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## CARE's WorkLife Solutions Monthly Wire

### Start a Green Team

July 2011

This month's Wire is taken from one of the many articles found on our website. To access this article, log-on to [www.caresworklivesolutions.com](http://www.caresworklivesolutions.com). Click on the World Icon and enter your unique company password (please call us if you do not know your company password or if you would like a temporary password). Locate the green Menu Bar near the top of the page and click on "Living," then select "Go Green." To the right you will see a list of topics that are relative to the main category (Living) and the sub-category (Go Green). Select "Workplace." You will find the article "Start a Green Team" under the Article section. We encourage you to use this method for finding information on a multitude of topics on our website.

#### Start a Green Team

One person cannot do it all! So when it comes to making your workplace greener and more energy efficient, nothing beats a team. Forming a green team is a great way to help reduce office waste and increase energy efficiency. Follow these tips to hit the ground running.

##### **Organize your green team.**

To get started, meet with management to get approval for the idea. Not only does support from management add legitimacy to your team, some of the measures needed to "green" your workplace might require an investment of time, money, or both. Next, encourage coworkers from different levels and parts of your organization—from senior management and interns to facility managers and human resources personnel—to get involved. A team approach improves participation from all levels of the organization, which helps to ensure greater support and success. Once you have recruited a core team, conduct a kickoff meeting to develop a plan of action.

##### **Start your green program.**

Careful planning and effective outreach at the launch of your program creates momentum for your green team. Identify project areas and opportunities, develop work plans, and prepare for an official launch or kickoff event. Consider implementing a pilot project to showcase at the program's kickoff. Small steps such as encouraging employees to replace at least one incandescent light bulb at their desks with a compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL) can make a big difference and motivate employees to become more involved.

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## **Raise awareness.**

Share tips and advice on how to save energy and reduce waste with your coworkers. Place posters and other materials about energy conservation in your workplace's kitchen, break room, conference room, or other places your coworkers gather. Add information about energy efficiency and its benefits to your intranet, newsletter, or employee bulletin board.

For Earth Day in April, Energy Awareness Month in October, or other special environmental occasions, hold an event to teach employees about energy efficiency and other green habits. You also can help motivate colleagues by organizing a green competition between offices, or hold brown bag lunches and invite in-house and outside technical and operational experts to speak about energy efficiency or other green topics. Organize an employee training session using the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) interactive tool, "ENERGY STAR @ Work", to help your coworkers learn what they can do at work to save energy and help fight global warming. You can find information about this program at <http://www.energystar.gov>.

Once your green team has gained momentum and management support, consider working with your company's energy team to conduct an energy review or audit of your office space to identify areas for improvement that do not require large investments. Additional information about business participation in Bring Your Green to Work with ENERGY STAR\* programs can be found at <http://www.energystar.gov>.

## **Recognize success.**

Who doesn't like rewards? Recognize the contributions of teams and individuals to reinforce the value of energy efficiency and encourage even greater improvements. Acknowledging success will help sustain motivation. Simple gestures such as a thank you and a handshake go a long way; a public e-mail or newsletter acknowledgment are other ideas to consider. Depending on the resources available, your green team might also work with management to explore the possibility of coffee mugs, certificates, plaques presented at award ceremonies, gift cards, bonuses, salary increases, and stock options, among others.

The long-term efforts of your green team can lead to happier and more productive employees, while benefiting the environment—an achievement of which your entire organization can be proud. For additional information the EPA's guide, *Teaming up to Save Energy*, is available at [http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=guidelines.teaming\\_up\\_to\\_save\\_energy](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=guidelines.teaming_up_to_save_energy). This tool provides step-by-step instructions for forming an energy team—many of which apply to green teams, too—as well as real-world examples from other businesses and organizations committed to saving energy, saving money, and fighting global warming.

\*ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy that is designed to help people save money and protect the environment through energy-efficient products and practices.

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (n.d.). *Start a green team*. Retrieved November 10, 2010, from <http://www.energystar.gov>

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