

# It's time for a carbon clean sweep!

The Seattle Times is challenging readers to trim their greenhouse gas emissions by at least 15 percent during the month of May. For more on the project, including a household emissions calculator: [seattletimes.com/climatechallenge](http://seattletimes.com/climatechallenge)

## Our carbon footprints

Typical annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for a two-person household, in pounds

Automobiles (per vehicle)	12,100
Gas heating and cooking	11,000
Electricity	16,290
Waste	2,020

Source: Environmental Protection Agency

The average two-person household produces about 41,500 pounds of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases every year, mostly from the fuel that powers our cars, heats our homes and helps make all the stuff we buy. But there are lots of things we can do — from baby steps to giant leaps — to shrink our carbon footprints.

## Reducing your carbon footprint

Baby steps

Walking the walk

Giant leap for mankind

**RECYCLE**  
paper, printer cartridges and other goods. Use two-sided printing and copying to save paper.

**UNPLUG**  
your TV, DVD player, computer, other electronics when not in use, or use a power strip to shut them down.

**CO<sub>2</sub> savings:**  
500 pounds a year.

**REPLACE**  
conventional light bulbs with energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulbs.

**CO<sub>2</sub> savings for replacing six incandescent bulbs:**  
566 pounds a year.

### USE GREEN POWER.

Both Seattle City Light and Puget Sound Energy have programs that allow you to purchase, for an extra monthly charge, power from renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and biomass.

[www.seattle.gov/light/green/greenpower/greenup.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/light/green/greenpower/greenup.asp)  
[www.pse.com/solutions/home\\_greenpower.aspx](http://www.pse.com/solutions/home_greenpower.aspx)

**INSTALL**  
low-flow shower heads.

**CO<sub>2</sub> savings:**  
370 pounds a year.

**DON'T LET THE WATER RUN**  
while shaving or brushing your teeth. Fix toilet and faucet leaks and take shorter showers. Municipal water systems use energy to purify and distribute water.

**IF IT'S YELLOW LET IT BELLOW  
IF IT'S BROWN FLUSH IT DOWN**

**WASH**  
clothes in cold water, wash and dry full loads and clean the dryer lint filter after every load.

**CO<sub>2</sub> savings:**  
500 pounds a year.

**LOWER**  
your water-heater temperature to 120 degrees, and insulate your tank.

**CO<sub>2</sub> savings:**  
500 pounds a year.



### EAT LOCALLY-GROWN FOOD.

On average, fresh produce travels 1,500 miles from farm to plate. Increasingly, more of what Americans eat is shipped from overseas.



### SEAL UP

leaky drafts, keep the damper closed on the fireplace and wood stove when not in use, and use energy-saving windows when replacing old windows.

**CO<sub>2</sub> savings:**  
2,480 pounds  
a year.

**TURN OFF**  
unnneeded  
lights.

### UNPLUG

your cellphone, MP3 player and other personal electronics as soon as they're finished charging.

**CO<sub>2</sub> savings:**  
200 pounds  
per year.



### USE

toaster ovens and microwaves to reheat small portions. They use much less energy than conventional ovens.

### BUY

products with less packaging and those in containers that can be recycled. Use products made from recycled material.

**CO<sub>2</sub> savings:**  
230 pounds  
a year.



### PAPER OR PLASTIC

at the checkout line? Plastic bags take less energy to produce, but the better choice is to bring a reusable bag, such as a canvas bag, to carry your groceries home.

**CO<sub>2</sub> savings:**  
34 pounds  
a year.



### RUN

your dishwasher only with a full load.

**CO<sub>2</sub> savings:**  
100 pounds  
per year.



### VACUUM

your refrigerator and freezer condenser coils once a year, keep the door gasket and seals clean, and don't open the door longer than necessary.

**CO<sub>2</sub> savings for unplugging that extra fridge:**  
2,000 pounds  
a year.



### RECYCLE

your paper, cardboard, beverage containers, glass and metal, and compost food and yard wastes.

**CO<sub>2</sub> savings:**  
850 pounds  
a year.



### TRADE IN

that gas hog for a more fuel-efficient car. Each gallon of gasoline saved keeps 20 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere.

**CAR POOL,**  
ride the bus, bike, walk or telecommute.

Transportation accounts for half of all greenhouse gases produced in King County, and much of that is from people driving alone to and from work.

**CO<sub>2</sub> savings from leaving your car home two days a week:**  
1,590  
pounds a year.



### UNLOAD

unnecessary items in your trunk to reduce vehicle weight. If you have a removable roof rack and aren't using it, take it off. That can improve fuel economy by as much as 5 percent.

### KEEP

tires properly inflated. Under-inflated tires reduce your fuel economy by as much as 3 percent.

**CO<sub>2</sub> savings:**  
250 pounds  
a year.



### LOWER

your furnace thermostat in the winter by 2 degrees.

**CO<sub>2</sub> savings:**  
353 pounds  
a year.

### CLEAN

or replace furnace air filters every two months during the heating season, and have your furnace inspected and tuned every two to three years.



### PLANT A TREE.

Well-placed trees create shade and lower cooling bills. They also use carbon dioxide during photosynthesis and can remove 50 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> a year.

### USE

a push mower on your lawn.

**CO<sub>2</sub> savings:**  
80 pounds  
a year.