

Green Business Recognition Program

Resource Guide

About the Program

The Green Business Recognition Program is focused on providing recognition and support to Alexandria businesses who are taking actions to ensure their business practices align with the sustainability goals of the City and Alexandria consumers. By reducing energy and water consumption, producing less waste, and providing opportunities for employees and customers to make sustainable choices, businesses can help improve quality of life throughout the city.

This is an opt-in program where businesses can apply to be recognized as an Eco-City Business at one of three tiers:

1. **Tier 1, Bronze:** Accessible, low-cost sustainability actions
 - a. You must complete all seven actions (and eight and nine, if applicable) under Tier 1 to earn this level of recognition.
2. **Tier 2, Silver:** Strong, demonstrated commitment to sustainable practices
 - a. You must meet the requirements for Tier 1 (completing the Tier 1 checklist) and complete the seven (or eight, if applicable) required actions under Tier 2 to earn this level of recognition.
3. **Tier 3, Gold:** Going 'above and beyond' in your commitment to sustainability.
 - a. You must meet the requirements for Tiers 1 and 2 (filling out the checklists for both tiers), complete the six (or seven, if applicable) required actions under Tier 3, and complete ten additional actions (choosing from the provided list and/or providing your own, subject to approval) to earn this level of recognition.

This Resource Guide identifies the requirements for each of the three tiers and provides guidance and information to help businesses qualify at each tier.

Contact

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To schedule a 20-minute "office hours" call, please sign up at the below link. We encourage you to book with the Program Manager, Samantha Heitsch, if available. If not, then feel free to book with any of the available staff.

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/GreenBusinessRecognition@alexandriava.gov/bookings/>

Tier 1: Bronze

You must complete all seven actions (and eight and nine, if applicable) under Tier 1 to earn this level of recognition.

1. Use LED bulbs in at least 75% of all light fixtures (indoor and outdoor).

LED (light-emitting diode) bulbs are highly energy-efficient, using 75-90% less energy and lasting up to 25 times longer than incandescent lighting. This efficiency and longevity translate into cost savings for you and less pollution for the environment! You should be able to find a variety of LED options wherever you currently buy lightbulbs, including home improvement and hardware stores.

To learn more about LEDs, including where you can buy them and an interactive tool to choose the right lighting for you, visit ENERGY STAR's site: [Learn About LED Lighting | ENERGY STAR](#)

Tip: Turn off lights when not in use (including after hours) and post signage near the light switches to remind staff.

2. When the heating or cooling system is on, all windows and doors (including rollup doors) within the air conditioned or heated space are kept closed.

When you leave windows and doors open while the AC or heat is running, the HVAC system has to work harder to achieve and maintain the set temperature. This makes it more difficult to maintain a comfortable indoor environment—increasing your energy bill and putting wear and tear on your HVAC system. During high heat days, this can lead to high demands on the electrical grid, which can cause brownouts or blackouts.

Tip: Instruct your staff to close windows and doors when the HVAC is running. Consider putting a sign on the door as a reminder to staff (and a way to showcase your commitment to your customers).

Tip: To make this even more effective, note if there are any drafts or related issues with doors and windows and communicate these to your landlord.

3. Use doors on 80% of all low-temperature or refrigerated cases.

Adding doors to open cases keeps cold air in, resulting in less energy usage and less of a toll on refrigerator components, extending their useful life. This will save you money on both energy bills and on replacement parts.

Note that adding a door reduces the heat load the refrigeration system deals with. After adding a door, you should adjust the system as needed to align with the new heat load. This will help to make sure the system can maintain optimal, efficient performance.

For more information, visit the US Department of Energy Better Buildings' site: [Retrofitting Open Refrigerated Display Cases Cuts Energy Costs for Retailers | Better Buildings Initiative.](#)

4. Review your energy bills for the past 12 months (or longest period available) and establish an energy reduction goal of 10% compared to your current average annual usage.

Gather your energy utility bills and identify the section with information on your meter and usage. Look for "Total kWh" – this is likely under billable usage and/or measured usage. This number indicates the

amount of energy you used that month, measured by kilowatts per hour. There may also be a Usage History section, which is an easy place to find your monthly energy use for the past 12 months.

