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Sustainable Actions Guide: At Home and In the Office

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INTRODUCTION

This is a guide of sustainability facts and action tips that you can apply in the office and at home that will help you reduce waste from the landfill, reduce water consumption, reduce energy consumption, learn about responsible purchasing, reduce CO2 production, save money, protect the environment, and build resiliency in your community.

WASTE FACTS

- The average United States resident creates over 4.9 pounds of trash per day and up to 56 tons of trash per year (rubicon.com)
- Americans make up roughly 4% of the world's population but generate nearly 12% of the world's total waste (rubicon.com)
- If every garbage truck we filled (annually) was placed end-to-end, it would cover half the distance to the moon or ~119,450 miles (rubicon.com).

TIPS TO REDUCE WASTE

- Remove single waste bins to encourage recycling and prevent trash from being taken out with little waste in it.
- Remove plastic liners/bags from waste bins at your desk.
- Opt for refillable snacks instead of individually packaged ones.
 - e.g., trail mix, dried fruit, chocolate, nuts, etc.
- Use apps like [Otter AI](#) to transcribe meetings and take notes on your computer later.
- Use scrap paper for grocery lists or note-taking before recycling it.
- Perform a waste audit to see what your waste output consists of in order to make a plan to reduce, reuse, and recycle items. Contact the Zero Waste Team at Walking Mountains for support.
 - Take note of how quickly the trash, recycling, and compost fill up.
 - Think about how you can limit the volume of frequently used items.
- Inventory your supplies and try and eliminate single-use or disposable items.
 - Use this [Eco-Labels and Certifications Guide](#) to help restock responsibly purchased items.
- Plan carefully to host Zero Waste Events for your meetings, parties, and office gatherings.
 - View the Zero Waste Guide [here](#) to get started planning your next Zero Waste Event.
- Write your own pledge to reduce waste in your everyday life or choose one that resonates with you the most.

TO HELP REDUCE WASTE, I PLEDGE TO:

- **RETHINK** my purchases.
- **REFUSE** single-use items and items I do not need.
- **REDUCE** consumption and therefore waste.
- **REUSE** items.
- **REPAIR** broken items.
- **REGIFT** items I no longer need.
- **RECYCLE** recyclable items.

TO HELP REDUCE WASTE, I PLEDGE TO ALWAYS CARRY (ON MY PERSON OR IN MY CAR) A:

- **REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE** to avoid single-use water bottles,
- **REUSABLE SHOPPING BAGS** to avoid single-use plastic or paper bags,
- **REUSABLE COFFEE/TEA CONTAINER** to avoid single-use cups,
- **REUSABLE UTENSILS** to avoid single-use forks, knives, & spoons,
- & **REUSABLE FOOD CONTAINER** to avoid restaurant single-use takeaway containers.

FOOD WASTE FACTS

- Nearly 40% of all food in America is wasted. Food goes to waste at every stage of food production and distribution - from farmers to packers and shippers, from manufacturers to retailers to our homes. Food waste in our homes makes up about 39% of all food waste - about 42 billion pounds of food waste ([FeedingAmerica.org](https://www.feedingamerica.org/)).
- Hunger in African American, Latino, and Native American communities experience higher rates of food insecurity because of systemic racial injustice. To achieve a hunger-free America, we must address the root causes of hunger and structural and systemic inequities ([FeedingAmerica.org](https://www.feedingamerica.org/)).
- Food waste that ends up in landfills emits methane and other GHG emissions while it could instead be turned into nutrient-rich soil by composting it.
 - The EPA reports that in the US, the decaying of solid waste in landfill accounts for 34% of human-related methane production, 16% of which is from uneaten food alone.

TIPS TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE

- Create meal plans and prep meals.
- Buy frozen veggies and fruits.
- Freeze your food before it becomes spoiled.
 - [How to Freeze Everything - Bon Appétit](#)
- Stock up on canned goods.
- Remember that “sell-by” dates/labels are guidelines, not mandates.
- Donate to a local food bank.
 - [Click here](#) to search by zip code or state to find the nearest food bank.
- Use the [FoodKeeper App](#).
 - Developed by the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, with Cornell University and the Food Marketing Institute, the FoodKeeper helps you understand food and beverage storage to maximize the freshness and quality of items and keep items fresh longer. Available as a mobile application for [Android](#) and [Apple](#) devices.
- Try any of the websites or applications that generate recipes for you based on let you by ingredients you have at home.
 - [SuperCook - Zero Waste Recipe Generator App](#), also available as a mobile application for [Android](#) and [Apple](#) devices.
 - [MyFridgeFood App](#) is also available as a mobile application for [Android](#) and [Apple](#) devices.
 - [RecipeLand](#) website.

