



Spring Cleaning at the Office

Spring is well known as a time to get rid of the old and make way for the new. This is a great occasion to introduce a new spring cleaning tradition – Green Cleaning!

Green cleaning is not just about the products you use on surfaces but about the process and reducing clutter as well. As you make your office shine, encourage staff to donate unwanted but usable furniture and surplus equipment first before you recycle these materials. In combination with green products you use, the process in which you clean will reduce chemicals being used. Next time, increase the frequency you clean and use less intensive cleaners.

Tompkins County has recently passed a Surplus Equipment Policy where items are first offered within a department for reuse, then to other County departments, before they are sold, or donated to a 501 (c) 3 for reuse. Consider a procedure such as this in your own business.

If you are a small business, try “Do It Yourself” recipes and make your own cleaning solutions using ingredients like baking soda, washing soda, borax, and white vinegar. If you currently have a cleaning contractor or maintenance staff, request green cleaning products are used. Visit the [Finger Lakes Buy Green](#) website for more information on recipes and products that are available locally.

Things to consider when purchasing cleaning supplies;

- ⓪ Concentrated – this reduces packaging
- ⓪ Nontoxic
- ⓪ Dye and fragrance free – to improve indoor air quality
- ⓪ Biodegradable
- ⓪ Effective in cold water – this reduces energy costs
- ⓪ Free of optical brighteners
- ⓪ Functional
- ⓪ Petrochemical free
- ⓪ Multiuse – this reduces chemicals used in the work place
- ⓪ Free of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)
- ⓪ Approved by third party certifier, such as Green Seal, the Environmental Protection Agency, or Environmental Choice
- ⓪ Chlorine free
- ⓪ Free of phosphates
- ⓪ Reusable and durable (if the product is a cleaning tool)
- ⓪ Offered in refillable packaging or sold in bulk

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April 22nd is Earth Day

Earth Day is a global celebration that promotes environmental citizenship and year round progressive action worldwide. This is a chance to bring environmental awareness to your business and your home.

Ways to Get Your Office Involved:



- 🌐 Have employees and visitors to your office sign an Earth Day pledge (sample on Page 2)
- 🌐 Improve your office's landscaping – be sure plant species are indigenous to your area. Remove invasive species. Not sure which is which? Ask your landscaper or investigate with local experts.
- 🌐 Notify others by newsletter of your office's plans to participate in Earth Day this year.
- 🌐 Carpool, walk, bike, or use mass transportation to get to work.
- 🌐 Organize a litter pick up. This can be right in front of your office or on your office's street.

Since the first Earth Day in 1970, there have been huge strides in environmental protection and waste reduction in the United State; the Clean Air Act, laws to protect drinking water, wild lands and the ocean, and the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Earth Day is commemorated in over 175 countries and in some cities, including Ithaca, has extended Earth Day festivities have grown to an entire week.

Look for planned events happening in your community.

Get involved and have Fun!



CLEANING CONTINUED FROM Page 1

Items that cannot be reused should be brought to the Recycling and Solid Waste Center (RSWC). Did you know that you can bring electronics free of charge to the RSWC 6 days a week? That's right! Items such as phones, computers, keyboards, monitors, mice, laptops, printers, copiers, scanners, fax machines, cables, and more can be taken here for recycling! But remember, you must call ahead and make an appointment recycle your electronics.

If you have any materials that are considered hazardous, they can also be brought to the [DEPOT](#) at the RSWC during a [Household Hazardous Waste Event](#). Those are held 6 times throughout the year; the first event this spring is March 15. Please call 273-4496, in advance of your visit to set up an appointment. For more information about the DEPOT and hazardous waste please visit www.recycletompkins.org.

Now that you know how easy green cleaning can be, try adopting these practices throughout the year.



ReBusiness Spotlight: Eric Toftegaard State Farm Agent



Since becoming a ReBusiness Partner, **Eric Toftegaard State Farm Agent** has spread interest in starting recycling programs in the 3-4 neighboring businesses at their location.

Have you shown off your 4R Program to engage other businesses? This is a great opportunity to tell your neighbors why the 4Rs are so important and why it should be their business too.

If you reside in an area such as a mall or shopping plaza, encourage your neighbors to join the ReBusiness Partners Program.

This **Eric Toftegaard State Farm Agent** office is located at 15 Catherwood Rd. or on the web at www.lthacaAgent.com.



Random Acts of Waste Reduction

Random Acts of Waste Reduction? This adaptation to *Random Acts of Kindness* works to perform acts to reduce, reuse, recycle, and rebuy in your everyday life.

Here are some simple Acts of Waste Reduction that can be preformed at your office:

- ✂ Investigate acquiring a conversion kit to allow for duplex capabilities on your existing printer
- ✂ Help a co-worker learn how to print/copy double sided
- ✂ Try not to print any material unless you have to
- ✂ Review and make changes to documents on the computer before printing
- ✂ Use scrap paper to take notes
- ✂ Recycle everything that you can
- ✂ Help bring recycling out to its collection/pick-up area
- ✂ Encourage and thank co-workers you catch in the act of recycling
- ✂ On coffee breaks, make sure to use reusable mugs
- ✂ Help bring out the office's compost
- ✂ Turn off lights when a room is not in use
- ✂ Make sure to turn off/put computers in energy saving mode if you are going to be out of your office
- ✂ If you see recyclable items in the wrong receptacle, remove them and place the items in the correct bin

By performing these small Random Acts of Waste Reduction, your office reduces waste and saves natural resources from landfills for future generations.

Earth Day Pledge 2008

I pledge to help make Earth Day every day by doing my part to prevent pollution and help the environment.



I pledge to do what I can to recycle, conserve energy, save water and protect our natural resources.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____