For more information on how to read your bill, Dominion has put together a quick guide here: [Understand My Bill | Virginia | Dominion Energy](#)

You may notice that your energy usage varies from month to month. With that in mind, we recommend setting an annual goal. To do this, add up the total amount of energy you used in the past year, and multiply it by 0.9 to find your target for a 10% reduction. You can then use that target usage to set individual monthly goals to help you stay on track throughout the year.

There are many opportunities for reducing energy usage.

The Federal ENERGY STAR program provides resources for small businesses, which you can find on their websites [ENERGY STAR for small business](#) and [Save Energy](#). These resources include:

- A guidebook on how to implement realistic and cost-effective energy improvement projects: [ENERGY STAR Action Workbook for Small Business | ENERGY STAR](#)
 - In that guidebook, Appendix B in particular lists many of these strategies.
- A Treasure Hunt, which provides a checklist you can use to walk around the facility and identify quick ways to save energy: [Treasure Maps | ENERGY STAR](#).
- Tips for financing energy-efficiency projects: [Finance Energy-Efficiency Projects | ENERGY STAR](#).

Dominion also has a resource page on ways to save energy and money for non-residential customers: [Save Energy & Money | Virginia | Dominion Energy](#).

See the Appendix of this Resource Guide for more tips on ways you can reduce energy usage.

5. [Review your water bills for the past 12 months \(or longest period available\) and establish a water reduction goal of 10% compared to your current average annual usage.](#)

Gather your water utility bills and identify the section with information on your usage. Note that if you receive bills for both drinking water and wastewater, you should use the bills for **drinking water**, since those are metered and will be more precise. Look for “Total Gallons,” which indicates the amount of water you used that month—this is likely on the front page of your bill. There may be a section further down that provides your meter reading and usage summary, which could help you calculate annual usage.

For more information on how to read your water bill, American Water has put together a quick guide here: [Your Redesigned Bill \(amwater.com\)](#).

You may notice that your water usage varies from month to month. With that in mind, we recommend setting an annual goal. To do this, add up the total amount of water you used in the past year, and multiply it by 0.9 to find your target for a 10% reduction. You can then use that target usage to set individual monthly goals to help you stay on track throughout the year.

There are many opportunities for reducing water usage.

The US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense program provides resources for saving water and labels water-efficient products to help you find the best options. Products with the WaterSense label are certified to use at least 20% less water while also saving energy and performing as well or better than their standard counterparts.

WaterSense provides resources for commercial buildings here: [Commercial Buildings | US EPA](#). These resources include:

- Sector-specific advice (most relevant for restaurants and kitchens): [Types of Facilities | US EPA](#)
- Making the business case for water efficiency efforts: [Getting Started | US EPA](#)
- Guidance on best management practices for water efficiency: [Best Management Practices | US EPA](#)
- Free tools and more to help assess and reduce your water use

The Alliance for Water Efficiency also provides water saving tips for businesses: [Water Saving Tips: CII Water Use | Alliance for Water Efficiency](#)

See the Appendix of this Resource Guide for more tips on ways you can reduce water usage.

6. Create a waste reduction goal and share the goal and plan for achieving it with employees.

Reducing waste is not only good for the environment—it also reduces costs for you, from both buying materials that are then thrown away *and* paying for that waste to be collected.

To start, get a sense of your typical waste stream. Decide how you want to track your waste – such as keeping a log near trash cans and other waste bins, or looking in trash cans and dumpsters before they're hauled out. Once you have identified general patterns and amounts of what you throw away, think about how that waste is generated—what processes result in the waste? What types of products and materials are you throwing away?

Based on your assessment of your waste stream, identify ways to reduce waste. This may include opting for reusable or more durable products, printing on both sides of paper, and boosting your recycling efforts.

The EPA has put together a short guide on how small businesses can prevent waste with easy step-by-step guidance for getting started and making sure your waste reduction efforts are working : [Why Should You Care About Preventing Waste? Small Business Guide | US EPA](#).

See the Appendix of this Resource Guide for more tips on ways you can reduce waste.

7. Implement and train employees in an 'ask first' policy.

With an 'ask first' policy, you can reduce waste from single-use items and save money via customer's behavior change. You can tailor the 'ask first' policy to suit your business—for example, employees may ask customers if single-use items are needed or desired, wait until receiving a customer request, or simply offer them at a station. If you offer online ordering, then you can include an option for customers to request these items as part of their order. The underlying principle is to not provide single-use items by default.