COMPOST FACTS

- 28 percent of waste deposited in landfills can be composted (eri.iu.edu).
- If everyone in the United States composted, it would be equivalent to removing 7.8 million cars from the road (eri.iu.edu).
- Soil with compost added to it can hold 2.5 times more water than traditional soil, reducing the amount of water that needs to be applied (eri.iu.edu).

TIPS TO COMPOST AT YOUR LOCATION

Denver

- [Resources for Composting in Denver](#)
- [New Changes with Compost Collection Guidelines](#)
- [Master Compost Program](#)
- [Compost Services](#)
- [Backyard Composting](#)
- [EcoGro Compost](#)
- [Vermicomposting](#)

Vail Valley

Compost your food waste by participating in curbside compost pickup through any of the services listed below:

- [Vail Honeywagon](#) hauls compost from commercial customers to their compost facility in Wolcott.
 - Additionally, [Eagle's new contract with Honeywagon](#) will include single-stream recycling and bear-resistant cans for curbside composting.
 - View a list of [Community Compost Drop Sites](#) for residential composters.
 - As a Honeywagon customer, you are entitled to a portion of the finished compost!
 - 970-476-3511
- If you live in Eagle and pay a small \$2.00 fee per month, you can drop off your yard waste at the [Town of Eagle's Yard Waste Facility](#) at [311 Violet Lane](#).
- [EverGreen ZeroWaste](#) hauls compost from commercial customers in Eagle County for processing at the Pitkin County compost facility.

Start your own composting system:

- View [A Guide for Backyard Composting In The Mountains](#) to get started in your own yard!
- Learn about the process of composting with the help of worms called [vermicomposting](#).

Snowmass

- Sign up for pickup through:
 - [EverGreen ZeroWaste](#)

- [Mountain Waste and Recycling](#)
- Drop off organics at the collection site located at the Public Works facility. This dumpster is NOT for yard waste and green composting. Those items, such as grass clippings, leaves, branches, etc. can be taken to the Pitkin County Landfill for composting. O3745 OWL CREEK ROAD

Tahoe

- [Keep Truckee Green – Food Waste Services](#)
- [California’s AB 1826](#) and the [Town of Truckee’s Municipal Code Section 6.01.070](#) require large organic waste generators to separate food waste from landfill.
- Compliance can be reached through participation in TTSD’s food-waste collection service or by self-hauling organic materials to a composting processing facility.
- [RT Donovan - Compost Program](#)
- [Full Circle Soils & Compost](#)
 - Truckee’s recycling staff - 530-582-2496.

Charleston

- [Commercial Composting in Charleston](#)
- [Charleston County’s Composting Program](#)
- [Bees Best Charleston County Compost](#)
- Haulers to facility:
 - [Smart Recycling](#)
 - (888) 304-6912
 - [Compost Now](#)
 - (919) 283-3627
 - [Carolina Waste Services](#)
 - (843) 576-1100
 - [Republic Services](#)
 - (843) 266-6199

Kamuela, Hawai’i

- [County of Hawai’i Solid Waste Facilities](#)
- [County of Hawai’i Greenwaste Diversion Program](#)
- Saturdays, Sundays & Wednesdays. 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

YARD WASTE FACTS

- Yard waste accounts for nearly a fifth (over 31 million tons) of all garbage generated in the U.S. each year, making yard waste the second largest component (by weight) of the municipal solid waste stream (nepisa.epa.gov).
- Yard waste (and other organics) decompose in landfills and generate methane gas and acidic leachate (nepisa.epa.gov).
 - Leachate is a liquid made from organics in the landfill that can leak into and contaminate waterways, and other environments.

TIPS ABOUT WHAT TO DO WITH YARD WASTE

- Utilize your local commercial compost facility!
 - See “How to Compost at Your Location” beginning on pg. 3.
- Find out when your community’s next Hard to Recycle Event is.
- **Leave your leaves!** Leaves are natural mulch that helps suppress weeds and fertilize the soil as they break down. Leaves also serve as a habitat for wildlife including lizards, birds, turtles, frogs, and insects that overwinter in the fallen leaves. These living creatures help eat pests and increase pollination.
 - Or add leaves to your compost for a great source of nitrogen.
- Use a horticultural technique called Hügelkulture to build raised garden beds.
 - Hügelkulture is a centuries-old, traditional way of building a garden bed from rotten logs and plant debris. These mound shapes are created by marking out an area for a raised bed, clearing the land, and then heaping up woody material (that’s ideally already partially rotted) topped with compost and soil.
 - Watch [this video](#) to learn about the basic principles behind building raised Hügelkulture beds.
 - [Click here](#) to read about the benefits of Hügelkulture.

