



Certification Guide

Retail & Services

This is a companion document to our [Retail and Services Application](#) that will provide you with more detail for the actions on that list.

Eligibility Requirements

- ***Our workplace is in Multnomah County, within Portland city limits.***
- ***Our garbage and recycling containers are not stored on public sidewalks or streets.***
- ***Paper, metal, plastic and glass are recycled.***
All businesses in Portland are required to collect these materials for recycling. Your garbage and recycling company provides you or your property owner with roll carts and dumpsters for garbage, glass and other recyclables that they collect from a central point in the building.
- ***Our workplace does not distribute single-use plastic bags to customers.***

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Paperless receipts or “no printed receipt” option is offered.

Default equipment and/or train employees not to print receipts. Many customers don't need them. If they do request one, offer to email a receipt rather than print one if that's an option through your register setup. At a minimum, ask your customer if they would like one rather than assume it by always printing one.

Paperless system is used for payroll.

If possible, default to electronic-only paystubs. Employees that still prefer printed versions can then opt to print them from home or ask to use a work printer. Within weeks of making this switch, most staff don't recall it ever happening a different way.

Paperless system is used for vendors.

Don't print invoices, bills of lading, etc. unless vendors require it.

Product packaging and shipping materials are reused, donated or recycled.

Whenever possible, offer your used boxes and packaging materials to staff or customers for reuse. Some private shipping companies like UPS and FedEx offices will take used foam peanuts for reuse. You can also check with businesses around you who do a lot of shipping to see if they can reuse your materials. Maybe some of your customers have home-businesses and would be happy for lightly used shipping supplies. You may be able to sharply reduce the amount of materials you throw away or recycle. First reduce, reuse, and only then recycle!

Recycling bins are clearly labeled and regularly monitored, and education is provided when needed.

All businesses in Portland are required to recycle at their workplace. Your garbage and recycling company provides you or your property owner with roll carts or dumpsters for recycling, garbage, and compost.

Unused/outdated electronic devices are donated for reuse or are recycled.

Don't throw away broken or outdated electronics! Set up a collection area and then check [Metro's Find A Recycler webpage](#) for drop-off locations.

Purchasing decisions (consumer products, back room supplies, store fixtures, etc.) take environmental impact into account.

Whenever you are thinking about new products, office supplies, display cabinets, lighting and more, add environmental impact to your list of considerations. Prioritize recycled content, low-VOC treatments in fabrics and varnishes, used cabinets, and efficient lighting. When it comes to lighting and reuse, you can often save money, too. Don't forget to let your customers know you are making these types of decisions. They really will appreciate the effort.

Fluorescent light tubes and compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) are safely stored and properly recycled.

Fluorescent lightbulbs (including tube style and CFLs) have **mercury** in them, so it's important to dispose of them safely. They should NOT go into your mixed recycling or your garbage. Mercury is a heavy metal that harms the brain, liver and kidneys and can cause developmental disorders in children. Sending burned-out fluorescent bulbs to the landfill instead of a hazardous waste facility can lead to contaminated air, water and soil, and accumulate in the food chain.

Careless cleanup of a mercury spill can also put you at risk. Learn how to [safely handle mercury](#). If your facilities manager or lighting contractor doesn't take care of your burned-out bulbs, check [Metro's Find A Recycler website](#) for locations where you can either drop them off or see the list of companies that can pick them up.

Note: Some **LED bulbs** can contain quite a bit of nickel, which could make them worth recycling. Also, colored LEDs can contain **lead** and **arsenic**. You can throw white LED bulbs away, but for other colors, use [Metro's Find a Recycler website](#) to determine where you can drop them off for recycling or safe handling. As with any bulb, they should NOT be put in with your mixed-recycling.

Potentially hazardous products such as paints, solvents, and cleaners are stored safely and recycled properly.

The government website for the State of Washington puts it well: *Hazardous wastes are not just radioactive drums stored at Hanford. They are wastes **your** business or organization may generate every day—spent solvents, toner ink sludge, heavy metals. Hazardous wastes pose real threats to real people... cancer, nerve damage, polluted drinking water.*

Metro's Recycling Information staff can provide details about recycling and disposal options, and answer many other questions about hazardous wastes. Call them at 503-234-3000 or visit [Metro Find A Recycler](#). Oregon's Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ) provides assistance in determining what is and is not regulated as hazardous waste in Oregon, as well as whether businesses qualify as Conditionally Exempt Generators (CEGs). Here's [DEQ's Factsheet](#).