Whatever your approach, it's important that your staff members know the policy and understand how and when to communicate it to customers. It can be helpful to have signage such as table tents, menu mentions, or a small flyer by the register to explain your policy to customers. This can make the transition easier for everyone and help to educate the public about your sustainability efforts and the importance of reducing waste.

The City of Little Rock, Arkansas has a successful green restaurant program and provides resources on developing and posting signage about an 'ask first' policy: [Ask First | City of Little Rock](#).

8. If you do not own the store property or building: Commit to discussing a green lease with your landlord.

Green leasing practices allow tenants and landlords to collaborate on lease clauses that save energy, reduce costs, and achieve sustainability goals at a property. Green leases can reduce an office building's utility costs by 22%, and up to \$0.51 per square foot in commercial buildings ([Green Lease Leaders](#)).

By greening a lease, landlords and tenants collaboratively identify priorities both parties support such as health, wellness, and energy efficiency; define how building and tenant spaces will operate; and establish data sharing and clear channels of communication.

Visit the [Green Lease Leaders program website](#) for more information on how to form a green lease, get recognized for executing a green lease, and access technical assistance resources.

9. If applicable: Use reusable food ware for onsite dining, including dinnerware, drinkware, silverware, and containers.

Reusable food service items reduce waste and can lower your operating costs in the long run ([Surfrider Foundation](#)). There are many options available for reusable food service items, and reusables can elevate the food and your customers' experience while creating less waste.

The [Surfrider Foundation's Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide](#) has tips for incorporating more reusable food service items into your operations, going beyond on-site dining. The Guide also includes information on the costs of different types of reusable items and environmentally friendly alternatives.

Tier 2: Silver

You must meet the requirements for Tier 1 (completing the Tier 1 checklist) and complete the seven (or eight, if applicable) required actions under Tier 2 to earn this level of recognition.

1. Have an energy use intensity (EUI) at or below the national median for your building type, as measured by ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager.

Currently, the City of Alexandria's Green Business Recognition Program applies largely to the following building types within ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, listed with their national median energy use intensity (EUI):

- a. Bar, pub, lounge: 130.7 EUI
- b. Coffee shop, café, bakery: 270.3 EUI
- c. Retail store: 51.4 EUI
- d. Restaurant, cafeteria: 325.6 EUI

Measuring EUI allows for fair comparison of a building's energy use among similar types of buildings. It is expressed as energy per square foot per year (total annual kBtu/sq.ft.). For more background information on how EUI is calculated, EPA has provided [this resource](#).

The EPA's ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager tool allows you to easily calculate EUI. To get started measuring your EUI, create an account in ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager:

ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager Mini Guide:

1. [~5 min] Create an account ([link](#)).
 - a. For the last question ("Do you want your Account Name (and username) to be searchable by other Portfolio Manager users?") please select "Yes". This will allow the Green Business Recognition Program manager to verify your EUI calculations.
2. [~10 min] Log into your electricity and natural gas customer account to retrieve the prior 12 months of bills.
3. [~30 min] Using the [Portfolio Manager Quick Start Guide](#), complete part 1 ("Add a Property") and part 2 ("Enter Energy, Water, Waste & Materials Data") - **however please see notes below:**
 - a. Only pages 1 & 2 of the guide are relevant.
 - b. Step 4 under "Add a Property" (entering Use Details) is **optional**.
 - c. When you are ready to move to Part 2 ("Enter Energy, Water, and Waste & Materials Data"), please note we are only entering Energy data – the electricity and natural gas bills you've collected.

ENERGY STAR uses the following definitions for property types (full glossary available at [ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager](#)):

- **Bar, pub, lounge:** Buildings used primarily for social/entertainment purposes, and are characterized by most of the revenue being generated from the sale of beverages instead of food.
 - Properties whose primary business revenues are generated from the sale of food should be entered using one of the **Restaurant** property uses, even if there is a bar.

