

Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation
Green Building Policies
(January 2008)

God showed Adam all the trees in the Garden of Eden and said, "See my handiwork, my creation, how beautiful and balanced it is. Be careful not to ruin or destroy it, for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you."

Midrash Rabba Ecclesiastes 7:1

Attaining the blessing in Genesis, we have been fruitful, multiplied and filled the earth. (Gen. 1:28). At the same time, we have subdued it and we have tilled it (Gen. 1:28, 2:15) and done that, while sometimes for survival, also too often for comfort. Our planet needs repair.

At JRC, we have always put repairing the world (*tikun olam*) front and center. Yet for the most part we have considered *tikun olam* a call to *gemilut chasidim* (acts of kindness), *tzedaka* (acts of charity and generosity), social action for social justice, and the pursuit of a peaceful coexistence among people and nations. The pursuit of a sustainable coexistence between human beings and the environment, by contrast, has not generally engaged us as a congregation in the same way. That is changing.

Most notably, we have ourselves built a new environmentally responsible home -- for prayer, education, celebration and all the things we do as a congregation. We used sustainable and recycled building materials, minimized our reliance on depletable resources, maximized natural light and air and innovated to make our building operations water and energy efficient. We have been through a review process in which the U.S. Green Building Council measured our new synagogue building against internationally recognized benchmarks in six areas: (1) site sustainability, (2) water efficiency, (3) energy and atmosphere, (4) materials and resources, (5) indoor environmental quality, and (6) innovation and design process. We were awarded the [highest / second highest] rating available – LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) [platinum / gold]. Of this we are justly proud.

Now, with the same dedication, it is time to commit ourselves to instituting environmentally responsible practices for the use of our new home. To that end, we therefore adopt the following as policies of the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation of Evanston:

- Reducing JRC's use of depletable energy resources,
- Increasing JRC's use of recycled and recyclable materials and supporting recycling markets,

- Reducing JRC’s contributions to landfills,
- Making environmental factors routine considerations in JRC’s purchase of products and services (including, among others, supplies and services for the JRC office, JRC events, the religious school, the Early Childhood Center, building cleaning and maintenance, the kitchens, and landscaping),
- Supporting environmentally preferable products by preferring contractors who use them,
- Conserving water,
- Reducing or eliminating JRC’s use of toxic substances and increasing JRC’s use of biodegradable cleaning supplies,
- Reducing JRC’s emissions of greenhouse gases, and
- Auditing and reviewing, on at least an annual basis, our compliance with these policies.

To implement these policies, JRC’s Board has created and approved two companion documents:

- (1) A guidebook to environmentally responsible practices, including a plan for environmentally preferable purchasing of products and services (“the EPP Plan”); and
- (2) A shorter guide specifically for planners of religious, educational and social events in our new building (“the Simcha Plan”).

The EPP Plan is Exhibit A to this document; the Simcha Plan is Exhibit B.

We do not pretend to have all the answers -- or even a fully operational set -- for using our building and conducting our congregational activities in environmentally responsible ways. But we believe that JRC’s environmental footprint can and should be reduced and that we must therefore learn more both about the ecological consequences of our choices and the spectrum of environmentally responsible alternatives available to us . This will be a journey.

Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation's
Green Procedures Manual And Plan for Environmentally Preferable Purchasing
(January 2008)

Introduction

This manual is a work in progress. It should always be a work in progress. As we gain experience, as technologies change and as green services and products become more available and more affordable, this manual will become outdated unless continually updated.

To readers not otherwise familiar with the concept or content or form of an environmentally preferable purchasing plan ("EPP" Plan), this manual may at first seem intimidating. It is not intended to be read through in one sitting -- or from start to finish.

Much of the content of this plan is modeled on similar programs previously adopted by local governments, including Oakland ([www.oaklandpw.com /Page844.aspx](http://www.oaklandpw.com/Page844.aspx)) and New York City (<http://tinyurl.com/2htmz5>).