RECYCLING FACTS

- Producing new products from recovered materials requires fewer raw resources and less energy ([epa.gov](#)).
- An aluminum can is likely back on a grocery store shelf as a new can after being recycled in as little as 60 days ([aluminum.org](#)).
- Aluminum can be recycled using only 5% of the energy used to make the product from new materials ([aluminum.org](#)).
- Glass is 100% recyclable and can be recycled endlessly without loss in quality or purity ([gpi.org](#)).
- Recycling plastic takes 88% less energy than making it from raw materials ([roaddrunnerwm.com](#)).
- Only 12% of disposable water bottles are recycled in the U.S. each year ([roaddrunnerwm.com](#)).

TIPS TO RECYCLE EFFICIENTLY

- Find out who your residential and/or commercial waste management service providers are to remain up to date on their single-stream or dual-stream rules!
 - **Single stream** recycling means all recyclable materials can go in one bin including paper, cardboard, and commingle materials.
 - **Dual stream** recycling means that paper, cardboard, and commingle materials (recyclable plastics, glass, aluminum, etc.) must be separated into separate containers.
- Different haulers may use different Material Recovery Facilities which often have different recycling rules depending on the end market of a material.
 - Stay up to date with changing rules by visiting your hauler’s website.

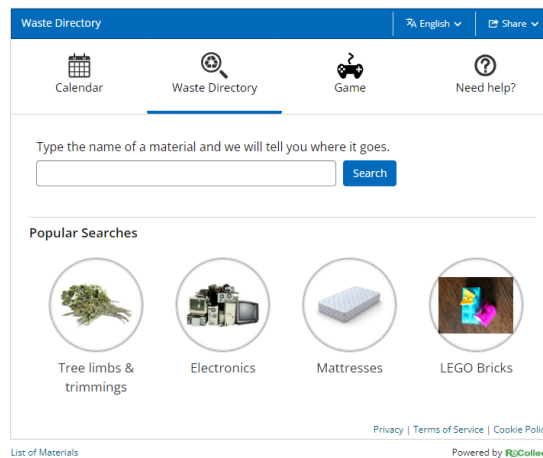
Vail Valley

- If you are living in a single-family or duplex residence in Eagle Valley and use Vail Honeywagon or Waste Management, curbside pickup is available for the most common household recyclables. Contact your waste hauler for details:
 - [Vail Honeywagon Rubbish & Recycling](#). 970-476-3511
 - [Waste Management](#) 970-524-1800
 - [Vail Valley Waste](#) 970-977-9228
- [Click here](#) for an interactive map and list of **Eagle County's Free Recycling Drop Sites**.
- When you are unsure how to properly dispose of a certain item or material, use the [Eagle County Waste Wizard website](#) or app available to download for [Android](#) and [Apple](#)!
 - Simply enter the item in need of disposal and the Wizard will tell you where it should go!



Denver

- [Click here](#) to find out about your service.
- [Click here](#) to view a map of the Cherry Creek Recycling Drop-off.
- When you are unsure how to properly dispose of a certain item or material use the [Waste Directory](#) on the City of Denver's website or app available to download for [Android](#) and [Apple](#)!
 - Simply enter the item in need of disposal and the Wizard will tell you where it should go!



- [Click here](#) to practice your waste-sorting skills and play the Denver Recycles Game!

Snowmass

- [Click here](#) to view a map of The Snowmass Village Recycling Center located in the Town of Snowmass Village Public Works at 3745 Owl Creek Road.
 - [Click here](#) to view a list of accepted items for the Town of Snowmass Village.
- [Click here](#) for more information about recycling in Aspen.
 - [Click here](#) to read about recycling with Waste Management in Aspen.
- View this excellent [TOSV Guide on how to host a green event!](#)
- If you have questions on what and how an item can be recycled contact the Solid Waste & Recycling Division at 970-923-5110.