- **Coffee shop, café, bakery:** These fall under the “Food Service” category in Portfolio Manager, which is defined as buildings used for preparation and sale of food and beverages, but which do not meet the definition of Restaurant or Bar/Nightclub. For example, a bakery or coffee shop.
- **Retail store:** Individual stores used to conduct the retail sale of non-food consumer goods such as Department Stores, Discount Stores, Drug Stores, Dollar Stores, Hardware Stores, and Apparel/Specialty Stores (e.g., books, clothing, office products, sporting goods, toys, home goods, and electronics). Buildings containing multiple stores should be classified as enclosed mall, lifestyle center, or strip mall.
- **Restaurant:** Buildings used for preparation and sale of ready-to-eat food and beverages, but which do not fit in the fast food property type. Examples include fast casual, casual, and fine dining restaurants.

OR

1. If the EUI cannot be met (i.e., because the steps necessary to achieve the set EUI are outside your control as a tenant), do at least four (4) of the following actions:
 - Use blinds and/or curtains to reduce solar heating in the building.
 - Set thermostat temperatures at 74°F or higher during the warm seasons.
 - Install a programmable thermostat.
 - Inventory the in-store devices that consume plug energy (e.g., vending machines, store displays). Create a plan for reducing energy consumption associated with these devices.
 - Conduct an energy audit of the facility(ies) within the next 12 months. (If you lease the property, then coordinate with your landlord to conduct the energy audit.)
 - If applicable: clean refrigerator compressors and other components that can impact efficiency at least every three months.
 - Use ENERGY STAR certified appliances when feasible.
 - Identify equipment that you expect to replace soon (such as appliances, office equipment, lighting, fans, building products, electronics, heating and cooling and data center equipment) and make a plan to purchase ENERGY STAR certified replacements.
2. Water-using appliances are WaterSense labeled OR if you are not currently using WaterSense labeled appliances, then develop a procurement plan to opt for these when it is time to replace current appliances.

The US Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) WaterSense program provides resources for saving water and labels water-efficient products to help you find the best options. Products with the WaterSense label are certified to use at least 20% less water while also saving energy and performing as well or better than their standard counterparts.

The WaterSense program provides a list of certified products, including faucets, toilets and urinals, showerheads, sprinklers, and irrigation controls: [WaterSense Products | US EPA](#).

3. If applicable: For non-restroom sinks, install low-flow spray nozzles.

This is an easy and inexpensive upgrade to save water and money in the kitchen. While many older pre-rinse spray valves use up to five gallons per minute, low-flow nozzles are just as effective but use as little as 0.65 gallons per minute.

You should be able to find these nozzles at restaurant suppliers, home improvement stores, plumbing suppliers, or where you usually purchase such equipment.

4. [Submit a Recycling Implementation Plan \(RIP\) form to the City that meets more than the minimum standard \(diverting more than two materials that you generate\).](#)

The City of Alexandria requires all businesses and multi-family property owners to submit a Recycling Implementation Plan (RIP) every two years. This plan states that all businesses must recycle the two (2) materials that they generate in the largest quantities at each location and provide educational methods for informing employees about recycling. Recyclable materials may include mixed paper (as specified by your recycling service provider), corrugated cardboard, food and beverage containers (aluminum, plastic, metal), scrap metal, used motor oil or tires, clean wood or pallets, and restaurant grease and oil.

Going above the minimum standard entails recycling more than those two baseline materials. For example, if you already recycle mixed paper and corrugated cardboard, then going above could include also recycling scrap metal (or even more material types!). You should continue to educate your employees about how to properly recycle materials.

If you have already submitted your RIP to meet its minimum requirement and cannot update it before submitting this application, then we ask that you implement a recycling program that goes above what was included in your RIP, and encourage you to submit an amended RIP.

Visit the City' Recycling at Work website for more information on the RIP form and how to set up a recycling program: [Recycling at Work | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](https://www.alexandriava.gov/recycling-at-work).

City staff can assist you by conducting a site visit to determine the types of recyclable materials you can recover; determining the appropriate size, location and frequency of collection containers; assist with appropriate informational signs; and suggesting strategies for reducing waste and informing your tenants about how to participate in the program. If you or someone you know needs assistance establishing a program, working with your service provider, or improving a program already in place, please contact the City's Resource Recovery Division at 703.746.4135.

5. [Do not use or provide single-use plastic bags to customers.](#)

Lightweight plastic bags are commonly found in waterways as litter and remain as a pollutant. Wildlife commonly mistake plastic bags for food and can cause microscopic particles of broken-down plastics to enter the food chain. The City of Alexandria has adopted a 5-cent per bag tax on disposable plastic bags from grocery, convenience, and drug stores. However, other types of businesses can support efforts to reduce plastic by not using or providing single-use plastic bags to customers.