In addition, for the past decade, the federal General Services Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have issued procurement guidelines for recycled and environmentally responsible products and services on which this plan also relies. See <http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/epp/> and <http://tinyurl.com/ywgdkb>.

This document is not short, and over time we hope it will become longer. Part of its purpose is to emphasize the breadth of choices we make that carry environmental consequences. It is also intended as a resource guide for further learning. We also hope that over time this manual will contain more requirements and fewer guidelines.

This document is divided into ten sections. Seven address different areas of environmental concern: (1) Energy Efficiency, (2) Waste Created by Paper and Office (3) Food and Food Service Procedures, (4) Transportation, (5) Waste Disposal, (6) Cleaning and Maintenance Supplies and Services, and (7) Landscaping. The eighth and ninth sections address cost-benefit considerations and immediate implementation. The tenth provides a glossary of terms.

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing & Procedures

1. Energy Efficiency

Our building has been designed with a “systems” approach towards energy management. We have a very tight and well insulated building envelope. Our heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system is carefully zoned and digitally programmed so that only areas in use are heated and cooled. Individual rooms have thermostats to temporarily raise or lower temperatures by 2°, but the system is designed to be centrally controlled and monitored.

Certain practices will help us take full advantage of that design. They will minimize both our consumption of energy resources and the environmental effects attributable to their use. These practices include:

- 1.1 Notifying the office of scheduled events or cancellations so that appropriate rooms will be heated or cooled only as needed.
- 1.2 Notifying the office when a room is uncomfortably warm or cold so that the HVAC programming can be adjusted as needed.
- 1.3 Using windows rather than air conditioning for ventilation when weather permits, while keeping windows *closed* when the HVAC system *is* running. The system will bring in fresh, filtered air.
- 1.4 Turning on *power-save* modes on equipment and appliances and choosing ENERGYSTAR equipment and appliances.
- 1.5 Turning off equipment during nights and weekends and attaching TVs, radios, computers, copy machines, microwaves, telephones etc. to power strips for ease in turning them off at the end of the day.
- 1.6 Making sure that furniture placement does not inhibit air circulation or HVAC effectiveness.
- 1.7 Using energy-efficient compact fluorescent and thin fluorescent (T5) light bulbs and dual switches to adjust lighting to lower levels when that is sufficient.
- 1.8 Recycling batteries and choosing rechargeable batteries.
- 1.9 Exploring the availability and affordability of renewable energy sources and carbon offsets.

2. Waste Created by Paper and Office Products

We each use, on average, more than 600 pounds of paper per person per year, a staggering amount and enough that buying paper with recycled content, processed chlorine free, can make a real environmental difference. Production of recycled paper uses less water, less energy and produces less air and water pollution than paper production using raw materials.

The EPA has comprehensive procurement guidelines for office paper products and recommends (as of 2003) purchasing paper processed chlorine free and containing a minimum of 30% recycled content. <http://tinyurl.com/2pymtj>. See also <http://www.greenseal.org/resources/reports.cfm> (click on “Paper, Printing and Writing”).

The environmental impact of the operations of our staff office and our committees would be significantly reduced by:

- 2.1 Increasing our reliance on email and reducing our use of paper mailings.
- 2.2 Using postcards for mailings when possible and/or use the smallest size envelope required.
- 2.3 Combining mailings to reduce the overall number.
- 2.4 Editing documents on screen as much as possible to avoid printing multiple drafts.
- 2.5 Printing and copying double-sided unless there is a bona fide reason not to and setting copiers and printers to default to duplex (double-sided printing) when that option is available.
- 2.6 Choosing refillable, recycled toner cartridges.
- 2.7 Conserving ink and toner by printing at “standard” or “fast” rather than “high” quality print settings.
- 2.8 Eliminating the use of fax cover sheets.
- 2.9 Continuing to use recycled paper with 100% Post Consumer Waste (PCW) content for in-house print and copy jobs, with a goal of moving exclusively toward paper with 100 % PCW content.
- 2.10 Minimizing the use of colored paper (because it is more difficult to recycle), and, when colored paper is used, using recycled content colored paper.
- 2.11 Choosing nontoxic water-based highlighters and markers.