At least two major office, packaging or marketing supplies have 30% or greater recycled content.

Look for recycled content when ordering printer paper, shipping boxes, and paper merchandise bags; whatever you are ordering the most of, see if there's a version with a high percentage of recycled content. You'll be helping to close the loop on the recycling process.

Green-certified cleaning products are used by staff.

Cleaning products impact indoor air quality, and many people are increasingly sensitive to harsh chemicals, scented products, etc. When it comes to purchasing green cleaners, these three programs have well-established standards for green cleaning in the workplace:

[Green Seal](#)
[EcoLogo](#)
[Safer Choice](#)

If you're interested in making your own cleaning products, check out this [helpful guide](#) from Metro.

High-efficiency electric hand dryers are used instead of paper towels in restrooms.

High speed electric hand dryers are the [best environmental option for hand drying](#), above paper towels and standard speed hand dryers. Stuck with paper towels for now? You can still influence change. Encourage your coworkers to watch this [TED video about using one paper towel](#) instead of two (or three, or more).

Employee Engagement

An employee or green team is supported by management in implementing sustainability efforts.

Just one sustainability champion can make all the difference in your workplace, but the more employees you have, the more important it is to establish a sustainability group that includes representatives from different areas of your organization. See our [Green Team Guide](#) to learn how to start or reenergize a green team.

Employees are educated annually (at a minimum) about sustainability best practices.

Everyone can benefit from a refresher about do's and don'ts now and then. Use a newsletter, a lunch and learn, or make reminders at all-staff meetings. Get in the habit of doing this at least annually. You could also consider a Recycling 101 training every year or so. ([We can help you with ideas.](#))

Sustainability practices are communicated to customers.

Don't forget to share your accomplishments with customers and clients. Your commitment to sustainability can set you apart from your competitors. Our recognition program is one way to share the news, but there are others. Share your successes through industry newsletters, social media, advertising, and marketing. This has the added benefit of acknowledging staff effort and achievement. It will help keep the momentum going, and you may encourage other organizations to make their own changes.

New employees are informed about sustainability best practices—including waste reduction, recycling, and commuting options.

Don't forget to provide details and direction for new hires about recycling, alternative commuting options, best practices for efficient printing, etc. Include a sustainability and transportation section in your orientation materials. If you have only a few employees and take an informal approach to orientation, create a FAQ handout along with a list of sustainability practices that your business wants new hires to keep in mind.

A system is in place to gather employee feedback, comments, and suggestions related to sustainability actions at work.

Employees often see opportunities or have recommendations for greening their workplace, but they aren't always sure how to share them. Encourage and capture as many ideas from as many employees as you can. Create an old-school comment box; encourage staff to share ideas with a point person or green team member; or set up a bulletin board so that everyone can post ideas, questions, articles and/or inspiration.

Transportation

Only tap water is provided at our workplace; no water delivery service or single-serve plastic bottles.

You're already paying for high-quality water to come through your tap each month. Don't pay for bottled water on top of that by having it trucked in or offering it in single-serve bottles. Encourage everyone to use refillable bottles at the sink, and if there's any concern about water quality (due to aging pipes, for instance), don't make assumptions. Instead, connect with the [Portland Water Bureau](#), 503-988-4000, to request a water testing kit. Their kit tests for lead, copper and iron. For more details about Portland's water, check out the [Water Bureau's FAQs](#). For help convincing co-workers to make the switch, visit the [Food & Water Watch website](#).

Do you still want or need filtered water? There are a number of local companies that can provide directly plumbed and filtered water dispensers that will enable you to eliminate bottle transportation and waste. Let us know if you would like more information about this. There are also an increasing number of affordable filters, for above or below the sink, that you can install.

Twenty percent or more of our employees walk, bike, carpool, or take transit as their primary commute method.

