



# NEW HOMEOWNER'S **GREEN GUIDE**

Brought to you by:  
The GreenSpot Advisory Board





## **Welcome to the neighborhood!**

Whether buying your first house or tenth, this guide is meant to help you make your home a little more sustainable. A strong thread through our community is sustainability--from our residential recycling program, to GreenSpot, to Sustainable Columbus, to Sustainable Steps, to Keep Columbus Beautiful, and Blueprint Columbus we continue to be good stewards of the environment. But it takes everyone doing their part. By adopting sustainable practices you are saving money, improving our environment, and setting an example for your neighbors. Remember, it only takes one to inspire many.

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# Conserve & Protect

# WATER

Less than 1% of all water on earth is fresh water that we can actually use. Columbus water costs less than a penny per gallon and is cleaner than bottled water. Help conserve and protect water with these simple actions you can take at home!

Let's start in the bathroom. There are three main areas to focus on: the shower, toilet, and sink.



**First, the shower...** Install shower heads that have the WaterSense label that use no more than 2 gpm. That can save \$20 and more than 1,000 gallons of water a year. A great reason to sing in the shower!



## Next, let's look at the toilet.

Install a WaterSense labeled toilet which uses no more than 1.28 gpf. If you can't do that, put a weighted bottle in the tank (back) of the toilet to displace some of the water. They also make retrofit kits where you can use less water for #1 and a little more for #2. Whew-that's a relief!

## Is your bathroom sink up to the challenge?

A WaterSense labeled aerator can save about 700 gallons of water a year. This reduction in water, without sacrificing comfort, also saves on energy costs for heating the water.

Now, we will visit the laundry room.

## There are loads of opportunities to conserve water when washing clothes.

Older top-loading washing machines use 40-45 gallons of water per load, averaging about 12,000 gallons (300 loads) annually. A front-loading washer uses about 14-25 gallons of water. Always run full loads.





## On to the heart of the home: the kitchen.



### The sink and the dishwasher guzzle water by the gallon!

A dishwasher averages about 10-15 gallons of water per cycle (about 1,800 gallons per year), so try to run full loads only, and limit pre-rinsing the dishes beforehand. As for the kitchen sink, installing an aerator (mentioned on the previous page) will help limit discretionary uses. For more information on how to check for leaks, check out the Columbus Department of Public Utilities' Leak Detection Guide.

## There are even more ways to conserve and protect water outside the home.

### If you like to wash your car, do it over the grass.

This way the oils, dirt, and debris are filtered by the grass and don't go into the storm sewer (which usually leads directly to the river). If you have a hose, check it for leaks at the connections as well as the hose itself—even a tiny leak can mean big money over time. Better yet, take your car to a professional car wash.

### Many people have installed rain barrels, compost bins and/or vegetable gardens.

You can use the rain barrel water to water your native plants or lawn. Check out the GreenSpot Community Backyards program for potential rebates on rain barrels, native trees and plants.

Visit [www.GreenSpotBackyards.org](http://www.GreenSpotBackyards.org).



# Conserve ENERGY

There are dozens of energy saving actions you can take to save money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Do your part because it all adds up!

## Green energy options.

### Soak up the sun with solar panels.

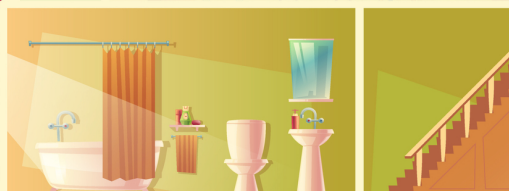
Go with a reputable dealer and follow the new, streamlined city code.



### Save energy by insulating.

Insulate your walls, attic, and duct work. You can save up to 10% on your annual energy bills by installing weather stripping around the doors and caulking around windows (Source: Energy.gov).

Better insulation also means reduced noise from the outside and less pollen coming into your home. Check out more information at ENERGY STAR®. [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)



### Look for the label!

The ENERGY STAR label means a product meets certain energy efficiency standards. When buying a light bulb, washing machine, dishwasher, TV, furnaces, water heaters, telephones and more, look for the label.



## Powering your home.



### Be smart, be green.

Sign up for your electricity provider's green option to offset the use of coal. For example, AEP offers ECO-Advantage which matches 100% of your energy usage with the national Green-e Energy certified, wind Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs). If the City of Columbus provides your electricity, you can sign up for their EcoSmart program.

For about \$5 more per month, a residential customer can offset 100% of their monthly energy consumption.

For commercial customers, offsetting at least 50% of your monthly energy consumption can provide a LEED point.



