

PRO P **FACT** Sheet

Green Building 101

Green building is the wave of the future...but what exactly is it and what is so environmentally great about it? The buildings we work, play and live in consume huge amounts of energy (39% according to the Environmental Protection Agency) and put out just as large amounts of waste and pollutants. Green or sustainable building is a way to establish more efficient offices, businesses and homes. These types of buildings typically include renewable and efficient energies, environmentally-preferable building materials, the reduction or recycling of other materials, water stewardship and an inside environment free of toxins, lead and asbestos.

Environmental Benefits

- Conservation of natural resources
- Reduction of waste streams
- Ecosystem protection
- Improve environmental quality

Economic Benefits

- Low operating/maintenance costs
- Improve green product markets
- Productivity increase

Social Benefits

- Improve work productivity
- Lessen strain on local infrastructure
- Improve aesthetics

Homes, schools, laboratories, medical facilities, businesses and retail buildings all have potential to be green, even if they already exist. Studies show that the costs of building green are nominal over standard construction, and there are grants and other funding opportunities available for construction of green buildings. Plus, their lifetime benefits are significant.

There are a number of ways to "green" your home or office as it is:

- Install a programmable thermostat
- Use solar energy for lighting and heating
- Use energy-efficient lighting like compact fluorescent lamps
- Insulate and repair the duct system
- Conduct an energy audit to pinpoint and reduce energy-consumption
- Use motion sensor lighting wherever possible
- Purchase energy efficient appliances and electronics
- Consider replacing or glazing windows



David Lawrence Convention Center
Pittsburgh, PA

Building green from scratch means you can incorporate the techniques listed above, reaping benefits from the start of the project.

- Choose sustainable, recycled-content building materials with zero or low toxicity
- Install water-efficient equipment like water-conserving toilets and sinks
- Consider recycled and environmentally friendly carpeting, wood flooring or tiling
- Design and implement a green roof
- Don't forget to recycle construction and demolition materials

There is a voluntary national standard in place for green building, often referred to as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). By meeting a minimum number of criteria, your building can be recognized as LEED Certified. There are many such buildings in the nation and right here in Pennsylvania, including the David Lawrence Convention Center in downtown Pittsburgh.

Greening Your Events

Besides building green, you can also plan green to help save the Earth's natural resources....there are green weddings, green meetings and conventions, green festivals and even green tourism. These kinds of events can be as eco-friendly as you can imagine.

Weddings

- Choose recycled, tree-free or paper-less invitations
- Look for eco-fabric or a used wedding gown
- Go with organic flowers
- Serve organic and compostable foods and drinks
- Choose reusable or compostable utensils
- Use a green registry



Meetings

- Choose a close location near mass transit
- Arrange for a meeting room with natural lighting
- Go paperless or use recycled paper with soy ink and double-sided printing for necessary hand-outs
- Provide recycling for bottles, cans, paper and glass
- Serve organic meals
- Choose recyclable or reusable utensils in minimal packaging
- Use recycled name tags, binders and grease boards
- Donate food scraps to a compost facility and unused food to a local food bank

Tourism

Green tourism, or EcoTourism is a rising trend across the globe. Many nations have EcoTourism Bureaus and Associations to assist people in seeing the world in an environmentally and socially responsible way. Green tourism includes:

- Travelling to discover and learn about natural environments
- Supporting local populations
- Minimizing environmental impact
 - Walking and/or biking tours
 - Using environmentally responsible hotels
 - Carbon emissions offsets

This fact sheet was developed by the Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania, P.O. Box 25, Bellwood, PA, 16617. For more information, please visit our website, www.proprecycles.org, or contact us by email at prop@proprecycles.org. We do our part to close the recycling loop and print all our publications on recycled paper.

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