- 2.12 Choosing energy efficient office machines.
EPEAT, <http://www.epeat.net/>, is a tool to help purchasers evaluate, compare and select desktop computers, notebooks and monitors based on their environmental attributes.

3.0 Food and Food Service Procedures

In the area of food service, we can minimize harms to the environment by:

- 3.1 Reducing the use of packaging that must be landfilled by buying in bulk, avoiding sugar and powder creamer in individual packets, and storing food in reusable glass containers.
- 3.2 Using re-usable spoons for coffee and tea rather than plastic stirrs.
- 3.3 Reducing the use of single-use plates and cutlery -- and, when using single-use plates or cutlery, purchasing plates, bowls and cutlery made from recyclable and/or compostable content (and encouraging their recycling).
- 3.4 Banning styrofoam products.
- 3.5 Purchasing washable, dark napkins and table linens for community use and laundering them, when appropriate, in our new washer and dryer.
- 3.6 Reducing the use of paper napkins, table cloths and decorations and, when paper is used, choosing paper goods made with recycled content.
- 3.7 Using cloth rather than paper towels in the kitchen.
- 3.8 Making reusable service items and decorations the primary choice.
- 3.9 Purchasing and providing storage for up to 100 re-usable service settings (china, glassware and cutlery) for community use.
- 3.10 Washing dishes and utensils and, when possible, pots and pans in the dishwasher rather than by hand to conserve water.
- 3.11 Purchasing fair-trade organic coffee, and encouraging the purchase of organic or preservative/chemical free, healthier food wherever food is served.

4.0 Transportation

We can reduce our use of fossil fuels and emissions by:

- 4.1 Establishing and encouraging carpools for transportation to and from JRC events.
- 4.2 Instituting a non-idling policy for cars waiting for, picking up and dropping off passengers at our building.
- 4.3 Encouraging people to walk or bike to JRC, reminding them of the availability of showers and safe bike storage.
- 4.4 Encouraging the use of public transportation by making train and bus schedules and routes available.

5.0 Waste Disposal

What we put in the trash, how much we put in the trash and how we dispose of it affects air, water and soil quality – as well as our own health and the health of other living organisms. There are four basic and essential strategies for minimizing and managing our waste:

Reduce: Preventing waste in the first place (source reduction) is always the best approach.

Reuse: Choosing re-usable rather than single-use products.

Recycle: When creation of waste cannot be prevented, typically the next best option is recycling.

Insist on Safe Disposal: When recycling is not an option, how we dispose of waste becomes the issue. This is particularly true with respect to materials that are toxic, carcinogenic, flammable, persist in the environment (do not break down) and/or bioaccumulate (build up in the food chain and tissues of living organisms). Examples include: batteries (rechargeable and alkaline), computer and electronics equipment (containing lead, mercury and/or heavy metals such as cadmium), fluorescent light bulbs (while they save energy, fluorescent bulbs contain mercury), solvents and degreasers, aerosol cans, disinfectants, floor waxes, polishes and cleaners, glass and window cleaners, and paint.

Appendix A: Green Procedures Manual and EPP Plan

The following steps will reduce the waste that results from JRC's activities:

- 5.1 Instituting a comprehensive recycling program for paper, cardboard, glass, metals, and plastic, with clearly labeled recycling bins.
- 5.2 Placing paper recycling bins in each room in all class rooms and offices and bins for cans and glass on each floor and in the kitchens.
- 5.3 When plastic trash bags are necessary, choosing bags made from recycled plastic content, preferably 100% RPPCM (recycled plastic postconsumer material). Every year the state of California publishes a list of manufacturers of trash bags made from RPPCM. See www.ciwmb.ca.gov/BuyRecycled/TrashBags/ComplyList.
- 5.4 Recycling printer and toner cartridges and other office consumables, and choosing remanufactured or recycled ink and toner cartridges. An inkjet cartridge does not biodegrade in a landfill. Once discarded, it will be there for several hundred years. Estimates are that over 300 million printer cartridges are thrown into landfills every year.
- 5.5 Donating or recycling used electronic equipment. The U.S. EPA has a web page dedicated to "Where Can I Donate or Recycle My Old Computer and Other Electronics Products?" <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/recycle/ecycling/donate.htm> . See also <http://www.pcsforschools.org/applicat/appcover.html>.
- 5.6 Recycling fluorescent bulbs. Drop-off locations for recycling fluorescent bulbs (and other recyclables) can be searched by zip code at <http://earth911.org/> .
- 5.7 Collecting and returning packing peanuts to a mailing store.
- 5.8 Safely disposing of batteries, cleaning products, paint and paint thinner, fuels and oils, drain cleaners, antifreeze, and other toxins – which means not placing them in the trash. For safe and local disposal of these items, see the website of the Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County, www.swancc.org, <http://tinyurl.com/cmeb4> (recycling website for the City of Chicago), or <http://earth911.org/>.

6.0 Cleaning and Maintenance Supplies and Services

Traditionally, general and special purpose cleaning products have contained surfactants, detergents, antibacterial chemicals and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that are toxic or hazardous, carcinogenic, flammable and/or not biodegradable. These substances are often hazardous to the workers using them. According to the State of California, each year six out of every 100 professional janitors are injured by the chemicals they use. [www.green.ca.gov/ EPP/Building/cleaning.htm](http://www.green.ca.gov/EPP/Building/cleaning.htm). Tons of these substances are poured down drains of every year, polluting water supplies and soil. They also affect interior air quality.

JRC can reduce the harms to its members and staff and the environment by:

- 6.1 Choosing Certified Green Seal cleaning products, www.greenseal.org/findaproduct/cleaners.cfm, or products recommended by the U.S. EPA or Environment Canada, see [www.epa.gov/dfe/pubs/projects/ formulat/formpart.htm#iiclean](http://www.epa.gov/dfe/pubs/projects/formulat/formpart.htm#iiclean) and <http://tinyurl.com/37oad4>. These web sites have very extensive and growing lists of safer products.

The City and County of San Francisco found that for 13 out of 14 product types it could use environmentally preferable products in place of existing products with no increased cost, while the United States Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory found that green cleaning products cost less than what they paid for non-green cleaning products. (Source: <http://www.green.ca.gov/EPP/Building/cleaning.htm#7>).

- 6.2 Using minimum amounts, where cleaning or disinfecting products containing toxic substances must be used and disposing of containers and remainders properly.
- 6.3 Training staff with respect to the safe use of safer products.
- 6.4 Requiring contracted cleaning services to use industrial and institutional cleaning products that meet Green Seal Certification or have been recommended by the U.S. EPA, Environment Canada or an equivalent body.
- 6.5 Requiring that janitorial paper products contain a minimum of 50 % recycled (PCW) content.

- 6.6 Using latex Recycled and/or low-VOC or zero-VOC paints to mitigate disposal challenges and reduce risks to human health and the environment. The State of California requires State agencies to purchase recycled paint containing at least 50 percent post-consumer paint (www.ciwmb.ca.gov/ConDemo/Paint/). Sherwin Williams, Benjamin Moore, Kelly Moore, Pittsburgh Paints and others make low-VOC or zero VOC low odor paints. www.greenhomeguide.com/index.php/product/C136/. See also www.pprc.org/research/epp/RecycledVsLowVOCpaint.pdf (recycled vs. low-voc paint).
- 6.7 Choosing carpeting with high recycled content and low VOCs, and low VOC or carpets with integral adhesives.
- 6.8 Choosing furniture that has been tested for, or does not emit, chemicals or particles that negatively affect indoor air quality. See generally www.greenguard.org.
- 6.9 For on-going maintenance, using minimal VOC construction adhesives and sealers.
- 6.10 Implementing effective and environmentally sensitive Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies that emphasize control of pests and their damage through preventive practices, mechanical and biological controls, and cultivation of pest-resistant plantings, with resort to herbicides, pesticides and rodenticides only as required and with the least possible exposure humans and other plants and animals. See www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/ipm.htm, www.uos.harvard.edu/ehs/pes.shtml (IPM as used by Harvard University on its campus) and www.birc.org.