### LED is a bright idea for your bulbs.

Switch lights to LEDs. They use less energy than an incandescent or CFL bulb, can last 25 years, and can save about \$5-\$10 per year. Turn off the lights when you leave a room.

## Conserve

# ENERGY



### Silent energy suckers.

Believe it or not Americans spend almost \$10 billion a year on vampire appliances, accounting for almost 11% of all U.S. energy use. So the next time you are not using an appliance, unplug it!

TVs, cell phone chargers, power strips, stove, dishwasher, clothes washer, dryer, blender, cell phones, computers/monitors, dehumidifiers, coffee maker, kitchen appliances, and more! These use electricity even when turned off; that's why they are called vampire appliances.



### Go green and save green!

Insulating, LED light bulbs, and upgrading appliances may sound costly and sometime they could be. However, check out the rebate programs from Columbia Gas and AEP Ohio:



Columbia Gas offers a variety of energy efficiency programs that not only keep your family warm in the winter and cool in the summer, but also make sure you have a little extra in your wallet. Programs include instant rebates on smart thermostats, in-home energy audits, rebates on high efficiency furnaces and water heaters, and no cost weatherization for income qualified customers. Visit [ColumbiaGasOhio.com/SavingMatters](http://ColumbiaGasOhio.com/SavingMatters) to learn more.



AEP Ohio's residential energy efficiency program consists of tips, information, rebates, and incentives. They can provide a home energy profile, appliance recycling, and rebates on items like refrigerators, air purifiers, clothes washers, heat pump/water heater, and smart thermostats. They also have an e3smart kids program which educates students on how to save energy at home. For more information and program requirements visit [AEPOhio.com/save](http://AEPOhio.com/save).



## Reduce, Reuse

# RECYCLE

**Skip the straw! Over 500 million straws are used in the U.S. daily. Take a stand and skip it!**



### Reduce.

- 1) **Reflect on what's in your landfill/trash bin and make small commitments to reduce!** What are you sending to the landfill that could have been avoided or recycled?
- 2) **Choose reusables over disposables!** Do you have a few single-use items or disposable coffee cups in your landfill/trash bin?
- 3) **Opt for items with less and/or recyclable packaging.** 30% of all the waste that goes to the Franklin County Sanitary Landfill is paper, cardboard, or some other fiber.

**It's easy to be a steward of natural resources in Franklin County! Every day we can choose to use resources wisely, preserve habitat and help build a stronger local economy by reducing, reusing, and recycling!**

**Buy products made from 'Post-Consumer Recycled (PCR) content' to support the recycling industry. Look for this logo!**



### Reuse.

- 1) **Donate!** Your trash is another person's treasure. If they are in good working condition, donate old clothes, electronics, household goods and more to local charities to help others in need and to contribute to work-training programs.
- 2) **Buy Used!** Support your local economy and find unique items at low prices by shopping at second-hand stores. Buying used = guilt-free shopping! Used or DIY items can make memorable presents too.
- 3) **Share!** Do you need a power saw when you use it twice a year? Let your friends and family borrow what you have and ask to borrow their goods! Save money, space, and have an excuse to hangout with people you enjoy. [www.modconliving.org/toollibrary.htm](http://www.modconliving.org/toollibrary.htm)

## Reduce, Reuse

# RECYCLE

### Recycle.

According to data released by SWACO in 2016, Franklin County's recycling rate is 45% while the national average is only 34%. The city of Columbus has a 75%+ residential recycling participation rate. By working together as a community, we are preserving natural resources while helping to create jobs and support local industry. Questions about the recycling process and benefits, or why certain items aren't accepted?

Go to [www.columbus.gov/publicservice/RecyColumbus/](http://www.columbus.gov/publicservice/RecyColumbus/) for more information.



### SWACO Drop-Off:

If your cart fills up or you don't have curbside recycling, use a drop-off container for free! Find a location near you at [www.swaco.org](http://www.swaco.org)



### Residential:

You can sign up for reminders of when recycling is picked up. You can also purchase a second bin at [www.columbus.gov/publicservice/Refuse-Collection/](http://www.columbus.gov/publicservice/Refuse-Collection/)



## Recycling helps conserve resources and energy.

Every ton of trash we throw out fills up 3 cubic yards of landfill space.



Making a ton of paper from recycled materials saves up to 17 trees and uses 50% less water



According to the Aluminum Association, using recycled aluminum to make new aluminum cans uses 95% less energy than making cans from raw materials.



Reuse, recycle, or safely dispose of items not accepted in your residential program.



