



Moving In Checklist

Keeping a green lifestyle at home is a lot easier if you start off on the right foot! Use this checklist to set yourself up for sustainability success. (Already live in an apartment or condo? It's never too late to go green! Now's the time to change anything you don't already do.)

- Are there any incandescent bulbs in the apartment or condo?** Change any light bulbs in the apartment to compact fluorescents—or slightly more expensive, even-more-energy-efficient LED bulbs.
- Are the faucets and shower already low-flow?** If not, you can easily install faucet aerators and low-flow showerheads on any fixtures that don't have them already. Keep the old faucet and showerheads so you can replace them and take your low-flow fixtures with you when you move out.
- How about the toilet?** It's easy to make any standing-tank toilet low flow. Fill a clean, empty half-gallon plastic bottle with rocks or other weights and enough water that it will sink and not move around. Put it inside your toilet tank to displace water. You'll save half a gallon on every flush!
- Is the thermostat programmable?** You may be able to get your landlord to install a programmable thermostat. They're also not hard to put in yourself. Buy one online or at any hardware store! (Or get one free with a Home Energy Jumpstart—see the sidebar.)
- Are you planning to paint?** Use low-VOC or no-VOC paint. It'll smell less while you're painting, and help prevent nasty chemicals from offgassing into your home for years to come.
- Who's your recycling hauler?** Chicago has dozens of different private recycling haulers, and each one has slightly different requirements. Find out who collects your recycling and what they'll take. (Landlords are legally obligated to provide recycling for all buildings with 5 or more units. They can be heavily fined if they don't! Find out more at www.recyclebycity.com/Chicago)
- What's your compost plan?** There are plenty of options for composting your organic waste—an indoor vermicomposting bin, a compost collection service that will pick up scraps from your home, or even an outdoor composter if you have the space available. Figure out which option works best for you and set it up.
- Are the appliances Energy Star and Water Sense certified?** You may not be able to change the large appliances when you move into a new condo or apartment, but find out if your appliances are Energy Star and Water Sense approved, and keep it in mind as you use them in the future. If something eventually does need to be replaced, always look for Energy Star and Water Sense labels.

A few conversations to have with your landlord or neighbors

You don't have direct control over everything your building does when you rent or own a condo. Sometimes you need to talk to the people who do!

Has the building had an energy assessment?

Landlords can sign up for the Home Energy Jumpstart program offered by ComEd and People's Gas for their whole building. This free program includes installation of free energy- and water-saving products throughout all the units in the building. Learn more at www.comed.com/waystosave

Is there a safe bike storage area in your building?

Biking instead of driving is great for the environment! Encourage bike ownership and use for yourself and your neighbors by setting up a place where bikes can be kept without carrying them up or down several flights of stairs.

What kinds of pesticides are used in your building?

Heavy pesticide use around your living space can be bad for air quality, not to mention the health of any small children or pets living with you. Encourage the use of non-chemical pest control techniques, like sealing gaps and removing food sources rather than heavy poisons.



How green is your household?

With just a little prep, you can stay prepared to do all of these things on a regular basis.

- Put things aside to fix, donate, or sell** rather than throwing them away. Make sure to follow up and actually fix/sell/donate anything you've set aside every few weeks rather than just letting the pile accumulate!
- Recycle and compost properly.** (Make sure you know what's recyclable and compostable for you!) You might want to keep recycling bins in more than one room if that makes it easier for you. Clean out your compost and use it on your house plants once in a while.
- Use your programmable thermostat** to heat your apartment or condo as little as possible in winter, and cool it as little as possible in summer. It takes less energy to heat a room up once when you come home from work than to keep it warm all day while you're gone. Fans, open windows, and keeping the blinds closed can significantly reduce the temperature inside on hot days, and electric fans use 98% less electricity than air conditioners.
- Turn all of your electronics off** when you're not using them—all the way off. Most electronic devices still draw power even when they're turned off. Plug everything into power strips and remember to switch the strips off, or invest in smart power strips (also free with Home Energy Jumpstart!) that turn themselves off when not in use.
- Do your housework with green cleaners.** There are dozens of recipes online (or see C3's green cleaner recipe handout). Keep a stock of vinegar, borax, and baking soda around all the time to use whenever something needs to be scrubbed.
- Reduce wasted packaging.** Keep glass jars or sturdy plastic containers to store or freeze food rather than relying on disposable zip-top bags or plastic wrap. Buy staples in bulk when possible, and store them in more reusable containers or jars.
- Use less water.** Try to wash dishes all at once in a full sink rather than letting the water run, or in a dishwasher if you have one. If you need to run water in the sink or a shower for a while before it gets hot, keep a bucket nearby to catch the water in and use it to flush your toilet or water your plants.
- Filter your air with house plants.** Plants don't just look green—they reduce carbon dioxide, airborne dust, and even some common indoor air pollutants. Plus they're a great place to use the compost from your compost bin!
- Run your devices on rechargeable batteries.** Avoid wasting batteries—and the metals inside them—by keeping rechargeable batteries around and using them again and again.

When was the last time you...

...cancelled your junk mail?

Check out

www.ecocycle.org/junkmail for tips on how to take yourself off of catalogue mailing lists, get rid of unwanted credit card offers, and keep piles of junk mail waste from ever getting printed.

...weatherized your home?

Heating and cooling costs can account for well over a third of household energy costs. Weatherize your condo or apartment to keep cold air out in winter, and hot air out in summer. See C3's Weatherization Guide for tips!

...checked for leaks?

It's recommended that you check for water leaks twice a year. Look in cabinets under sinks for leaky pipes, repair dripping faucets, and use a few drops of food coloring in your toilet's tank to see if it's leaking into your toilet bowl between flushes.

...changed your air filters?

Chances are good that changing the air filters every so often may be your responsibility, even if you're renting. Changing filters can reduce heating and cooling costs, and drastically improve air quality. It's usually recommended to change your filters every 1-3 months.