

Some Simple Ways to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint

The burning of carbon-based fossil fuels (oil, natural gas, etc.) releases greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide, or CO², into the atmosphere and is changing our climate. Your carbon footprint is the amount of CO² you release daily into the atmosphere by driving your car, heating and lighting your home, mowing your lawn and numerous other things that rely on fossil fuels. You can reduce your carbon footprint by being more energy efficient and/or switching to renewable sources of energy such as wind or solar - *think globally, act locally*.



At Home

Dry your clothes on a clothesline. Rope strung between buildings is cheap! A stand-alone clothesline can be purchased for \$25 to \$75 at the local hardware store. Indoor drying racks are \$32. If your neighborhood doesn't allow outdoor lines, string lines in your garage or use the drying racks.

Replace your incandescent bulbs and Compact Florescent Lights (CFL) with LEDs. LEDs use significantly less energy, last significantly longer, are reasonably priced (\$2.50 for a 60 watt bulb) and will save you money over the life of the bulb.

Turn off TVs, printers, computers and other devices when not in use. Electronic devices use a lot of "Phantom Energy" even when turned off. Plug them into a power strip and shut them off at the strip.

Make sure your home, especially doors, windows, attics and eaves, are well insulated, caulked and sealed. Local utilities frequently offer energy loss inspections for free or at a reasonable cost.

Heat your home with wood pellets, a renewable resource. (Newer model stoves are much less polluting now.) Or, if you're feeling rich, look into ground source heating/cooling.

Program your central heating to come on only when you're home. Use evaporative coolers rather than air conditioners. Set temperatures to a little cooler in winter and wear a sweater; a little warmer in summer and drink lots of water.

Trade your gas/propane water heater in for an "On Demand" electric water heater. Talk with your favorite electrician for this resource that saves both energy and water. Another option is to install a solar hot water heater with an electric backup.

Install photovoltaics and generate your own electricity. There are numerous installers in Mono and Inyo Counties. Tax credits may be available, check with your installer.

The mission of INYO350 is to **"promote environmental protection and social & economic justice through policy influence, education and direct action."**

INYO350 is part of an international organization, 350.org, dedicated to reducing the levels of CO² in our atmosphere to 350 ppm - a level that will sustain life on our planet as we have known it.

Transportation

Walk, ride a bike, share rides or use public transportation whenever possible. Consolidate your trips, whether long or short, and plan out your route for ease and efficiency.

Purchase the most fuel-efficient vehicle you can: hybrid electric or all electric, and downsize your vehicle when you can.

Some airlines offer the option of purchasing carbon offsets for your travel. Search the web for “carbon offsets”.

Food

Plan ahead to reduce food waste. Compost your food waste or give it to a gardener or someone who has chickens. Lots of information is available from your local farm advisor or Master Gardeners.

Grow your own – this reduces transportation costs and burning of fossil fuels. It’s OK to start small—grow your favorite vegetable in a container if don’t have garden space, time or interest. To get a plot at the Bishop Community Garden contact Sam Walker at 760.914.2484 .

Avoid one-time-use packaging such as coffee pods. Carry your own reusable coffee mug and water bottle and refill as needed. Pack a sack lunch to avoid buying pre-packaged salads and sandwiches.

Eat less red meat – Cattle produce large amounts of methane (a potent greenhouse gas) whether grass fed or feed-lot fed. Studies vary on the amount of emissions produced by cattle, but it’s between 25 and 50% of the world’s total green house gas emissions. In addition, the Union of Concerned Scientists states that 75% of tropical rainforest deforestation is for cattle grazing.

Buy locally grown – Buying locally reduces food transportation cost and burning of fossil fuels. Farmers Markets exist up and down the Owens Valley and Mono County all summer and into the fall.

Buy organic – Fertilizers and pesticides used to grow our crops are frequently made from fossil fuels. Increased fertilizer and pesticide use contributes to water pollution down stream and causes harm in the food chain to bees, birds and other critters that happen to eat the poisoned “pests”.

Be an Advocate

Taking personal steps can and does help in reducing your carbon footprint and that of our communities. But we all must take bigger and more far reaching steps to really have the most global impact. Encourage others to reduce their carbon footprint, write your elected representatives and tell them how you feel, and vote for people who recognize the need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

Do Something

Reducing your carbon footprint not only will help slow climate change, but it will also save you money over time. Do what you can; you will be making a difference.