

Alberta Council for Environmental Education: Green Operations Policy

Approved by the Board: 24 January 2008

Purpose and Desired Outcomes:

- To reduce the ecological footprint, air and water pollution, and waste stream resulting from all ACEE's operations, both internal and external. This includes, but is not restricted to, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and air contaminants; improved energy and water efficiency; reduced waste and support reuse and recycling; the use of renewable resources; reduced hazardous waste; and reduced toxic and hazardous substances.
- To ensure that ACEE purchases environmentally preferable goods and services that have a lesser or reduced impact on the environment over the life cycle of the good or service, when compared with competing goods or services serving the same purpose.
- To ensure that ACEE, as an environmental education organizations, 'walks its talk' to the best of its ability
- Serve as a template for other organizations interested in establishing similar policies for their organizations

Policy Specifics

1. Transportation

- ACEE will ensure that the travel of staff and Board members is rendered carbon neutral, through regular tracking of its carbon emissions and the purchase of carbon offsets as needed from a reputable vendor
- While on ACEE business ACEE staff and Board members shall make every effort to minimize travel by car, and carpool whenever possible

2. Office Practices

- ACEE will ensure that the offices used to conduct ACEE business operate in carbon neutral, through regular tracking of carbon emissions used to generate the electricity used and heat generated, and the purchase of carbon offsets as needed from a reputable vendor
- Staff will act to minimize the ecological footprint of office operations by procuring low-impact materials, and are authorized to purchase these materials even if less expensive materials are available, within reason. For example:
 - Paper: will be certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, and have a high recycled content

- Toner cartridges: will be recyclable

Staff will act to minimize the ecological footprint of office operations through conservation practices, and can receive relevant training in this if required. For example:

- Water: water conservation practices will be in effect
- File folders and envelopes are re-used if possible
- Photocopying is double-sided where possible

3. Program Practices

The principles described above will be applied to all of ACEE's external programs. For example, brochures printed by ACEE will be on FSC-certified paper, and successful printing companies will be chosen based in part on their environmental practices.

4. ACEE Events

ACEE convenes individuals and groups, and these meetings should be as low-impact as possible. For example:

- Carpooling is both encouraged and facilitated by ACEE
- Key host facilities are asked to demonstrate that their venue is operated with environmental objectives in mind. The appended 'Guidelines for a Green Meeting' will be used to facilitate a dialogue on this topic between ACEE staff and host facilities.
- Staff will evaluate the environmental practices of host facilities, and report on this evaluation as part of their decision to work with selected venues.

Appendix: Guidelines for a Green Meeting or Conference

The following guidelines to assist the meeting organization process. (Thanks to EECOM, who provided a earlier template for these guidelines).

A. Meeting Organization and Planning

- ___ 1. Participants and presenters are advised in advance that the meeting will be green and educated about what this means. The registration materials ask that participants respect and assist this process as appropriate.
- ___ 2. For all goods procured for the meeting, preference is given to the most environmentally appropriate alternatives that are available at a reasonable price and are locally produced. There is a willingness to pay more for environmental responsibility.
- ___ 3. Gifts for participants are durable, minimally packaged and made from non-toxic materials.
- ___ 4. Participants can register electronically.
- ___ 5. Steps are taken to minimize environmental impact of transportation to the meeting and during it. This could include choosing a locale accessible by public transportation, using a meeting site where walking is feasible, providing information on public transit, etc.
- ___ 6. Information systems are in place to facilitate carpooling.
- ___ 7. Sponsors and donors are actively sought who reflect positive environmental values and practices.
- ___ 8. Contributions from corporations that are known for their social responsibility are encouraged.

- ___ 9. Organizers are encouraged to walk, bicycle, carpool or use public transit to attend meetings and events whenever possible.

B. Registration

- ___ 10. Measures are taken to reduce paper waste at check-in (e.g., short registration forms, computerized systems).
- ___ 11. The registration package is provided in a reusable or reused holder.
- ___ 12. Reusable name tags are used, and their return encouraged.
- ___ 13. Placards and banners are reusable or made from recycled materials.

