

# Model Law Office Sustainability Policy

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Firm management intends to establish sustainable office practices consistent with its overall commitment to provide excellent legal services to clients. This policy is adopted to implement that intent.

The best-known definition of sustainability is contained in a 1987 report *Our Common Future* commissioned by the UN World Commission of Environment and Development:

*Sustainable development is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

We recognize that all human activity, including the operation of a law office, has an impact on the environment and the natural world. Within the firm we make daily choices in performing work that can either reduce or increase that impact. As a firm we seek to reduce the impact.

**Education.** Because the daily actions of each person in the firm will contribute to the success of this policy, this policy includes a provision for education of all new lawyers and staff on sustainability matters. In the long run, the initiative of each individual will be the key to the success of the policy.

**Sustainability Coordinator.** One person shall be designated as the Sustainability Coordinator for the firm. The time allocated for work as Coordinator shall be determined by the [Firm Administrator] [Managing Partner]. The Coordinator shall organize and lead the Sustainability Team, be responsible for training all employees in an understanding of sustainability, make recommendations to firm management to implement the policy, and keep awareness of this policy at a high level in the firm.

**Sustainability Team.** The Sustainability Team will meet on a regular basis to evaluate current practices, determine priorities in carrying out this policy, and educate and motivate lawyers and staff to move toward sustainable practices. Anyone with ideas for improving the firm's performance is encouraged to contact a member of the Sustainability Team. The Sustainability Team will make periodic reports to the firm management regarding the progress the firm is making toward sustainability.

**Purchasing.** *Sustainability* shall be considered in the purchase of supplies, equipment, and services. Examples of sustainability criteria are recyclability, biodegradability, recycled content, waste minimization, hazardous-chemical free, energy conservation, resource conservation, locally manufactured, and organic.

**Waste Reduction and Recycling.** Subject to security and other requirements, policies shall be established that minimize the use of paper in data storage, printing and copying, internal and external communications, and mailing. Systems will be established to minimize disposables and packaging, reuse equipment and supplies where feasible, and maximize recycling of all items that can be recycled in this region.

**Energy.** Policies shall be established that encourage energy conservation and efficiency in heating/cooling, lighting, and equipment. This may involve negotiations with the building manager to seek best practices.

**Travel.** The Sustainability Team shall consider means for reducing business travel, including teleconferencing options, and strategies for reducing the impact of travel, including fuel efficiency, Flex Car, and carbon offsets.

**Commuting.** The firm management shall establish commuter incentives to encourage use of mass transit, carpooling, and bikes.

**Carbon Credits/Green Power.** The firm will consider the purchase of carbon credits to offset all or a portion of the greenhouse gas emissions associated with our operations and the purchase of green power to encourage alternatives to fossil fuels.

**Tenant Improvements.** When tenant improvements are made, the firm shall specify materials that are the least hazardous and most natural and give preference to those that are high in recycled content, recyclable or biodegradable, certified sustainable, and durable.

**Implementation and Measuring Success.** In implementing this policy, firm personnel shall consider three documents prepared by Oregon Lawyers for a Sustainable Future and available on its Web site ([www.earthleadershipcenter.org/OLSF/office\\_practices](http://www.earthleadershipcenter.org/OLSF/office_practices)): (1) Sustainable Practices of the Law Office, (2) Best Practices of Office Building Management, and (3) Guidelines for Tenant Improvements. Where practicable, baselines shall be established for practices that can be measured--such as paper used, recycled content of supplies, disposables purchased, percentage of office waste that is recycled, and electricity used--and progress shall be reported to the firm at least annually.



*Oregon Lawyers for a Sustainable Future is a project of the Center for Earth Leadership.  
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The law office tools are located at [www.earthleaders.org/olsf/office\\_practices](http://www.earthleaders.org/olsf/office_practices).*