Knowing how many employees are commuting by means other than driving alone can be very helpful. If you want to boost the percentage of bikers, make sure you have plenty of secure, rain-protected bike parking. For bikers, walkers, and runners, some lockers could help for storing gear and extra clothes. Has your organization grown large enough that you can offer a discount on bus passes and/or an incentive for cyclists and walkers?

Employees participate in a commute challenge every year.

Every year in May, the Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA) organizes the [Bike More Challenge](#). (This was formerly the *Bike Commute* Challenge held in September.) Anyone at your business can register—either as individuals or as part of a team. In early October you can join Oregon’s [DriveLess Connect](#) challenge.

Don’t want to wait? You can create your own competition anytime. Compete against last year’s commute rate or compete across other store locations. Consider challenging a neighboring business or friendly competitor to see whose staff can commute the most miles by bike, gains the most new riders, rides the most days, etc.

Alternative transportation is used for work-related trips whenever possible (walk, bike, transit, carshare, carpool, or electric vehicle).

For work-related trips, encourage staff to first take advantage of public transit, bike share, shared cars, electric cars, and carpools. Here are some resources that can help:

[Biketown](#)

[TriMet Trip Planner](#)

[Zipcar](#) (car rental for round trips; hybrids widely available)

[Car2Go](#) (Smart Cars for point-to-point trips)

[ReachNow](#) (BMW and MINI car share)

Secure bike parking (sidewalk “staple” rack, custom rack, etc.) is available for customers.

Provide safe bike parking for your customers. The City of Portland can even provide and install a [free sidewalk “staple” rack](#), assuming your location meets a few minimal requirements. If you consistently see more than 10 bikes parked in front of your business, you might want to also check with the City about getting a bike corral installed. Bike parking corrals are created by installing multiple bike parking racks in a street parking space at or near your business. For more detail, visit [this website](#).

Sheltered, secure bike parking is available for employees.

Because employee bike parking is long-term, it should be sheltered from rain and it should be secure – in a locked room, enclosed by a fence, or within view of employees, a building attendant, or security guards. There are lots of great examples of innovative bike storage systems to help make the most use of limited space: [PBOT’s Handbook of Approved Bicycle Racks](#).

Bicycle tire repair kit, air pump and a spare lock are available for employees and visitors.

Bikers (employees or visitors) occasionally forget to bring their bike lock, or they lose it along the way, and sometimes need a loaner. Have a spare lock or a welcoming, secure space for them to leave their bike. An air pump and a tire repair kit can be helpful, too.

Reimbursement, raffles, or other incentives are offered to employees who bike, walk or carpool to work.

This depends on the size and location of your business, of course, but consider a raffle or contest every now and then to celebrate employees who get to work by means other than a car. A common parameter is to include folks who use alternative transportation for at least 80% of their trips, but you can set any threshold you want. Find some way to celebrate staff who leave their cars at home. Reward those that make the effort and you’ll also be motivating others that need a nudge to give it a try.

Emergency ride vouchers or taxi reimbursements are available to employees who commute by foot, bike, transit, or carpool.

Sometimes employees are reluctant to take alternative transportation to work because they worry they might need to suddenly leave for unexpected personal needs (pick up a sick kid from school, accompany a relative to the doctor, etc.). Knowing there’s an emergency ride program in place helps alleviate those concerns. Solutions include offering cab reimbursement, bus tickets, and/or rides by coworkers. If you have a large organization and participate in one of TriMet’s employee pass programs or subsidizes at least \$10/month per employee for alternative transportation, [TriMet will supply your organization with cab vouchers](#). Here’s an example of [how an emergency ride policy can be used](#). Feedback we’ve gotten from businesses indicates that employees are grateful the policy is in place, and that it rarely gets used.

An electric vehicle charging station for employee and customer use is located onsite or nearby.

Electric vehicles are becoming increasingly popular. That means an increasing number of people are making destination decisions based on whether they can charge their car while they shop, eat, or meet. Is there an EV station within one block of your business? If your business has its own EV charging spot, consider making it available for both employees and customers. You can learn more about EVs and EV charge stations through [DriveOregon](#).

Deliveries to customers are made by bike, hybrids, EV or vehicles using low-carbon fuel.