The City provides a website with more information on the bag tax, including a flyer and point-of-sale graphic to help inform customers about the transition away from plastic bags: [Plastic Bag Tax | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](https://www.alexandriava.gov/plastic-bag-tax)

If you currently use or provide plastic bags for shopping or take-out, consider alternatives such as paper bags and encouraging customers to bring their own reusable bags.

6. [Do not use or provide polystyrene foam \(e.g., Styrofoam\) products.](#)

Polystyrene foam (often referred to as Styrofoam) products are made from fossil fuels and synthetic chemicals that can be dangerous to human health, particularly when heated. This material does not

biodegrade in our lifetimes, but does easily break into smaller pieces. These pieces can enter our natural environment and threaten wildlife. It is difficult and expensive to clean up, which means that cities have to spend substantial amounts of taxpayer dollars to comply with stormwater regulations that limit the amount of trash in waterways.

If you provide to-go products (such as cups, plates, or containers), there are many alternatives to polystyrene foam. The Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide provides information on these alternatives: [Surfrider Foundation's Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide](#).

7. Use paperless billing for all vendors (as available).

Switching from printed receipts and invoices to a digital system reduces the amount of paper entering the waste stream. Coordinate with your vendors (such as your suppliers, equipment sources, out-of-house printers, etc.) to find out which of them provide an option for paperless billing and how to set it up.

8. Establish a procurement policy that maintains sustainable standards, with all four (4) of the below requirements:

- a. All paper products are made from recycled content.
 - The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides guidance on procuring recycled paper products, including links to commercial vendors and manufacturers of paper with recycled content: [Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines for Paper and Paper Products | US EPA](#)
- b. All cleaning solutions meet a green standard such as Green Seal, UL EcoLogo, or EPA Safer Choice Standard.
 - The US Green Building Council provides a list of green cleaning materials and products. Using these specific products is not a requirement for the program, but rather guidance on possible options and the type of product to look for: [Green cleaning - products and materials | U.S. Green Building Council \(usgbc.org\)](#)
- c. Purchase used and/or refurbished products when possible (e.g., electronics, furniture, decorations).
 - Your current vendors may have refurbished options. You may also find refurbished options at major retailers and brands, especially for electronics.
- d. Choose ENERGY STAR and WaterSense certified appliances.
 - Identify equipment that you expect to replace soon and make a plan to purchase ENERGY STAR and WaterSense certified replacements (as applicable).
 - US EPA ENERGY STAR Product Finder: [Product Finder | EPA ENERGY STAR](#)
 - US EPA WaterSense Products: [WaterSense Product Search \(epa.gov\)](#)
 - Dominion Energy may have rebates available for certain types of equipment, check here: [Targeted Sector Programs | Virginia | Dominion Energy](#)

Tier 3: Gold

You must meet the requirements for Tiers 1 and 2 (filling out the checklists for both tiers), complete the six (or seven, if applicable) required actions under Tier 3, and complete ten additional actions (choosing from the provided list and/or providing your own, subject to approval) to earn this level of recognition.

1. Achieve an energy use intensity (EUI) 10% below the national median within your applicable property category.

Based on the guidance provided in Tier 2 above for setting up an account in ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager and calculating your building/space's EUI, achieve an EUI at least 10% below the national median in your applicable property category. Thresholds are listed below:

- a. Bar, pub, lounge: 117.6
- b. Coffee shop, café, bakery: 243.3
- c. Retail store: 46.3
- d. Restaurant, cafeteria: 293

2. Implement a system for composting organic waste.

a. For smaller amounts (e.g., employee food scraps), provide a compost bin in the break room or eating area, include signage and training on what can be composted, and designate staff member(s) to drop off compost at farmers market or other designated sites on a regular basis, or utilize a contractor for regular pickups.

- This City website provides more information about food waste composting at farmers' markets, including locations, hours, and what materials are and are not accepted: [Farmers' Market Composting | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](#)

b. For larger amounts (e.g., food service), set up a contract with an organics waste hauler, develop a system for collecting organic waste, and train employees on the system.

