

## GREENING THE CANADIAN NURSES ASSOCIATION

Staff of the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) working at CNA House, the association's main building in Ottawa, have tried to implement environmentally friendly purchasing and operating choices over the past several years. As part of CNA's centennial activities, these policies and practices have been reviewed to identify what is now being done as well as other strategies to further reduce the association's environmental footprint.

### RECYCLING

- Recycling stations for cans, glass, paper and cardboard are available in several locations throughout CNA House, including the kitchens, and recycling bins for paper are found at each work station.
- Spent batteries are returned to the supplier for recycling. CNA staff are allowed to use this battery-recycling service for batteries from their homes.

*Enviro Tip:* Household batteries are responsible for 50% to 70% of all heavy metals found in landfills. Recycling batteries ensures that mercury, cadmium, nickel and lead don't reach landfill sites, where they could leach into soil and groundwater. You can find more information on recycling batteries from your municipality.

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- The Information Technology (IT) Department has replaced all of the association's old cathode ray tube (CRT) monitors with the liquid crystal display (LCD) type, to reduce energy use and lessen eye strain. More energy-efficient alternatives are being identified as plans are made to upgrade equipment.
- CNA is exploring a new technology that allows leverage of existing servers to create additional virtual servers on an existing computer. This technology makes it possible to increase computing power without purchasing more equipment.
- Older printers and photocopiers have been replaced. The newer units use a synthetic product instead of old-style toners. This newer technology uses far less energy and emits fewer chemicals into the atmosphere.
- The IT Department either donates surplus computer monitors, hard drives and keyboards to organizations that can use them or has them recycled to prevent toxic components from reaching landfill sites.
- Toner cartridges, which should never go into the regular garbage, are picked up for recycling.

*Enviro Tip:* One thing that everyone can do to reduce energy use is to turn off computer monitors at the end of the day. Most people already turn off their computer hard drives – turning off monitors as well will result in further energy savings. Information on recycling home computers and other electronics can be found at the website of your municipality.

## ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PURCHASING

- Wherever possible, environmentally friendly purchasing practices are followed in procuring supplies and equipment for CNA House. Over the past few years, the cost of such items has come down with rising demand.
- At present, most of the paper used by CNA staff is made from 50% recycled stock. In the past, 100% recycled paper was purchased, but there were complaints about its quality. A proposal has been made to purchase small quantities of 100% recycled paper for use by those who have individual printers in their offices. Once the quality of 100% recycled paper improves, it will be purchased for all printers.
- More and more staff are using the double-sided printing option to reduce the quantity of paper used for printing from individual computers.
- Reusable dishes, plates and cups are used for all meetings, rather than paper plates and plastic cutlery. A high-efficiency dishwasher supports this practice.

*Enviro Tip:* The EcoLogo program certifies products for household use as well for the workplace. More information on this program can be found at:

[http://www.ec.gc.ca/EnviroZine/english/issues/23/feature3\\_e.cfm](http://www.ec.gc.ca/EnviroZine/english/issues/23/feature3_e.cfm)

## REDUCING GREENHOUSE GASES

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) prevent heat from escaping the earth's atmosphere, thus leading to changes in climate such as increases in arctic temperatures; widespread changes in precipitation amounts, ocean salinity, and wind patterns; and the occurrence of extreme weather events, including droughts, heavy precipitation, heat waves and tropical cyclones (references available on request). Any time we burn fossil fuels, GHGs are released into the atmosphere. Several key changes have been made at CNA House to decrease the emission of these gases:

- The building's natural gas boiler was changed two years ago to increase system efficiency. Future plans include replacement of windows to conserve energy.
- All fluorescent tubes and light bulbs are being replaced over time with more energy-efficient bulbs.
- The number of bike racks available to staff has been increased from one to three, and all are well used in the summer. CNA House is located close to a major public transit stop (just a short walk away, over a pedestrian bridge crossing the Rideau Canal). Not surprisingly, CNA staff came second in a corporate walking challenge held by the City of Ottawa in 2007.
- Short-haul flights represent a significant source of GHGs. For trips to Montreal or Toronto, CNA staff are therefore encouraged to take the train instead of flying. In addition, meetings are clustered in the east or the west of the country as another way to reduce emissions.
- Over time, CNA may consider increasing the use of video conferencing to replace face-to-face meetings.

*Enviro Tip:* Using more energy-efficient appliances at home is one way to reduce GHG emissions. More information on the EnergyStar program for appliances can be found at: [http://www.ec.gc.ca/EnviroZine/english/issues/22/feature2\\_e.cfm](http://www.ec.gc.ca/EnviroZine/english/issues/22/feature2_e.cfm)

## PESTICIDE USE

- Pesticides are not routinely used inside CNA House. If concerns about pests were to be identified, an integrated pest management approach would be developed and used.
- On the grounds outside CNA House, the National Capital Commission (which is responsible for the property) has refrained from using pesticides for several years, so yoga practitioners at the association are safe to do their asanas on the grass.

*Enviro Tip:* A large body of evidence has led researchers to conclude that although pesticides offer some benefits, their use also carries risks, particularly for children (references available upon request). More information about managing pests can be found at a variety of websites:

- The Responsible Pest Management website, which is operated by the Canadian Centre for Pollution Prevention and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, has good information about responsible pest management: <http://www.pestinfo.ca/>
- The federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency has fact sheets with specific information on dealing with a broad range of indoor and outdoor pests: <http://www.pmra-arla.gc.ca/english/consum/pnotes-e.html>

## INDOOR AIR QUALITY

- Whenever minor construction work is needed, every effort is made to have the work done when there are fewer people around; for example, during evenings and on weekends.
- Regular tests and maintenance of the fresh air vents have resulted in excellent indoor air quality.

*Enviro Tip:* Poor indoor air quality can be a problem at home as well as in the workplace. Information about air quality can be found at the websites of Health Canada ([http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/air/in/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/air/in/index_e.html)) and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (<http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/maho/yohoyohe/inaiqu/>).