Your delivery vehicle says a lot about your commitment to the environment. Can you use one of the local bike delivery services that have insulated cargo carriers? Or maybe all you need for your own “fleet” is a couple of bikes (e-bikes for those hills), or a nimble smart car or two. If you already have standard cars or trucks, can you convert them to biodiesel? Find ways to reduce the environmental impact of your delivery vehicles. Your current customers will notice your commitment, and you’re more likely to grab the attention of potential customers.

Energy

All electronic office equipment is set to sleep after 15 minutes of inactivity.

Many newer electronics are designed to enter sleep mode after a short period of inactivity. Still, you should check all equipment now and then to make sure it’s working as intended, hasn’t been overridden at some point and not set back, or that the period is set to as short a time as possible.

An energy audit has been conducted in our workplace within the past 5 years through either our electric utility or Energy Trust of Oregon.

This action is intended primarily for large businesses. If you are located in a building larger than 20,000 sq. ft., you can count the [energy performance report](#) you provide to the City for this action or you can count an independent energy assessment. If your workplace is smaller than 20,000 square feet or is exempt from energy reporting, give your utility company a call and ask them about ways you can save energy. Your options will depend on whether you lease or own your building, how you use your space, and the age of the building, etc. Lighting and HVAC are obvious places to look at, but each workplace can have additional, unique opportunities.

[Pacific Power](#)

[Portland General Electric](#)

[NW Natural](#)

[Energy Trust of Oregon](#)

Maintenance checks are regularly conducted on HVAC and other energy-intensive equipment.

This is an obvious one but is often overlooked. Find out if someone is scheduled to check your heating and cooling equipment each season or however often the equipment manual recommends.

Programmable thermostats automatically reduce heating and air conditioning during closed hours.

Occasionally check the settings on your programmable thermostats to make sure they are still set for appropriate on/off times. At the very least, check them after power outages, and in spring and fall when *daylight savings time* changes take effect.

If you have a staff who override the settings on a regular basis, you might be able to minimize this behavior by setting the timer so that heat/air comes on 30 minutes before the first employee arrives. That way, the temperature is comfortable when people start their workday. To offset this extra energy, you should also program the thermostat to revert to your off-peak temperature 30 minutes to an hour before the last person leaves for the day. Most workplaces stay perfectly comfortable for that last bit of time before closing time.

Water heaters are set to 120 degrees.

Most water heaters work by holding water (in a tank) at a specific temperature 24 hours a day. Reducing the temperature setting to 120° will save you energy 24 hours a day. If it’s not clear what your water heater is set to, you can run hot tap water over a candy thermometer to get a fairly accurate reading.

Linear lighting uses either LED bulbs, T8 or T5 fluorescents with electronic ballasts.

When it’s time to replace or upgrade your lighting, check out LED options. The prices continue to fall and the options (bright and warm, dimming, colors, etc.) continue to expand.

Track and spot lighting use LED bulbs or CFLs (compact fluorescent lightbulbs).

LEDs in particular are improving very quickly in both quality and variety, even as the price per bulb continues to decline. As with all lighting projects, check [Energy Trust incentives](#) to see if you can bring your costs down even further.

Display case lighting is LED or ceramic metal halide.

Your display lighting may be using much more energy than necessary. Whenever you need to replace burnt out bulbs, transition to LED or ceramic metal halides when you can. You'll save energy and won't have to replace bulbs as often.

Occupancy sensors or timers are used for lighting in storage rooms, offices, restrooms, and other common rooms.

Occupancy or motion sensors can be very effective, especially in rooms that are used sporadically. Estimates of savings after installing sensors range from 35-75%, depending on room size, type of lighting, and the use of the space.

Doors are weather-sealed.

If you can see even a small amount of daylight around the edge of your doors, you're likely losing energy. Install and replace doorway insulation and door sweeps so that your heating and cooling stays inside – where it's needed.

Windows are double-pane or better.

Switching from single-pane to double- or even triple-pane windows will reduce your need for heating and cooling. You'll reduce UV ray impact and street noise, too.

Renewable energy is purchased for a portion of our electric use.

[PGE](#) and [Pacific Power](#) both have green energy programs.

Emergency EXIT lights use LED bulbs.

Some older buildings still have EXIT lights that use inefficient lighting. Replace them with new EXIT lights using LED bulbs and you'll save energy 24-hours a day.