Questions about what to do with old electronics, chemicals, paint, batteries, and more? Use the following tools to help you quickly find a location near you accepting a wide range of items from tires to bicycles!

**RECYCOLUMBUS**  
We were meant for each other.

**City of Columbus Only:**  
Waste Wizard:  
[www.columbus.gov/publicservice/RecyColumbus/](http://www.columbus.gov/publicservice/RecyColumbus/)

**SWACO**  
FROM WASTE TO RESOURCES

**All of Franklin County:**  
SWACO Search Tool :  
<https://recycleright.org/recycle-reuse-search-tool/>

What can I recycle?

**Recycle This:**

Steel & Aluminum Cans

Paper & Cardboard

Plastic Bottles & Jugs

Glass Jars & Bottles

Beverage Cartons

**Not That:**

- ❖ Plastic Bags
- ❖ Plastic Cups & Styrofoam
- ❖ Clamshell Containers
- ❖ Egg Cartons
- ❖ Cassette Tapes
- ❖ Plastic Tubs & Buckets

## Reduce, Reuse

# RECYCLE

Recycle plastic film and plastic bags at more than 100 locations across Franklin County, including Kroger and Giant Eagle. Plastics that have the #5 on them like yogurt containers and clamshell salad containers can be recycled at places like Whole Foods.

### Confused about biodegradable, recycled, compostable meanings? Here are the differences (thanks to Earth911.com):



**Compostable:** Product breaks down to carbon dioxide, water, inorganic compounds, and biomass at a rate similar to paper and breaks down into small pieces in about 90 days, so that you don't even recognize the original compost, and it leaves no toxic residue.



**Biodegradable:** Product can be broken down WITHOUT oxygen and that it turns into carbon dioxide, water, and biomass within a reasonable amount of time. Now, reasonable is not really defined, but WAY less than 1000 years, which is how long it takes some plastics.



**Recycled:** Recycling means to treat or process things to reuse. Materials like glass, paper, metal, plastic, textiles, and electronics can all be recycled.

## Recycling Electronics

Think about donating your old, functioning electronics.

If they aren't working anymore, take them to a recycler that specializes in recycling electronics.

If it has a cord, it is considered electronic.

## Close the Loop

When looking to purchase new products, choose the ones made from recycled material (or at least those that have packaging made from recycled material. This increases the market for recycled material.

## Label to look for:



Forest Stewardship Council Certification ensures that products come from responsibly managed forests that provide environmental, social, and economic benefits. Products with this label indicates materials were sourced in a more responsible manner.





## Going..going...going

# GREEN

### Green Cleaning

Every home often has a large array of cleaning supplies that can be used on many different surfaces and in many different rooms. But how many of these cleaning supplies are 'green'? Even though these standard items get the job done, they may also have adverse effects on human health and the environment. Look for the Green Seal and other helpful labels. Even better, check online to find out how to make your own DIY green cleaners!



An independent non-profit founded in 1989, Green Seal certifies thousands of products and services that meet science-based environmental standards that are credible and transparent. Green Seal utilizes a life-cycle approach to ensure tangible reductions in the whole environmental footprint.



Companies certified through the Coalition for Consumer Information on Cosmetics' (CCIC) Leaping Bunny Program make a voluntary pledge to eliminate animal testing from all stages of product development. The companies' ingredient suppliers make the same pledge and the result is a product guaranteed to be 100 percent free of new animal testing.



The ECOLOGO Certification Program was acquired by UL Environment, a division of UL (Underwriters Laboratories) in 2010. ECOLOGO Certification is based on multi-attribute, life cycle-based standards. All products certified to an ECOLOGO standard must meet or exceed each of the listed criteria before receiving the mark.



Certification Programmes for Fair Trade & responsible supply chains and Corporate Social Responsibility.



### Use Green, Be Green!

Other labels to look for would include the EPA's Safer Choice label. Items that are marked "plant-based" or "no solvents" also ensure a healthier product.

Some cleaning liquids travel down our drains and do not break down during treatment, creating a threat to fish (plus other wildlife) and water quality. In 2002, the U.S. Geological Survey found leftover traces of detergent in 69% of the streams they tested. Use green, be green!



[epa.gov/saferchoice](http://epa.gov/saferchoice)



## Green Transportation

Transportation is one of the leading causes of greenhouse gas emissions, and in Central Ohio, more than 82% of us drive alone to work! Check out some alternative methods below of arriving to all the places you go. They reduce your climate impact and are fun ways to get around!