Tahoe

- [Click here](#) to view the recycling service calendar.
- [Click here](#) to view information about commercial recycling services.
- [Click here](#) to view Keep Truckee Green's Recycling Guide.

Charleston

- [Charleston County Environmental Management](#) (CCEM) manages the collection of recycling and disposal of solid waste at the Bees Ferry Landfill.
- [Click here](#) to view a list of acceptable items that can go in your blue recycling bin.
- [Click here](#) for a list of Recycling Convenience Centers & Drop Sites.

Kamuela, Hawai'i

- [Click here](#) to view a list of solid waste facilities.
- [Click here](#) to view how to dispose of individual materials.
- [Click here](#) to view map directions to the County of Hawai'i Solid Waste Division Facilities.
- [Click here](#) to view a County of Hawai'i Solid Waste Diversion Recycling Facility GPS Locations.

INDOOR WATER USE FACTS

- The average family can waste 180 gallons per week, or 9,400 gallons of water annually, from household leaks. That's equivalent to the amount of water needed to wash more than 300 loads of laundry ([epa.gov](#)).
- Running the dishwasher only when it's full can eliminate one load of dishes per week and save the average family nearly 320 gallons of water annually ([epa.gov](#)).
- Letting your faucet run for five minutes while washing dishes can waste 10 gallons of water and uses enough energy to power a 60-watt light bulb for 18 hours ([epa.gov](#)).

TIPS TO REDUCE WATER WASTE INDOORS

- Retrofit toilets flushing at higher than 1.6 gallons with high-efficiency toilets (1.28 gallons or less per flush).
 - Your water utility may have a rebate program for high-efficiency toilets.

- Regularly inspect and repair all broken or defective sprinkler heads/nozzles, meters, water pipes, lines, and valves.
- [Click here](#) to find WaterSense Products to help increase water efficiency!

OUTDOOR WATER USE FACTS

- If the average-sized lawn in the United States is watered for 20 minutes every day for 7 days, it's like running the shower constantly for 4 days or taking more than 800 showers. That's equivalent to the amount of water needed for the average family to take 1 year's worth of showers (epa.gov).
- Outdoor water use accounts for more than 30 percent of total household water use, on average, but can be as much as 60 percent of total household water use in arid regions (epa.gov).
- As much as 50 percent of the water we use outdoors is lost due to wind, evaporation, and runoff caused by inefficient irrigation methods and systems. A household with an automatic landscape irrigation system that isn't properly maintained and operated can waste up to 25,000 gallons of water annually (epa.gov).

TIPS TO REDUCE WATER WASTE OUTDOORS

- Sign up for a Landscape Assessment through the [Beyond Lawn](#) program to have experts from the Eagle County Conservation District and Eagle River Watershed Council help convert your lawn to resilient, native, waterwise, landscapes adapted to our Colorado Rocky Mountain climate.
- Pay attention to your water use.
 - Check your water bill.
- Access your free WaterSmart account at erwsd.watersmart.com
 - Download the WaterSmart App for [iPhone](#) or [Android](#).
 - Shows normal use and possible leaks.
- Verify heads/nozzles are the proper rating/type for that application and positioned to prevent hardscape areas from being sprayed.
- Adjust the schedule and duration of your irrigation system according to seasons. Water during non-daylight hours (before 7 am or after 9 pm).
- Install an automatic irrigation controller that uses local evapotranspiration data and/or soil moisture sensor data to create an irrigation schedule.
 - [Outdoor Water Efficiency Devices](#)

ENERGY FACTS

- Fossil fuels – coal, oil, and gas – are by far the largest contributor to global climate change, accounting for over 75 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions and nearly 90 percent of all carbon dioxide emissions (un.org).
- Energy accounts for around three-quarters of total greenhouse gas emissions – the other quarter [coming from](#) agriculture and land-use change (ourworldindata.org).
- A handful of countries get around half or more of their energy from nuclear and renewables. In Iceland this share is around 80%; in Norway and Sweden, it's close to 70%; around 50% in France; and just over 40% in Finland. All of these countries get a

significant share of their energy from [nuclear power](#) and/or [hydropower](#) ([ourworldindata.org](#)).

