

Office Equipment

Energy efficiency in the office

Computers, fax machines, printers and photocopiers are indispensable to many small businesses. Learning how to operate your office equipment more efficiently not only makes good business sense, but it's great for the environment as well.

The following are some hints to help your business reduce the amount of energy consumed every day:

General

- Select equipment that is more energy efficient – check energy efficiency ratings and consult with your suppliers.
- Install compact fluorescent bulbs instead of standard light bulbs – they have up to 15 000 hours of life compared to only 800 hours for standard light bulbs.

Switch Off

- Turn equipment off when not in use, particularly outside your regular hours of operation. A quick check at the end of the day and before the weekend will prevent wasted energy. It is a myth that switching it off can damage equipment.
- It is untrue that large amounts of energy are required to start up equipment. In fact, turning off equipment generally increases its useful lifetime.
- Office equipment can still use energy when switched off at the appliance, but not at the same power point. Although only small, this 'phantom' consumption still adds up! If power points are difficult to reach, consider installing power boards.

Timers

- Fit power points with plug-in timers to ensure equipment is not left on outside of operating hours. They are available at your local hardware store.
- Look for models of equipment with built-in sleep modes that can be activated to cut electricity consumption while the equipment is not in use.

Computers

- Use laptops or notebook computers where possible as they use around ninety percent less energy than a conventional desktop computer.
- Turn off all laptop battery chargers – only use them as required.
- Switch off PC monitors whenever possible. Screen savers don't save energy and the monitor sometimes uses more energy than the computer itself.

Printers and faxes

- Consider selling any excess equipment. Link all your computers to the one printer, and direct all calls to the one fax. Consider a combination fax/printer for low usage applications.
- If possible, use ink jet plain paper faxes and printers as they generally use less energy than laser models.

Photocopiers

- Select a size appropriate for your needs. Copiers are sized on their 'volume capacity', or how many copies they produce per minute. The larger the capacity, the larger the energy usage.
- Purchase a copier with a 'sleep mode' function, as these take only 10 to 20 seconds to warm up again.
- When in use try to group copying tasks together – save your copying tasks and run them all at once. Copiers can be turned off between batches.
- Use photo reduction and double-sided copying where possible.

Note: some photocopier models need to be left on to power a small electric element to stop moisture build-up. Check with your supplier.

Protecting your equipment can save you money in the long run

If your business relies on sensitive electronic equipment such as computers, the right approach to protecting your equipment is vital. Products and services designed to protect the quality of your power supply can benefit your business in a number of ways, including:

- reduced downtime and lower maintenance costs;
- extended service life; and
- the prevention costly damage.

The first step is to ensure that your own equipment can't be a cause of interference and the answer may be as simple as installing a power filter or conditioner.

There are a range of other protection solutions available, each designed to meet different needs. They include:

- UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply) or battery back up
- line conditioners
- suppressors

Aurora can advise you on the most appropriate solution for your business or put you in touch with specialists who can advise further. Please visit www.auroraenergy.com.au/officeequipment or call our business line on **1300 13 2045** for more information.