



## Overview of key environmental issues

All businesses impact on the environment in two fundamental ways: through the resources they use (e.g. fuels, materials and water) and through the wastes they produce (e.g. carbon dioxide emissions from vehicles or the disposal of chemicals).

Some of these impacts are under your direct control (e.g. the efficiency of your heating and lighting), while other impacts occur in your supply chain (e.g. during the extraction of raw materials to you purchase). While it is sensible to first address impacts occurring on-site, there are significant opportunities for those businesses who take a broader view of their total environmental impact.

Below are some of the most common pieces of environmental legislation that businesses should be aware of – as well as some essential 'Green Savings' to creating a greener, more profitable, business. A full report is available at <http://www.SurreyGreenSteps.com>

---

## Legislation

### Climate change agreements

The Climate Change Levy (CCL) is a tax on the use of energy in industry, commerce and the public sector. The Government permits an 80 percent discount from the CCL if certain targets for improving energy efficiency and carbon emissions<sup>6</sup> are met as part of a formal Climate Change Agreement with industry sectors or businesses. More information is available at: [www.decc.gov.uk](http://www.decc.gov.uk)

### CRC energy efficiency scheme

The CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme (CRC) is a mandatory carbon trading scheme for businesses who consume above a set threshold of energy. Participant's performance will be published in a league table. More information is available at: <http://www.decc.gov.uk>

### Ozone depleting substances

Ozone Depleting Substances are chemicals that damage the ozone layer if allowed to escape and Fluorinated gases (F-gases) are a potent greenhouse gas. Both have restrictions on their production, transport, sale and disposal. More information is available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk>

### Air conditioning

Air conditioning systems over a certain size must be inspected regularly by an accredited assessor. These inspections are designed to improve efficiency and reduce energy consumption, operating costs and carbon emissions for your system. For further information there is an explanatory guide which can be downloaded from the DCLG website (<http://www.communities.gov.uk>).

### Waste storage and transport

You are responsible for storing and transporting your waste safely and legally and must ensure that your waste does not harm the environment. More information is available at: <http://www.netregs.gov.uk>

## **Waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE)**

The WEEE Regulations aim to reduce the amount of electrical and electronic waste going to landfill and improve recovery and recycling rates. More information is available at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>

## **Surface water or ground water pollution**

Many substances entering surface waters or ground waters could cause pollution. Most substances that businesses use and dispose of are unsuitable for discharge to surface waters or ground waters without being treated first. More information is available at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>

---

# **Green Savings**

## **Calculate your carbon footprint**

You can only make informed decisions about where to target carbon reduction policies when you have a complete view of your organisation's emissions. Plenty of business-friendly, free, advice is available on creating a simple corporate carbon footprint – highly recommended is Defra's GHG Reporting Guidelines (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/>). This document explains in clear terms how you go about creating a footprint – as well as how to report the result and set emissions targets. To help you calculate your business carbon footprint to the Defra standard we you can use the free Footprinter tool: <http://www.footprinter.com/>

## **Implement an Environmental Management System**

An environmental management system (EMS) supports your company's commitment to improving all aspects of its environmental impact. By adopting an Environmental Management System you will be in a position to reduce raw material, waste and energy costs, gain environmental credibility and be compliant with legislation. To encourage SMEs to adopt an Environmental Management System, Surrey County Council has licensed an e-learning package for use by Surrey SMEs. This can be accessed via the following link: [INSERT HERE](#)

## **Buy green**

'Green procurement' is a process through which a business considers the environmental impact of the goods and services it buys – alongside financial value. Green procurement is a very effective method for highlighting environmental issues within an organisation – and also driving environmental improvement in the supply chain. By purchasing prudently, organisations can reduce waste and pollution, save materials, energy and money, and encourage sustainable patterns of behaviour. The unsustainable purchase of products (e.g. timber, travel) also has a high reputational risk and can be seen by stakeholders as unacceptable. Some green procurement 'quick wins' can be explored at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk>.

## **Become energy efficient**

It doesn't capture the imagination like some environmental initiatives but energy efficiency measures can yield big savings on your fuel and electricity bills – even the simple ones. An important first step to becoming a more energy efficient business is to ensure someone in your organisation takes responsibility for monitoring energy use and pushing forward energy projects. This will require discussion with staff from across your business as their behaviour and day-to-day decisions will directly affect the energy demands of your business. Visit the Energy Savings Trust (<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk>) and Carbon Trust (<http://www.carbontrust.co.uk>) for more information on energy efficiency in business.

## **Travel less, and more sustainably**

Transport is often a major source of emissions for businesses – whether it's in the form of business travel, freight or staff commuting to work. Some tried-and-tested approaches to reducing business travel emissions include: Institute a 'no fly' policy for domestic and some short haul destinations; promote tele- and video-conferencing by providing good alternatives; ban the use of private cars for business travel and providing super-efficient pool vehicles. The Energy Savings Trust provides advice on green vehicle fleets.

Commuting is consistently found to be a very significant source of business emissions. Although not under the direct control of an employer, steps can be taken to encourage staff to shift from low-occupancy car travel to more sustainable modes.

6. Note that the 2009 Pre-Budget Report announced that, from 1 April 2011, the discount from the CCL will be reduced from 80% to 65%.