TIPS TO REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION

- If you live in Eagle County, Colorado sign up for Walking Mountains Science Center to perform a [Home Energy Assessment](#) or a [Business Energy Walkthrough](#).
 - An Energy Program Coordinator will discuss your assessment report, help you implement projects that fit your budget, and help you apply for rebates.
 - Check out the [2023 Residential and Commercial Rebates](#).
- Open windows at night to let cool air in and close the windows when the weather starts getting warmer.
- Using natural light to illuminate your workspace reduces energy use and also keeps you awake and alert.
- Unplug appliances when they're not in use like TVs, printers, gaming consoles, etc., or plug them into a smart power strip that prevents "phantom loads".
 - Some appliances suck energy even if they're not in use.
- Program your thermostat to automatically adjust heating or cooling temperatures.
 - 68 degrees in the cooler months while you're at home and awake and 55 degrees when you're on vacation.
 - Keep blankets and sweaters available.
 - 78 degrees in the warmer months while you're home and awake, then turn it up to about 85 when you leave.

RESPONSIBLE PURCHASING FACTS

- Responsible sourcing is an approach to sourcing and supply chains when an organization actively and consciously sources and procures products and services for its operations in an ethical, sustainable, and socially conscious way.
- 55% of consumers are willing to pay more for eco-friendly brands ([theroundup.org](#)).
- 84% of customers say that poor environmental practices will alienate them from a brand or company ([theroundup.org](#)).

TIPS ABOUT RESPONSIBLE PURCHASING

- Use Facebook Groups like Buy Nothing to find what you need that others might have but no longer need or give things away to others instead of throwing them away.
 - [Buy Nothing Eagle River Valley, CO](#)
 - [Buy Nothing Highlands/Sunnyside/West Highlands/Berkely, Denver, CO](#)
 - [Buy Nothing Aspen/Snowmass Village/Snowmass, CO](#)
 - [Buy Nothing North Tahoe, CA](#)
 - [Buy Nothing – Free Stuff/Trade in Charleston, SC](#)
 - [Buy Nothing Hawaii](#)
- Utilize this [Eco-Labels and Certifications Guide](#) to become familiar with which products
- to prioritize when shopping and avoid greenwashing.
 - Greenwashing is deceitful marketing that exaggerates a business's practices in order for them to appear more environmentally friendly.

TRANSPORTATION FACTS

- Compared with driving alone, taking public transportation reduces CO2 emissions by 45% (transportation.ucla.edu).
- It's estimated that public transportation in the U.S. saves 37 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually, and even moderate increases in bicycle use each year could save an estimated 6 to 14 million tons (transportation.ucla.edu).
- Improved air quality in a community means greater health benefits for the people who live there. That can mean fewer cases of respiratory ailments such as asthma and even cancer. People are also more prone to get out and exercise when the air quality is better (transportation.ucla.edu).

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES

Public Transportation

- [Click here](#) to view Eco Transit Authority for the Vail Valley.
- [Click here](#) to view Roaring Fork Transportation Authority.
- [Click here](#) to view Transit Services for Tahoe.
- [Click here](#) to view Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority.
- [Click here](#) to view the Hele-On Bus Schedules and Maps for Hawai'i County.

E-Bikes

- [Click here](#) for Shift Bike, an electric, pedal-assist bike share network, servicing the residents and visitors of Eagle County, Colorado.
- [Click here](#) to read the Guide to E-Biking Around Aspen Snowmass.
- [Click here](#) to Bike Truckee.
- [Click here](#) to view Charleston's Rebellion Roads.

ADDITIONAL FACTS AND RESOURCES

- The production of meat and dairy has large environmental impacts – increasing [greenhouse gas emissions](#), [agricultural land](#), and [freshwater use](#) ([Ourworldindata.org](https://ourworldindata.org)).
 - [Click here](#) for a [Beginner's Guide to a Whole-Food, Plant-Based Diet](#).
- Social equity, or environmental justice is the fair treatment and involvement of all people and communities regardless of race, gender, national origin, or income level in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
 - It is imperative that we do not assume that if everyone is given equal resources, they will be in an equal situation. Social, political, and economic forces like racism, discrimination, exclusionary policies, etc. often prevent people from achieving equality.
 - [Click here](#) to read about environmental and climate justice.
 - [Click here](#) for a guide to Anti-racism resources.
- [Click here](#) to read about Project Drawdown's science-based climate solutions and strategies.
- Calculate your ecological footprint with [this free calculator](#).

One must sustain one's health in order to care for others and our planet, so remember to spend time outside, eat well, get good sleep, and exercise.

Contact me, Mia Beyer, your Sustainability Coordinator at mbeyer@eastwest.com for more information, to ask any questions, or if there's something you'd like to see added to this guide!