(Items 6.6 through 6.10 are designed into our building as part of our LEED certification).

7.0 Landscaping

Landscaping, which often requires water and creates waste, need not do either. JRC can minimize both by:

- 7.1 Planting drought-tolerant plants native or appropriate to the local area and climate.
- 7.2 Managing pest problems through prevention and physical, mechanical and biological controls (Integrated Pest Management).

- 7.3 Appropriate pruning, See generally www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/SUL5.pdf and www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/SUL7.pdf, from the University of Iowa Extension Service’s series on “Sustainable Urban Landscapes.”
- 7.4 Using organic fertilizers.
- 7.5 Using healthy plant debris for composting.

(Items 7.1 , 7.2, 7.4 and 7.5 are designed into our building as part of our LEED certification).

8.0 Environmentally Preferred Purchasing: Performance, Price and Availability

Nothing contained in this manual requires or should be construed as requiring JRC or its members to purchase or use products or services that do not that do not perform adequately for their intended use or are not available at a reasonable price and in a reasonable time frame.

This manual contains only two absolute requirements:

- (1) Environmental considerations shall be taken into account, where practical, as a factor in decision making in as many areas as possible, including but not limited to supplies and services use for the JRC office, JRC events, the religious school, the Early Childhood Center, building cleaning and maintenance, the kitchens, and landscaping.
- (2) Compliance with environmental policies and the suitability of these guidelines as means of implementing them shall be audited and reviewed on at least an annual basis, at the Board level.

This manual also recommends converting the following additional items from guidelines to requirements:

- (1) Use of recycled paper with 100% Post Consumer Waste (PCW) content for in-house print and copy jobs. See ¶ 2.9 above.

- (2) Use, and employment of contract cleaning services that use, industrial and institutional cleaning products that meet Green Seal Certification or have been recommended by the U.S. EPA, Environment Canada or an equivalent body. See ¶ 6.4 above.
- (3) Use of janitorial paper products that contain a minimum of 50 % recycled (PCW) content. See ¶ 6.5.
- (4) Use of trash bags made from 100% recycled plastic content. See ¶ 5.3.

9.0 Implementation

This manual is intended as guidance for implementing the following policies of the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation:

- Reducing JRC's use of depletable energy resources,
- Increasing JRC's use of recycled and recyclable materials and supporting recycling markets,
- Reducing JRC's contributions to landfills,
- Making environmental factors routine considerations in JRC's purchase of products and services (including, among others, supplies and services for the JRC office, JRC events, the religious school, the Early Childhood Center, building cleaning and maintenance, the kitchens, and landscaping),
- Supporting environmentally preferable products by preferring contractors who use them,
- Conserving water,
- Reducing or eliminating JRC's use of toxic substances and increasing JRC's use of biodegradable cleaning supplies,
- Reducing JRC's emissions of greenhouse gases, and
- Auditing and reviewing, on at least an annual basis, our compliance with these policies.

Implementation of these policies, with use of this manual for guidance, is to begin immediately, including through the education of clergy, staff and community members, and by considering how lesson plans consistent with these policies might be incorporated into the Sunday school curriculum.

10.0 Definitions

Energy Star refers to the U.S. EPA's energy efficiency product labeling program described at <http://www.energystar.gov>

Environmentally preferable products and services are products and services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared to competing products and services that serve the same purpose.

Green Seal is an independent, non-profit organization that develops standards for sustainable, environmentally responsible products and services and certifies "Green Seal" products and services that meet those standards. See <http://www.greenseal.org/> for information on the organization's programs and standards.