- The City of Alexandria provides a list of permitted solid waste haulers (which include some organic haulers): <https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2022-11/City%20of%20Alexandria%20Solid%20Waste%20Haulers%20Permit.pdf>

3. If applicable: Use compostable "to go" food containers, mugs, cups, plates, and cutlery.

Containers and packaging made up almost 30% of municipal solid waste in 2018 ([EPA](#)). Compostable products are items that can disintegrate into non-toxic, natural elements, at a rate consistent with similar organic materials, given the right conditions (Surfrider Foundation's [Bioplastics Toolkit](#) provides more details and definitions about what types of materials are and are not compostable).

When making decisions to purchase compostable materials, be sure to check for product certifications, such as from the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) or ASTM International (ASTM) and understand under what conditions the materials are compostable. Products that with statements such as "plant-based lining", "poly-coated paper," and "grease resistant" may not be compostable outside a specialized facility. Similarly, bioplastic foodware and packaging may be marketed as eco-friendly alternatives, but

they can still be mostly made up of fossil fuel products and are often not recyclable alongside conventional plastics.

With that in mind, the Surfrider Foundation does not endorse the use of bioplastics. **Instead, the best option is reusable products, and the next-best option is single-use items made from naturally occurring materials are a good alternative to reusables, such as paper-based items, bamboo plates, wooden utensils, straws made completely from paper, hay, pasta, seaweed, or bamboo.** The [Surfrider Foundation's Ocean Friendly Foodware Guide](#) provides more details on these products.

4. Install accessible bike racks or provide bike storage for employees.

Encouraging active transportation is an essential strategy for the City to achieve its climate action goals. As more people shift to these modes of transportation, especially bicycling, they need places to secure their bicycles for various trips they make, such as commuting.

There are several means of providing secure bike storage for employees (and the public) such as bicycle corrals, which can be placed on-street, and bicycle racks, which are installed on the sidewalk in front of businesses. To see if the City can potentially install a solution **free of charge for your business**, explore the below options:

- [Bicycle Corral Application](#)
- [Request Bicycle Rack](#)

For additional information on the City's Bicycle Parking program, visit the [City of Alexandria's Bicycle Parking page](#).

If you cannot install a bicycle corral or rack, then make sure there is a space in or near your business (within 2 blocks, or about 0.15 mile) for employees to safely store their bikes while they work.

5. Establish an emergency response plan with employees for climate events such as storms (rain, snow, ice), flooding, extreme heat, and extreme cold.

An emergency response plan should include steps for communicating with employees, customers, regulators, and government officials as needed, and for keeping people safe. All employees should be aware of how to safely evacuate in case of emergency, and there should be proper accessibility measures in place to ensure everyone is able to evacuate quickly and safely. Besides evacuation, there should be information on how to modify working conditions and schedules as needed during climate events, such as protections for outdoor workers when temperatures are high.

The federal government provides information and resources on emergency planning for businesses through Ready.gov: [Ready Business | Ready.gov](#). It may help to start with their '10 steps for developing the emergency response plan' here: [Emergency Response Plan | Ready.gov](#).

- Note that the second step mentions a risk assessment. The City's 2023 Energy and Climate Change Action Plan ([PDF available here](#)) found that flooding and extreme heat are the two greatest climate concerns for the city. For more information, see the chapter on Climate Impacts and Adaptation Strategies, beginning on p. 82
- In Step 7, they provide a link to this PDF template that you can fill out to create your own emergency response plan: [Emergency Response Plan \(ready.gov\)](#)

- Ready.gov also provides guidance for developing emergency communications plans, which should be part of your emergency response plan: [Crisis Communications Plans | Ready.gov](#)

The City provides resources for emergency planning and response, including:

- The Public Health Emergency Management program provides free training in the community, including to businesses: [Public Health Emergency Management | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](#)
- Flood information, including strategies for proactive protection and how to obtain and use sandbags in the event of a flood: [Flooding Information | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](#)
- Heat safety information: [Heat Safety | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](#)

For restaurants, the CDC provides easy, step-by-step guidance on how to keep food safe after a disaster or emergency: [Keep Food Safe After a Disaster or Emergency | Natural Disasters and Severe Weather | CDC](#), and specific to power outages: [Food and Water Safety During Power Outages and Floods | FDA](#).

6. Provide a hydration station or water tap for refilling water bottles—both for employees as well as the public. *In particular, make sure this is available to all members of the public (not just customers) during high heat days.*

Note that for this program, high heat days include any time there is a heat advisory, watch, or warning.

