes of paper towels (each box has _____ rolls/sheets).

Tracking your progress is the best way to show the success of your project. It may be necessary to track paper towel usage for a whole quarter *before* starting the reduction campaign.

Part Two: Promote Fewer Paper Towels

Pick from the following activities or create your own:

- ❖ Post signs on paper towel dispensers with a slogan. Different slogans work for different paper towel dispensers.

Examples include:

- “3 pump rule” or “3 pushes please”
- “One or None”
- “These Come From Trees” – stickers available to order here: <http://thesecomefromtrees.blogspot.com/>
- “Shake and Fold” – watch the video here: <http://tinyurl.com/shakeandfold>



- ❖ Make posters about your campaign. Put them up in multiple locations.
 - Bathrooms
 - Kitchen
 - Break Room
 - Hallways
- ❖ Make announcements introducing the campaign and its progress at staff meetings.
- ❖ Send out information to your coworkers over email about the campaign including tips and progress.

Part Three: Helpful Facts

Feel free to use the following info and data to promote reducing paper towel use:

- 1. Paper towels cannot be recycled or composted in Portland.** While paper towels are often made with recycled content, they represent the end of the recycling line and have to go in the trash. In Portland, only food can be composted commercially.
- 2. A lot of water and energy is used to make paper towels.** The paper industry is the biggest industrial water user, consuming 11% of all freshwater in industrial nations. As of 2012, the U.S. paper industry used 12% of total manufacturing energy.
- 3. Paper towels are made from trees:** Even those made with recycled content contain some virgin fiber. The less we use, the more forests are preserved for wildlife, watershed health, combatting climate change and maintaining traditional livelihoods.
- 4. Using just 1 paper towel** can keep up to 16 grams of CO₂ eq out of the atmosphere each time you dry your hands. For a 10 person office, this can add up to 120,000 grams each year.
- 5. More information is available here:**
 - environmentalpaper.org
 - msl.mit.edu/publications/HandDryingLCA-Report.pdf

Part Four: Track Your Progress

How successful is your campaign? Compare paper towel usage to your baseline:

Data driven campaigns are more successful because you can tell if your campaign is working. If you're not seeing reductions in paper towel use, don't give up. Try something else or get in touch with Sustainability at Work (sustainabilityatwork@portlandoregon.gov)

❖ Baseline Usage

Date: _____

Paper Towel Usage: _____ per week/month/quarter

❖ Midway Usage

Date: _____

Paper Towel Usage: _____ per week/month/quarter

❖ Final Usage

Date: _____

Paper Towel Usage: _____ per week/month/quarter

Make sure to let us know your results so we can share successes with other businesses
(sustainabilityatwork@portlandoregon.gov)