

Green Guide: Reducing Environmental Impact at W&J

W&J students in EVS 101 and members of the Sustainability Committee collated ways one can reduce their environmental impact on campus. We recognize the need for all W&J community members to reduce their ecological footprints and live more sustainable and environmentally-friendly lifestyles through this guide. Please contact the Sustainability Committee at sustainability@washjeff.edu with suggestions on how to improve this guide.

In the Residence Halls:

Refrigeration

For convenience, Residence Life allows students to provide their own mini-fridges. In order to reduce energy use, purchase and use Energy-Star refrigerators. Other ways to ensure efficiency include checking the effectiveness of the seals on the doors, keeping the temperature of the refrigerator between 36 and 38 degrees, and avoiding putting the refrigerator in a sunny part of the room. Keeping the coils on the back of the refrigerator clean also helps to promote more efficient energy consumption from the refrigerator.

Laundry

W&J uses high-efficiency (HE) front-loading washing machines that use significantly less water and energy. In front-loading machines, the spin cycle is faster, therefore drying the clothes more than top-loading machines. By using HE detergents in addition to these HE machines, you can further reduce your environmental impact. When possible, avoid doing half-loads of laundry and wait until you can run a full load to reduce water consumption. Washing clothes in cold water also reduces energy consumption by 90%. Additionally, hanging clothes to dry is encouraged, but when dryers are used, cleaning the lint trap after every load will not only save energy, but also reduce the drying time needed for each load.

Lighting

When a room is not occupied, turn off the lights and when possible, maximize natural lighting from windows instead of using artificial lighting. In lamps, use LED and other energy-efficient light bulbs.

Climate Control

In the warmer months, fans are more efficient and less energy-consuming than air conditioners. Turning off fans, air conditioners, and heaters when a room is not occupied avoids heating or cooling empty rooms. Leave windows closed when the air conditioner or heater is in use.

Avoiding Phantom Power Loss

Many appliance use electricity even when turned off. To prevent this, unplug TVs, gaming systems, and phone chargers when not in use. By plugging these devices into a power strip, it is easy to turn power off to these when not in use. When leaving campus for an extended period of time, such as a weekend or break, be sure to unplug all electric appliances.

Infrastructure

Facilities Services should immediately be contacted (724-503-1001, Ext. 6086) if you come across a leaky faucet, leaking pipe, broken window, poorly-sealed door is noticed.

Water Use

By shortening the length of a shower by two minutes, you can save up to 250 gallons of water in one month. If the faucet is turned off while brushing teeth, eight gallons of water can be saved during two minutes of teeth brushing.

Cleaning

When cleaning, use old washcloths, socks without a match, or other pieces of cloth as rags instead of paper towel. In addition, using environmentally-friendly cleaning products reduces dangerous chemical use. Cleaning products can be made at home or in the dorm with baking soda, vinegar, water, and lemon juice.

In the Classroom and Computer Labs:

Computer

If you already own an electronic tablet or laptop, consider going paperless by reading online assignments and articles electronically rather than printing. Additionally, many textbooks can be bought in electronic format at a cheaper price.

Printing

For personal use, print double-sided and reduce the font size, spacing, and margin width to reduce total pieces of paper needed for one document. Ask individual professors if turning in essays and assignments printed double-sided is acceptable. Computers in the computer labs on campus are automatically set to print documents double sided. By printing on recycled paper and using the back side of old papers as notebook and scratch paper, paper use is further reduced.

Transportation:

Rideshare Board

To reduce carbon emissions and costs, carpool home with a friend or other student living in the same city over break. The rideshare board is located behind the Mailroom. Sign up by filling out a notecard with your name, phone number, email address, and destination.

Carpooling

When going to a sporting event, athletic practice, or other campus-sponsored event, carpool with friends, roommates, teammates, or coaches.

