

NEI Green Policy and Procedures

PURPOSE

This issuance states the specific National Eye Institute (NEI) policy and procedures for conducting its operations and activities in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner.

BACKGROUND

In 2005, the NIH Director created the Environmental Policy of the National Institutes of Health to declare a commitment to the protection of the environment and responsible use of natural resources. As the steward of medical and behavioral research for the Nation, the NIH leads the way in the pursuit of knowledge about living systems and the application of that knowledge to extend healthy life and reduce illness and disability. As proactive keepers of the public health and the environment, the NIH community embraces pollution prevention and sustainable development while continually seeking to reduce resource consumption.

The NIH environmental policy establishes the following important commitments:

- Compliance with all Federal, State, and local environmental laws and regulations, as well as Executive Orders.
- Prevention of pollution by minimizing the generation of wastes where possible, reducing consumption, recycling materials, and disposing of wastes in an environmentally responsible manner.
- Integration of environmental and health considerations into decision-making processes.

All NIH employees are responsible for being aware of the environmental and health impacts of their jobs and for continually striving to minimize these impacts as set forth in this policy.

POLICY

NEI is committed to protecting the public health by conducting our operations and activities in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner. We are committed to complying with all applicable laws and regulations. We recognize that reducing and, where possible, eliminating the environmental impacts of our activities is an important part of our mission as stewards of the public health. We strive to be a leader among the

NIH Institutes and Centers in achieving environmental excellence and will work with our employees and other internal and external entities to establish and follow principles, in conjunction with the Environmental Policy of the NIH that will guide NEI environmental practices.

The NEI guiding principles and practices to achieve resource conservation, waste reduction, and sustainability overall are summarized below:

- Comply with mandatory requirements and conduct our activities and operate our facilities within applicable environmental laws and regulations
- Conserve energy and other natural resources
- Reduce, reuse, and recycle to reduce waste
- Minimize the production of hazardous waste
- Adopt green procurement practices
- Ensure all employees complete the environmental awareness training
- Continue to review and minimize the impacts of our activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES

a) Energy conservation

Employees should:

1. Turn off lights when not in use and use natural light when possible.
2. Unplug equipment that drains energy even when not in use (e.g., cell phone chargers, fans, coffee makers, desktop printers, radios, etc.).
3. Use Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFLs) in desk lamps as opposed to incandescent lights whenever possible.
4. Use the stairs when possible.
5. Utilize videoconferencing and conference calls as an alternative to travel when possible.
6. Refrain from using space heaters.

b) Reduction of Materials Consumption

Employees should:

1. Reduce paper usage by distributing and storing documents electronically.
2. Print and photocopy only when necessary and double side jobs, when possible.
3. Tell staff and colleagues that you prefer double-sided documents.
4. Use the backside of old documents for faxes, scrap paper, or drafts.

c) Reduction of Fossil Fuel Consumption and Air Pollution

Employees should:

1. Ride mass transit or other alternative forms of transportation, whenever possible.
2. Use carpools or vanpools, when possible, over single use cars.
3. Telework at least one day a week, if possible.

d) Minimized Waste and Increased Recycling

Employees should:

1. Use durable, reusable beverage containers, plates, and utensils.
2. Print documents in black and white or grayscale whenever possible.
3. (At the Bethesda Campus) recycle paper, paper products, plastic, binders, folders, catalogs, boxes, bottles, cans, batteries, electronics, toner and ink cartridges.
4. (At Montgomery County facilities other than the Bethesda Campus) recycle plastic and paper products in accordance with county regulations.
5. Donate used furniture and electronics through the Property Utilization Branch.

e) Minimized Toxic and Hazardous Waste

Employees should:

1. Not pour toxic or hazardous substances down the drain.
2. Reduce use of toxic chemicals and use less toxic alternatives wherever possible.
3. Not use or purchase mercury or mercury-containing equipment, unless approval has been obtained.
4. Design experiments, when possible, to use less toxic or hazardous substances.
5. Purchase chemicals in the smallest quantities needed to avoid over-ordering.
6. Dispose of hazardous chemicals appropriately and in accordance with the NIH Disposal Guide and other legal requirements.

f) Commitment to Green Purchasing

Employees should:

1. Purchase copier and printer paper that contains at least 30% post-consumer recycled content.
2. Purchase office supplies and furniture that contain the highest percentage of recycled and non-toxic content whenever possible.
3. Purchase products that contain biobased content whenever possible.
4. Purchase Energy Star office equipment.
5. Use the [Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool \(EPEAT\)](#) to identify computers and monitors with environmental attributes and purchase computers and monitors with at least a Bronze rating.

6. Where applicable, purchase quality furniture and electronics through the Property Utilization Branch.

g) Increasing Awareness of NEI's Impact on the Environment and Public Health

All employees are required to complete the NIH Environmental Management System (NEMS) Awareness training course. The course may be found at: <http://lms.learning.hhs.gov>.

PROCEDURES:

See the "Responsibilities" portion of this policy.

REFERENCES

- [NIH Environmental Policy](#), dated 1/13/2005
- [Green Purchasing](#), dated 2/8/2006
- [Executive Order 13423—Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management](#), dated 1/26/2007

RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSAL

All records (e-mail and non-e-mail) pertaining to this chapter must be retained and disposed of under the authority of NIH Manual 1743: Keeping and Destroying Records, Appendix 1: NIH Records Control Schedule, Item 1100-M-1.

1100-M-1 Administrative Files accumulated by individual offices that relate to the internal administration or housekeeping activities of the office rather than the functions for which the office exists. In general, these records relate to the office organization, staffing, procedures, and communications; the expenditure of funds, including training and travel; supplies and office services and equipment requests and receipts; and the use of office space and utilities. They may include copies of internal activity and workload reports (including work progress, statistical, and narrative reports which are prepared in the office and forwarded to higher levels) and other materials that do not serve as official documentation of the programs of the office.

a. Recordkeeping copy:

Disposition: Destroy the recordkeeping copy when 2 years old.

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

This issuance states the specific National Eye Institute (NEI) “green” policy and procedures.

1. Office Responsible for Reviewing Management Controls Relative to this Policy: Management Policy and Analysis Branch
2. Frequency of Review: every two to three years
3. Method of Review: MPAB will work with the NIH Environmental Management System (NEMS) to ensure our compliance with legal requirements and improve our performance on environmental impacts that are not regulated. Environmental assessments and cost savings analysis will be conducted on an annual basis. MPAB will analyze the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of our environmental programs to determine whether NEI’s environmental programs are meeting the current and future goals of the NEMS.
4. Review Reports Sent to: Associate Director for Management, NEI

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If there are any questions about this policy or about the NEI Policy Handbook, please contact MPAB, OAM, OD, NEI at (301) 451-7195.