

TOOLBOX TALK NO.55

How to make Lucas Head Office more SUSTAINABLE



Sustainability is a term used to address efforts being made to create a balance in the environment that will promote physical, social, and economic health for current and future generations. Everyone has a role to play in the Environmental Management System.

Environment: The surroundings in which an organization operates, including air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans and their interrelation.

Sustainability: Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

There are 5 key environmental issues that affect us all:

- a. **Climate Change** is the rise in mean global temperature caused by the release of heat trapping gases. Scientists predict that this will result in an increase in extreme weather events leading to flooding, droughts and the melting of ice.
- b. **Pollution** – The release of substances that cause harm to humans, property and the environment. Pollution can be to air, land and water.
- c. **Loss of Biodiversity** – A reduction in the number and variety of animal and plant species on earth. Human life depends on diversity within ecosystems.
- d. **Resource depletion** – This is when natural resources are used at a higher rate than they can be replenished. The earth has a finite set of resources that support our way of life including: gas, oil, coal, trees, water, soil and plants.
- e. **Statutory nuisances** – activities that may be damaging to people's health or interfere with a person's legitimate use or enjoyment of his/her property. These can include dust, noise, smells, piles of rubbish and emissions of smoke and fumes

What we can do:

1. Reduce Waste

- Double-side copy or print your photocopies.
- Save paper by not printing whenever possible.
- Recycle used printer and toner cartridges – all used toners and cartridges to be handed to the office administrator for recycling.
- A stationary re-use system is in place, avoid throwing functioning stationary away i.e. used ring binders, instead place them back in the stationary cupboard.

2. Electricity

Power Saving Tips:

- Turn the lights off in rooms when not in use. For instance, there's no point in having the lights in the boardroom or washroom on all day.
- Do not leave the office lights on overnight.
- Disable your screen savers on your computers as this consumes more energy compared to allowing monitors to dim by power management.
- Turn down your brightness setting on your screen
- If you are not using an application or programme, close it down, multiple applications or programmes open will slow down your computer and use more power.
- Turn off your computer when it's not in use.

Air-Conditioning/Heating

- Ensure doors and windows in all air conditioned rooms are kept closed when the air-conditioning is on.
- Do a basic walk-around to identify areas in the office which are being heated unnecessarily and take action to save energy as required.

Switching off

Turn off lights when you leave the room, don't leave lights on unnecessarily.

3. Procurement

Think about how far a product has travelled to reach you and what the carbon footprint might be. Just because a product is recycled or recyclable doesn't mean it is necessarily environmentally friendly. The materials used could contain hazardous chemicals or be made alongside non-environmentally friendly products. With all wood and paper related products that are not made from recycled materials, ensure that they come from sustainably sourced suppliers i.e. FSC certified suppliers.

General going green in the office:

1. Place used batteries in the battery box on the kitchen wall. These are recycled.
2. Always turn taps off completely, ensure they do not drip.
3. Get running toilets fixed. They are huge water wasters.
4. Make sure all washroom cleaning products are environmentally safe.
5. Use both sides of the photocopier paper
6. Use small pieces of photocopier paper for short memos.

Applying the waste hierarchy for waste minimisation could include the following:

- ☑ Reduction/prevention
- ☑ Reuse
- ☑ Recycling
- ☑ Recovery
- ☑ Disposal