C. Program

- ___ 14. Educational efforts are undertaken as part of the program to make participants aware of their environmental impacts during the meeting and by the meeting. This might include ideas such as calculating the ecological footprint of the meeting.
- ___ 15. Attendees are reminded of waste reduction and other environmental opportunities during the meeting. For example, presenters are asked to turn off overhead and slide projectors when not in use.
- ___ 16. The program includes education about the local ecology and environmental issues as a part of the program.
- ___ 17. The program includes on-line information opportunities for people who cannot come to the meeting.
- ___ 18. Field trips are screened to be environmentally friendly.
- ___ 19. The meeting evaluation form has a place for participants to comment on the environmentally-friendly practices of the meeting and provide suggestions for improvement.

D. Meeting Site Systems

- ___ 20. Recycling and composting systems are in place with convenient and well-marked receptacles.
- ___ 21. Reusable dry markers, erasable boards or blackboards, overheads, computer projectors and slides are used instead of paper flip charts. (If paper flip charts must be provided, they should be made of recyclable newsprint, with recycled content.)
- ___ 22. Distribution of brochures, handouts and session notes is limited to those with a genuine need or interest (e.g., by providing a sign-up sheet or collecting business cards for subsequent mailings; putting copies at the front of the room rather than at the back).
- ___ 23. Exhibit components are reusable and, if practical, made from used or recycled materials. Exhibit packaging is reusable (e.g., pallets, wrappings), and/or recyclable.
- ___ 24. Exhibitors limit handouts and giveaways, and instead collect business cards or post a sign-up sheet for those interested in more information or product samples.
- ___ 25. Lights and equipment are turned off when not in use.

E. Office Systems used by the hosting venue

- ___ 26. Paper use is minimized through the use of e-mail and voice mail instead of paper memos.
- ___ 27. Paper documents are produced only when necessary, and are as short as possible. Editing is done on-screen, rather than printing unnecessary drafts.
- ___ 28. All photocopying is double-sided.
- ___ 29. Paper that has been used on one side only is collected and reused for fax cover sheets and note paper. Draft print-outs and photocopies for internal use are made on the back of used paper.
- ___ 30. Documents are circulated and memos posted rather than individual copies being distributed.
- ___ 31. Paper products have certified recycled content, with a high proportion of post-consumer content. Chlorine-bleached paper is avoided.
- ___ 32. Paper products used, photocopier and laser printer toner cartridges, and printer ribbons, are recycled.
- ___ 33. File folders and envelopes are reused (e.g., by placing a label over the old address).
- ___ 34. Mailing and circulation lists are regularly checked and updated to avoid unnecessary

mailings.

- ___ 35. Environmentally Friendly Capital Purchasing is used: Priority is given to photocopiers and laser printers with double sided copying, and to plain-paper fax machines. Preference is given to equipment capable of using unbleached and recycled paper. Computers with built- in fax-modems are preferred to enable electronic faxing. Preference is given to photocopiers with stand-by or sleep features and computers equipped with energy-saving features.

F. Food Systems

- ___ 36. Explicit effort is made to utilize food that is locally grown, organic, low in processing, and purchased in bulk.
- ___ 37. Food is used as a teaching moment with appropriate labeling.
- ___ 38. Food provides meal choices for vegetarian and vegan participants.
- ___ 39. Leftovers are used and or given away.
- ___ 40. No single portion package items (ketchup, coffee, cream, sugar etc.) and no single-serve containers are used. No Styrofoam or throw away plates, utensils, etc.
- ___ 41. Disposable dishes, cutlery, straws, stir-sticks, napkins, etc. are not used for coffee breaks or meals. Durable coffee mugs are used. Coffee filters are reusable cloth or steel, or unbleached recycled paper.
- ___ 42. There is a composting program or volunteers take organic materials home for composting.

G. Service Contractors

- ___ 43. Preference is given to contractors who adhere to the above criteria as routine practice.
- ___ 44. Contractors are made aware of the green criteria and expected to adhere to them. If they do not utilize some of these criteria as routine practice, they are challenged to make these a practice for this meeting. If they refuse in major ways, attempts are made to find alternative contractors.
- ___ 45. The contractor's practices respect all local and national environmental legislation.
- ___ 46. The contractor makes all reasonable efforts to reduce paper use, including obligatory double-sided copying.
- ___ 47. Any hazardous materials used are properly handled, stored and disposed of.