

# XYZ Housing Co-operative

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## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

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### **MODEL FOR HOUSING CO-OPERATIVES**

1st Version, September 2016

Passed by the Board of Directors on [ ]\*

Confirmed by the Members on [ ]\*

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# 1. OUR COMMITMENT

Environmental sustainability is about meeting our own needs without preventing future generations from meeting theirs. To achieve this goal, all of society must take action to protect the natural environment and reduce the human contribution to climate change.

Our co-operative believes that environmental protection and sound business practices go hand in hand. We will strive to manage our property in an environmentally sustainable way and will seek to influence our members' and suppliers' practices to the same end.

We will

- provide housing of good quality at a fair price, while keeping our environmental footprint as small as possible
- favour the co-op's long-term economic success over short-term financial concerns so that we can provide our community with good-quality, member-controlled housing for the foreseeable future
- extend the useful life of our buildings for as long as we can by consistently taking proper care of them
- take steps to reduce the greenhouse gases produced in our co-op
- comply with all environmental laws, regulations and by-laws that apply to us
- seek out opportunities for our staff, board and members to learn how to reduce our environmental footprint
- encourage our suppliers to adopt environmentally sustainable practices
- encourage everyone living or working in our co-operative to contribute to a healthier environment
- draw up an environmental action plan with goals and targets to help us reduce our environmental footprint
- consider the environment in our other planning and activities
- take the specific steps below.

## 2. OUR OPERATIONS

2.1 We will honour the environment and respect the principle of “rethink, reduce, reuse and recycle” by

- reducing water and energy consumption
- using less paper
- reducing waste.

2.2 We will

- consider the environment, as well as price, before purchasing goods or services
- reduce the harm we do to the environment
- protect the health of our members
- purchase products that
  - are attractive and fit for purpose
  - incorporate recycled materials
  - are long-lasting
  - incorporate few, if any, toxic substances
  - use less plastic
  - require less energy and water in their manufacture and use
  - come with less packaging
  - are reusable, refillable or recyclable
- purchase biodegradable, non-toxic and non- or low-emitting products and materials
- use FSC-certified wood
- look for opportunities to recycle, donate or give away surplus and scrap materials from capital projects
- arrange for regular bulk recycling of hazardous household products
- replace hazardous materials and products in our buildings and dispose of them in ways that protect human health and the environment
- reduce the energy draw of our computers
- consider using green power.

### **3. OUR SUPPLIERS**

- Where we can, we will choose suppliers and contractors with good environmental practices.
- We will source local products, wherever practical.

### **4. OUR MEMBERS**

We will inspire our fellow members to practice environmental sustainability by

- leading by example ourselves
- reminding them about this policy
- publicizing the co-op's environmental efforts and successes
- encouraging members to find ways to reduce their environmental footprint and make more sparing use of resources.

### **5. OUR STAFF**

We will help our staff adopt environmentally sustainable practices by

- encouraging their environmental awareness
- allowing them to learn about environmental issues and greening practices on work time through the Internet, presentations, events and other means
- giving them the tools and resources they need to work in an environmentally responsible way
- letting them use the co-op's kitchen facilities for their meals
- encouraging environmentally sustainable commuting.

## **6. RETROFITTING OUR BUSINESS**

We will

- investigate services and programs that will help our co-op become more environmentally responsible
- carry out affordable initiatives, such as re-caulking, that can be financed from the maintenance budget
- track our water and energy use over time
- complete an energy audit and take the recommended steps to improve waste management and reduce water and energy consumption, borrowing as needed to pay the cost
- replace worn-out building components with energy-efficient products.

## **7. RESPONSIBILITY**

Our Board of Directors and manager will work together to put this policy into action.

## **APPENDIX A:**

### **HOW WE CAN APPLY THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY**

Below are some practical steps our co-op can take to put this policy into action.

#### **How can we reduce water and energy consumption?**

- Install low-flow toilets and other water-saving devices.
- Use power-saving light bulbs and [EnergyStar](#) equipment.
- In our public areas
  - install sensor-controlled lights
  - install blinds that repel solar heat in summer and retain it in winter
  - maintain a moderate temperature.

#### **How can we make better use of paper?**

- Copy and print on both sides.
- Reuse scrap paper.
- Deliver and store documents electronically.
- Hold paperless meetings using a laptop and projector.
- Communicate with members by e-mail and postings on the co-op's website.
- Buy paper products made from recycled material.

#### **How can we cut waste further?**

- Reuse office supplies and materials.
- Buy recyclable flooring material and furnishings.
- Recycle outdated equipment and toner cartridges.
- Buy second-hand materials and furnishings, where practical.

- Find a new home for unwanted furniture and materials in good condition.

### **How can we reduce the harm we do to our environment?**

- Use green cleaning products and non-toxic paint and flooring materials.
- Use non-toxic furniture in public spaces.
- Buy fewer non-recyclable plastic products.
- Choose paints, adhesives, sealants, carpets, flooring, composite wood and laminate adhesives that are biodegradable, non-toxic and that do not off-gas or that are low-emitting.
- Send surplus materials from our capital projects to Re-Store or another charity.
- Collect burnt-out fluorescent bulbs, dead batteries, pressurized cans, paint, oil, electronics and other hazardous household products and equipment from our members so we can ensure they are disposed of in an environmentally responsible way.
- Put our computers and other office equipment on power bars and turn the bars off after hours.
- Install software, such as [EZ Wizard Software](#), to turn off computer monitors not in use.
- Follow the lead of co-ops that use green power by exploring wind power, solar panels and solar heat-transfer tubes or switching to a company delivering power from renewable resources, such as [Bullfrog Power](#).

### **How can we find suppliers that care about the environment?**

- Ask about their environmental practices.
- Favour fair-trade and fair-wage companies.
- Put information about our environmental sustainability requirements in our tender packages.

### **How can our members help our co-op be more environmentally sustainable?**

- Turn down the heat in winter and in summer use a fan instead of an air conditioner. If air conditioners are used, set them at a higher temperature.
- Use power-saving lightbulbs and power bars for electrical equipment.
- Report dripping taps promptly and don't let water run unnecessarily.



- Recycle paper, glass, plastic and metal through the co-op's recycling services.
- Recharge batteries as many times as possible.
- Reuse office supplies.
- Compost food waste.
- Give hazardous household products to the co-op to dispose of.

**How can we encourage our staff to commute in an environmentally sustainable way?**

- Provide secure bicycle storage.
- Pay for a transit pass.
- Agree to staff schedules that reduce rush-hour travel.

**How can we retrofit our buildings to reduce their environmental impact?**

- Replace worn-out building components with energy-efficient windows, doors, air-exchange equipment and heating and cooling systems.
- Look into adding insulation and air or ground-source heat pumps.