Public Transportation

The Washington City Transit has routes to local shopping centers, Pittsburgh, the South Hills Village, and the South Hills Village "T" Transit Center, where you can connect to rail service to Pittsburgh. Additionally, W&J students have access to both the Student RUSH Shuttle, which is offered every Tuesday and Thursday night departing from the Rossin Campus Circle at 7PM to local stores and returning at 8PM, as well as the Pittsburgh Pipeline, which is offered every Friday and Saturday nights leaving at 6:30PM, 8:30PM, and 10:30PM and allows students to visit many locations in downtown Pittsburgh. Both of these services are free to W&J students with a student ID. A full schedule can be found on W&J website.

"Take a Walk, Ride a Bike, Share a Ride" Program

Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to walk, bike, or carpool to campus. This reduces carbon emissions and is good for your health. Faculty and staff can sign up to participate by contacting Human Resources or a member of the Sustainability Committee.

Dining:

Use Reusable Containers

Eliminate use of plastic, one-use water bottles and purchase a sturdy reusable water bottle. These can be refilled for free at any water fountain, The Commons, and G&T's. Reusable "clamshell" to-go containers are available through the Sustainability Committee to eliminate consumption of G&T's Styrofoam to-go containers. If a reusable coffee mug is brought to the Barista, a large coffee may be purchased for the price of a small.

Washington Farmer's Market

The Washington Farmer's Market is held weekly April through August on Main Street in downtown Washington. Not only does this allow for you to purchase fresh produce, but it also supports local farms and businesses. Ecological footprints are further reduced because the Washington Farmer's Market uses little to no packaging and reduces energy by reducing transportation costs.

Dine Outside in the Presidents' Kitchen Garden

Parkhurst Chefs use herbs and vegetables from the Kitchen Garden to prepare meals at W&J. Picnic tables are in this area for students, faculty, and staff to enjoy meals outside during nice weather. Employees of Parkhurst can give you more information about this.

Join W&J's Chapter of the Food Recovery Network

Help Sustainability Committee members, including Parkhurst staff, deliver leftover food to a local homeless shelter. Contact the Sustainability Committee for more information.

Compost Kitchen Waste

Become involved and assist kitchen staff with the composting program. Contact the Sustainability Committee for more information.

Recycling:

Single-Stream Recycling

W&J utilizes single-stream recycling, a system that allows for all recyclable materials, such as cardboard, plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and glass to be deposited into the same recycling bin. G&T's cups are recyclable. Food waste, plastic cutlery, straws, used paper towels, and napkins should be placed in the trash. If a recycling bin is needed or missing from your residence hall or academic building, please notice both facilities services (724-503-1001, ext. 6086) and Residence Life.

Books

Textbooks can be donated to "Better World Books", a program that provides low-income areas with affordable textbooks. Donation bins are located in Burnett, outside of the Bookstore, and in the U. Grant Miller Library. Green Club packages and mails these books to Better World Books. Novels and other books can be donated to Political Science Professor Buba Misawa to help educate communities in Africa through the "Books for Africa" program. Contact Buba Misawa or W&J Librarian John Henderson to donate your books.

Printer Cartridges

Printer cartridges and toners can be donated in bins behind the Mailroom and on the 2nd floor of Burnett to be mailed to a cartridge recycling company.

Cell Phones

Cell phones can be donated in the collection bin near the front entrance of the U. Grant Miller Library.

Plastic Bags

A bin to collect plastic bags is near the front entrance of the Hub.

Household Hazardous Waste

Paints, solvents, pesticides, herbicides, used motor oil, pharmaceuticals, etc. can be brought to a regional collection event organized by the Pennsylvania Resources Council (prc.org).

Computers and Electronics

Washington County Planning Commission hosts electronic recycling at the Washington County Fairgrounds during the first Tuesday of each month. Call (724- 228-6811) for more information. Additionally, many computer retailers often accept electronic items for a fee, with some retailers providing a refund if a new purchase is made.