Postconsumer Recovered Material is defined by the EPA as material that is recycled after completing its life as consumer item. It is finished material that would normally be disposed of by consumers (end-users) as solid waste but has been diverted or recovered from the solid waste stream, www.epa.gov/cpg/glossary.htm, and becomes postconsumer waste content (PCW) when recycled into new items.

Preconsumer Recovered Material is defined by the EPA as material that is recovered before it is sold to or used by a consumer – for instance, scrap left over from manufacturing processes that is recovered by the manufacturer before it leaves the plant. www.epa.gov/cpg/glossary.htm.

Processed Chlorine Free (PCF) means a product produced using no chlorine or chlorine derivatives.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) are organic (carbon-based) compounds that significantly vaporize under normal conditions. They may react with other pollutants in the presence of sunlight. Paints and paint thinners often contain VOCs. They may also be generated by photocopiers, carpets and furniture.

GREENING YOUR SIMCHA

JRC's Environmentally Preferred Simcha Plan

In consideration of the values-based decision making that led to the LEED certification of our new building, the attached Green Simcha Plan serves to inform and guide decision-making as it relates to events held in the building.

Importantly, we view these guidelines as an opportunity to educate and inspire staff, congregants and guests as to the Jewish values that are at the heart of our JRC community, and to empower all to make conscious decisions in the life of the congregation. In doing so, may we be inspired to bring these values out into our work and home environments as well and truly live as stewards of the earth.

Areas to Consider Greening, and Steps to Get You There:

INVITATIONS -

- Print invitations on recycled paper with the maximum amount of post-consumer waste content available. Encourage guests to recycle invitations.
- Avoid lined envelopes; consider post-card style invitations; Ask for replies to phone or email account rather than including a separate reply card. Print with low-toxic dyes or soy ink, double-sided where possible.
- Consider eliminating paper invitations altogether and using an on-line invitation program such as Evite; or consider Evite for events surrounding the main event or as a "Save-the-Date".

B'NAI MITZVAH BOOKLET

- Consider eliminating printed booklet and prepare a poster-size display of photos, quotes, poems, etc. to be available for viewing at one.
- If preparing a service supplement, print on recycled paper with the maximum amount of post-consumer waste content available. Print with low-toxic dyes or soy ink, double-sided as possible. Recycle following event.

ROOM/TABLE DECORATIONS

- Consider centerpieces which can be donated or re-used.
- Consider re-usable table linens first; paper next. Avoid plastic where possible, or choose plastic made with recycled content.
- If using balloons, consider latex first; make sure balloons are responsibly discarded after use.

FOOD and FOOD SERVICE

- Supply fair-trade organic coffee, and consider the use of organic or preservative/chemical free, healthier food where possible.
- Consider the use of locally grown food, and/or food that is minimally processed and packaged.
- Choose service items including serving pieces, plates, napkins, cups, silverware with these considerations:
 - 1) Consider first using reusable service items wherever it is practical and cost effective to do so. JRC can provide service for 100 guests; members are responsible for coordinating washing and restacking of service items used. Consider cloth napkin rental.
 - 2) If choosing paper, choose goods made with recycled paper content first.
 - 3) If choosing plastic, choose plastic goods made with recycled plastic content, and consider the recyclability of the product following the event.
 - 4) Avoid Styrofoam.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Recycle as much of the event waste as possible.
- Consider donation of left-over food/supplies where a suitable donor can be identified.

GIVE-AWAYS

- Consider an environmental alternative with a message: ie: reusable water bottles filled with treats; environmental message t-shirts, etc.
- Make a donation in guests' name to a personally meaningful cause.

SERVICE PROJECTS

- Living in a green building provides a doorway into the exploration of many important environmental topics. Please contact the JRC Environmental Task Force for ideas!

TRANSPORTATION/TRAVEL

- Encourage carpooling of guests to the event.
- Encourage guests to consider public transportation and provide them with information needed to do so.
- Consider the purchase of carbon offsets for travel needed to bring in guests to the event.