7. Post information in the business identifying the nearest seasonal warming and cooling options and shelters.

Information about these shelters can be found on the City website: [Seasonal and Emergency Warming and Cooling Options | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](#). Generally, these centers are City recreation centers and libraries.

8. Ten (10) extra actions from the following list (or write in the box provided):

1. Install lighting controls, such as occupancy sensors, timers, and/or daylight sensors.
2. Install an ENERGY STAR high efficiency water heater or a solar water heater.
3. Implement measures to better seal the building envelope and prevent solar heating, such as weather stripping, double pane and/or tinted windows, updating insulation, and/or a cool roof.
4. Use doors on 100% of low-temperature or refrigerated cases.
5. Use doors on 50% or more of medium-temperature refrigerated display cases (excluding fresh bulk produce).
6. Locate all compressors remotely outside the store to avoid waste heat issues (or vent or pipe waste heat outside).
7. Utilize demand control kitchen ventilation (DCKV).
8. Use on-site renewable energy (e.g., solar panels).
9. Provide incentives for employees to commute using active transport, transit, and/or carpools.
10. Provide employees and/or customers access to an EV charger and provide information on where/how to access it.
11. Offer employees secure storage and charging for E-mobility devices, such as E-bikes and scooters.
12. Meet third-party or equivalent standards such as LEED for Retail, LEED Volume, LEED for Commercial Interiors, BREEM, etc.
13. Have a green lease.

14. If you are responsible for landscaping, use 'green infrastructure' to help cool the building and protect against flooding (e.g., planting trees to provide shade and better absorb stormwater).
15. If you are responsible for landscaping, reduce water use by planting native, drought-tolerant species; capturing and using rainwater; placing mulch or planting ground cover to reduce evaporation; etc.
16. If you are responsible for landscaping, take a no-fertilizer pledge.
17. Partner with laundry services that follow sustainability best practices (e.g., using cold water, only washing when loads are at least ¾ full, using efficient washers and dryers) and/or use ENERGY STAR certified washers and dryers yourself.
18. If you make your own goods, design products and packaging to consider circularity (e.g., reuse, recyclability, or composting at end of useful life).
19. Recycle internally through backhauls of recyclable materials like cardboard, pallets, plastic film, etc.
20. Provide and advertise recycling or product take-back initiatives available to customers.
21. Participate in the City Purple Bin program for glass recycling.
22. Suspend outdoor work on heat emergency days and provide education to employees about health and safety with respect to heat risks.
23. Purchase at minimum 25% of supplies/merchandise from businesses that are local (within 200 miles) to reduce emissions from shipping and transportation.
24. Provide compost bins or buckets for customers to use with signage that details what can be composted.
25. Donate or offer a discount on leftover food at the end of the day.
26. When catering at events, plan and set up a collection system for waste, recyclables, and organic materials.
27. Do not sell beverages in plastic bottles.
28. If you provide seafood, it is all 'Best Choice' or 'Good Alternative' as defined by Seafood Watch or certified as sustainable.
29. A minimum 25% of all food and beverages are from certified organic or locally grown products (where 'local' means that ingredients are grown within 200 miles).
30. Install and maintain a pet waste station.

Appendix

This appendix provides tips and resources for reducing energy and water usage, reducing waste, sustainable procurement, and other sustainability measures.

Energy

- If you do not own/manage your HVAC, then request that your landlord follows best practices for regular maintenance. Ideally, these best practices would be included in your lease agreement. Best practices include cleaning/replacing filters on heating and AC twice a year; cleaning AC condenser coils four times a year; and maintaining proper function of economizers on AC units.
- Where possible, use power strips for electronics and switch them off at the end of the day.
- Unplug chargers when not in use.
- Turn on power management features and select the shortest time option (e.g., enabling sleep mode for printers, copiers, monitors, displays, computers).
- Install basic monitoring and controlling devices for plug-in devices (e.g., vending misers).

Water

- Regularly check for and repair all leaks.
- Operate dishwashers only when they are fully loaded.
- Identify what water-efficient changes can be made (with your landlord, if needed). For example:
 - Install water-efficient toilets (1.28 gallons or less per flush) or place a water displacement device in the tank to reduce water use per flush.
 - Replace all urinals flushing at greater than 1.0 gallon with high efficiency urinals, flushing at less than 0.5 gallons, or waterless urinals.
 - Install aerators on faucets to increase water savings.