Garage or parking lot lighting is energy efficient.

If you haven't updated the lighting in your parking lot or garage in the past 5 years or so, you should see if there are [more efficient options](#) available.

Water

Restroom faucet aerator has a flow rate of 0.5 gallons per minute.

Find the gallons per minute (gpm) number stamped into the outer edge of one of your restroom [aerators](#). If it's 1.0 gpm or greater, let us know. We'll give you a free aerator that will reduce the flow by half or more.

A majority of our landscaping is native and drought tolerant.

Landscape with plants that are drought tolerant, native to the NW, and are hardy in urban environments.

Toilets are WaterSense-approved or use 1.28 gallons per flush or less.

A [WaterSense](#) label is printed on toilets that are independently certified to meet criteria for both performance and efficiency. Replacing an old, inefficient toilet with a WaterSense toilet can reduce water use by 20 to 60 percent. If you're remodeling soon or simply need to replace an older toilet, check with Portland's Water Bureau to see if they are offering [rebates for toilets and other water-efficient fixtures](#). Commercial accounts can get up to twenty rebates.

Our business has signed up as a Green Street Steward and adopted a bioswale in our neighborhood.

Bioswales are rain gardens that collect stormwater runoff from streets. When placed by the City along street curbs, they are often referred to as "[Green Streets](#)." They help keep stormwater and pollutants out of our streams and rivers, provide attractive streetscapes, and improve the health of watersheds.

The City, often through professional landscapers, conducts regular visits to bioswales to ensure that they're operating effectively and to trim or replace vegetation. Green Street Stewards help in between City visits to alert City staff to any issues needing immediate attention. If you are interested in learning more, visit the [Bureau of Environmental Services FAQ](#) page.

Community Engagement

Sponsorship, in-kind services or products are donated to community organizations.

Do you sponsor local events, clubs, children's sports teams or activities? Have you donated services or products to nonprofits for their fundraising events? If your organization does any of these, or something similar, check the box!

One or more employees serve a community leadership role (business association, government advisory committee, etc.).

This applies if at least one manager or leader at your organization serves on a local committee, association, panel, etc. We're specifically looking for participation in groups devoted to improving Portland's neighborhood or districts, schools, or public services (planning, environment, transportation, etc.), but we're open to other involvement as well. We would not consider serving on the board at another company towards this. The role should be with a public agency or nonprofit organization.

A formal policy promotes contracting with women- and minority-owned businesses.

If you haven't already done so, consider creating and publicizing your organization's commitment to contracting with minority- and women-owned businesses (MWBE). Not only can you use this lens when hiring for formal contract work, but you can also apply it to your own internal contracts with janitorial services, caterers, remodelers, and others. The [Business Oregon website](#) has a search feature to help you identify businesses that have registered and been certified by the State of Oregon.

A social responsibility mission statement guides our work and is shared with the public.

Looking for ideas? Conduct a web search on the phrase "social sustainability mission statement." You'll find a lot of examples. After you've read through several you'll have a feel for how to draft a statement that reflects the values of your own business. Once you have settled on a statement, share it with employees, but don't forget to also share it with customers or clients through your website, social media, or other means.

Employees are allowed to volunteer in the community on paid work time.

Does your organization allow staff to volunteer a certain number of paid hours per year? This can take many forms, from individuals choosing and participating in their own volunteer experience, to teams, divisions or your entire staff choosing and working on a project together. Not sure where to start? Check out [HandsOn Greater Portland](#).

A charitable giving campaign, matching funds or similar program is in place for the business to support charitable donations by employees.

This can be a grassroots effort such as a silent auction, car wash or casino night where all the funds raised are directed to a charity chosen by employees; all the way up to an organizational program that incorporates automatic payroll deductions and possibly matching funds.

Additional Actions

Your advisor can consider up to five additional actions towards your certification total. We encourage you to list actions unique to your workplace. Not sure if an action will count towards certification? Put it down anyway, and your advisor will review these with you as part of the verification visit.

On our website you'll find a list of **Additional Actions** that advisors have compiled through their work with a wide variety of organizations. If your workplace has also implemented some of these actions, feel free to include up to five of them on your application