### Drive Electric



Driving in an electric vehicle (EV) helps to significantly decrease your carbon footprint. Battery electric vehicles have zero tailpipe emissions, and as the grid gets cleaner over time, so do electric vehicles. Not to mention, EVs are cheaper to power and maintain. EV drivers save about \$10,500 on car ownership costs over five years compared to an internal combustion engine vehicle.

**Smart Columbus is working towards 300 charging stations around Franklin County! Charging has never been easier!**



Ready to drive into the future? Visit [smart.columbus.gov](http://smart.columbus.gov) to learn more about the benefits of electric vehicles and about the many models available in Columbus.

### Drive Less

Thanks to a recently redesigned and updated bus system and new transportation services, there are abundant options to travel conveniently, affordably, and sustainably throughout Columbus:



**COTA BUS:** COTA has recently redesigned its entire network to provide more frequent service, better connections to more destinations, and increased weekend service. They also launched the C-Pass program which provides free bus passes to 45,000 downtown employees, and CMAX, central Ohio's first bus rapid transit service. [www.cota.com](http://www.cota.com)



**BIKE & SCOOTER SHARE:** Bike and scooter sharing services help you get around Columbus in a fun and sustainable way. Look for docked or dockless options around town. Pay by app and you're on your way!



CoGo Bike Share boasts 46 stations and 365 bikes to help you get from point A to point B whenever you need them--24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. [www.CoGoBikeShare.com](http://www.CoGoBikeShare.com)



**BIKING:** Jump on your bike and take one of the 100s of miles of bike lanes and multi-use paths to your destination.

Bike ridership in Columbus is at its highest levels, thanks to the influence of Pelotonia, the work of YayBikes!, investments by our city to add bike lanes on main thoroughfares, and numerous safe places to lock and store bikes.

If you are not sure how to ride in the street, Yay Bikes! offers classes and information about biking around Columbus. [www.yaybikes.com](http://www.yaybikes.com).



Their Ride Buddy rides provide individualized support, in the form of custom routes and a personal "buddy", to escort people on their first commute attempt.

Do you like the more scenic route? Check out this map of the many trails in Columbus and central Ohio, great for a leisurely stroll or a nice bike ride.

<https://www.columbus.gov/recreationandparks/trails/Central-Ohio-Greenways/>



**RIDESHARING:** There are also options for rideshare in Columbus with both Uber and Lyft operating in the community. Opt to use uberPOOL or Lyft Line, and share your ride with others heading in the same direction, to save money and the environment.

For more information about local commuting challenges and resources, including carpool and other transportation options, check out Gohio Commute. <http://www.morpc.org/transportation/gohiocommute/index>

If driving is a must, keep in mind how you drive can either save you money or cost you lots of money.



- Combine trips. This will save fuel and wear and tear on your car while reducing pollution.
- Accelerate gradually. Accelerating quickly uses more fuel, so lay off the pedal and save.
- Don't speed. Ignoring the speed limit is not only illegal, but can use more fuel. Follow the posted speed limit for safety and fuel savings.
- Limit idling. Idling your vehicle gets zero miles per gallon (mpg). It also damages the engine. The quickest way to warm up your car is to drive it.
- Anticipate stops so you don't slam on the brakes. Slamming on the brakes causes more wear and tear on them which means you'll need to replace them sooner. Gently come to a stop to save money and increase safety.

For more green driving tips check out Safety Insurance's Green Driving page.

### BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Smart Columbus and COTA have launched the Pivot app that makes it easier than ever to combine all of these modes of transportation to get where you need to go. Just tap in your location and where you need to go, and the app will suggest a journey that combines options like taking the bus, taxis, scooters and walking, to find you a route based on personal preferences like the fastest or cheapest way to get there. Check it out at [www.cota.com](http://www.cota.com).





## Parks

Believe it or not Columbus has over 375 amazing city parks you can visit. Some of the more popular ones include the Scioto Mile and Audubon Center downtown, Goodale Park in the Short North, Whetstone Park in Clintonville, Westgate Park on the west side, and Schiller Park in German Village.

For a full list of city parks visit [www.columbus.gov/recreationandparks/park-listing/](http://www.columbus.gov/recreationandparks/park-listing/)

Franklin County has great MetroParks.

For a full list of MetroParks visit [www.metro parks.net/](http://www.metro parks.net/).

## Farmers Markets

Farmers markets are plentiful in the summer and fall in Columbus. Shopping at a farmers market directly supports the farmer and local economy, allows you to get produce that is in season, and is a great way to meet your neighbors. Many farms have a community supported agriculture (CSA) option where you pay the farmer a set cost up front and the farmer provides a certain amount of vegetables/fruit throughout the season.