Waste

Legal requirements related to waste:

- Submit a [Recycling Implementation Plan \(RIP\)](#) form to the City that meets the minimal standards for recycling (i.e., recycle the two materials that you generate in the largest quantity that are recyclable or use single stream recycling and provide written notification to employees, tenants, or customers on recycling).
- Establish a hazardous waste management process to ensure hazardous waste is properly disposed of (e.g., training staff, working with hazardous waste disposal contracts, proper storage and containers).
- Grocery stores, convenience stores or drug stores have to meet the requirements of the 5-cent Plastic Bag Tax. [Plastic Bag Tax | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](#)
- Fats, oils, and grease (FOG): food service establishments and other industrial or commercial establishments generating wastewater containing fats, oils, and grease need to have and maintain active or passive systems for preventing FOG from being discharged into the city's sanitary sewer system. [FOG Program | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](#) Specific legal requirements are spelled out in the City Code: [DIVISION 4 - Fats, Oils, and Grease \(FOG\), Fog Management Program | Code of Ordinances | Alexandria, VA | Municode Library](#)

Tips for reducing waste:

- Help reduce litter, including cleaning cigarette butts from areas surrounding your facility, sweeping debris and soils away from storm drains, and managing the overflow from outdoor trash receptacles.
- Conduct a waste stream audit to identify the volumes of waste that are disposed, recycled, and composted. Adjust waste reduction goal as needed based on this information.
- Have a janitorial contract that specifically states that cleaning staff will support the business' recycling objectives and program. For tips on working with janitorial service companies or for sample language for janitorial service bid or contract, [click here](#).
- Do not purchase bottled water for staff or sell it to customers. Instead, offer alternatives to bottled water— such as glass, canned or boxed water, or reusable cups and water dispensers.
- Reduce paper use by printing only when necessary and setting the printer default setting to duplex / double-sided printing and copying.
- Reduce paper usage in restrooms by providing high efficiency hand dryers as an alternative to paper towels and/or installing foot pull door openers to prevent paper towels from being used to open door handles.
- Offer a discount for customers with reusable cups, container, bag, etc.
- Give staff access to reusable mugs, plates, silverware, and the means to wash these dishes.
- Use rechargeable batteries instead of disposable ones.
- Provide written notification to employees and customers on recycling and other waste reduction measures.
- When possible, purchase and/or donate used physical assets such as furniture and electronics to help reduce the waste stream.

Procurement

- For potentially hazardous products, opt for a less toxic option. (City provides guidance on alternatives here: [Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics Collection | City of Alexandria, VA \(alexandriava.gov\)](#))
- Coordinate with suppliers to minimize environmental impacts, such as reducing extra packaging, swapping out plastic packaging, scheduling deliveries to reduce overall vehicle miles traveled and idling times, etc.
- Make purchases in bulk for commonly used items (to limit packaging and shipping) as much as possible.
- Use low-VOC paint.

General Tips

C-PACE program

- The City of Alexandria's Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) Program is an innovative financing program enabling owners of multifamily, commercial, and industrial properties to obtain low-cost, long-term financing for energy efficiency, renewable energy, water efficiency, resiliency, and stormwater management improvements. You can learn more about the program here: [Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy \(C-PACE\) | City of Alexandria, VA](#)

alexandriava.gov) or at the Virginia PACE Authority program site: City of Alexandria - Virginia PACE.

- Train staff on sustainability in the workplace. This action may include ensuring a list of the business' green practices, such as those identified in this checklist, is available for employees.
- Post consumer-facing messaging about sustainability efforts (on your website, social media, in store, etc.).
- Reduce light pollution from outdoor lighting (such as shielding the lights, turning off unnecessary lighting, using motion sensors, etc.).
- Calculate the business' CO2 footprint and offset at least a portion of the CO2 emissions (e.g., carbonfund.org).
- Have a landlord-tenant partnership to achieve sustainability-related goals and actions (e.g., renewable energy, energy efficiency, water efficiency). For more information, visit: [Landlord Collaboration \(rila.org\)](http://Landlord Collaboration (rila.org)).
- The National Restaurant Association has a website of best practices for sustainability: [NRA - Cut Food Waste \(restaurant.org\)](http://NRA - Cut Food Waste (restaurant.org)).