### Some easy tips on reducing food waste:

- Save leftovers and put them in the front of the fridge as a reminder to eat them the next day.
- Make a list before you go grocery shopping.
- Buy food you will eat in a timely manner.
- Plan meals in advance so you know what to get.
- Compost vegetables and fruits that aren't eaten.
- Bring your lunch to work (eating out is more expensive and generates more waste).
- Learn how to properly store fruits and vegetables—they will last longer!



Your green lifestyle can also extend to your companion animals. Diets and living conditions can make your cat or dog very happy or very unhealthy.



## Greening your cat or dog

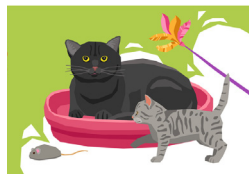


Look for food containing FDA-certified, food-grade meat as the primary ingredient. The primary ingredient in pet food should be safe-to-consume meat. If the pet food says the meats were raised in sustainable, humane environment, that is a plus. Avoid artificial flavors, BHA, BHT, ethoxyquin, and propylene glycol. Other ingredients that serve no benefit to your cat or dog include animal by-product, corn or soybean meal, wheat, and sweeteners.

Cats are carnivores and need meat to survive. Go for the wet food and skip the dry food. They don't need carbohydrates, in fact carbs can make your cat obese and cause it to develop a host of health ailments. Next, look for the preservatives. Vitamins C and E are healthy for pets and can serve as excellent preservatives. This can keep the healthy meat in the food safe for your pet.

When looking for bedding and toys, check out those that are made out of organic material, recycled material, biodegradable material, or products that have sustainable fibers from plants grown without herbicides or pesticides.

For more information check out The Real Deal at [www.retailmenot.com/blog/shopping-green-for-your-pet.html](http://www.retailmenot.com/blog/shopping-green-for-your-pet.html).



If you have a dog and live in Columbus sign up for our PUP pledge which encourages dog owners to pick up after their animal.

Take the pledge and be eligible for free biodegradable poop bags. [www.columbus.gov/PUP/](http://www.columbus.gov/PUP/)

There are also services that can take your pet's waste and turn it into energy (example Green Scoop Pet Waste Removal). Poop to power!



## Get involved!

There are dozens of groups in Columbus and Franklin County that are making a difference to protect our air, land, and water. Consider volunteering your time to one of these organizations. You can find a list on the **Sustainable Columbus** website.

And don't forget to join **GreenSpot** today! [www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org](http://www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org)

## Green Checklist



- ☐ Switch to LEDs
- ☐ Increase home insulation
- ☐ Install water efficient fixtures (aerators, showerheads, etc.)
- ☐ Check for leaks
- ☐ Purchase **ENERGY STAR** & **WaterSense** labeled appliances
- ☐ Install a rain barrel
- ☐ Switch to a green energy option
- ☐ Use green cleaning products
- ☐ Compost
- ☐ Get out into the parks
- ☐ Use healthier cat and dog food for your four-legged friend.

## Helpful Websites

Columbus GreenSpot

[www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org](http://www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org)

Sustainable Columbus

[www.columbus.gov/sustainable/](http://www.columbus.gov/sustainable/)

Sustainable Steps

[www.sustainablestepscolumbus.com](http://www.sustainablestepscolumbus.com)

**ENERGY STAR**

[www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)

WaterSense

[www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense)

RecyColumbus

[www.columbus.gov/publicservice/RecyColumbus/](http://www.columbus.gov/publicservice/RecyColumbus/)

PUP Pledge

[www.columbus.gov/PUP/](http://www.columbus.gov/PUP/)

Columbus Public Utilities

[www.columbus.gov/utilities/](http://www.columbus.gov/utilities/)

Columbus Recreation and Parks

[www.columbus.gov/recreationandparks/](http://www.columbus.gov/recreationandparks/)

Franklin County MetroParks

[www.metroparks.net](http://www.metroparks.net)

Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed

[www.olentangywatershed.org](http://www.olentangywatershed.org)

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC)

[www.morpc.org](http://www.morpc.org)

Columbia Gas

[www.columbiagasohio.com](http://www.columbiagasohio.com)

AEP Ohio

[www.aepohio.com](http://www.aepohio.com)

Smart Columbus

[www.smartcolumbusos.com](http://www.smartcolumbusos.com)

IGS Energy

[www.igs.com](http://www.igs.com)



THE CITY OF  
**COLUMBUS**  
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

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DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC UTILITIES