

## 1. Creating a basic green (environmental) policy

### What is a Green Policy?

A Green Policy is your company's statement about the commitment to sustainability and environmental management that your business is prepared to make. Having a formal green policy shows your employees and customers that managing environmental issues is a high priority for your company.

A green policy usually contains the following components:

- A declaration of your company's commitment to the environment.
- A concise description of **what** your company is trying to achieve with your environmental goals and **how** you will accomplish your goals.
- A commitment to prevent pollution and to continuously improve environmental performance.
- A commitment to keeping employees and community members safe.
- A statement of the strategies and actions your business is willing to undertake to meet its commitments.

Green policies don't have to be lengthy or wordy. The most effective policies are written in plain language that is motivating and inspires people to change. The policy should be communicated to all employees, stakeholders and customers as a commitment to improving environmental sustainability over time.

### Why do you need a Green Policy?

A Green Policy defines the approach your company is taking to improve the environment and provides a framework for the development of your green practices. By creating a green vision for your business and implementing projects and practices to achieve the vision, you'll accrue the following benefits:

- A healthier, safer workplace
- A way to engage employees and customers in discussions around green
- An improved financial bottom line
- The ability to meet customer green contractual requirements
- A competitive advantage in the marketplace
- An enhanced image in the community and with existing and potential customers.

### Example – ABC Pros

ABC Pros is a temporary staffing firm, headquartered in Oakland, California. The company has contracts with several corporate customers. ABC Pros has a permanent staff of 25 employees and a temporary roster of over 300 employees that the company places for short term assignments. They serve the entire San Francisco Bay Area. ABC Pros is just beginning its green program.

When thinking about implementing a green program, the ABC Pros management team and employees knew they wanted to integrate green thinking and green practices into all aspects of their daily operations. Due to the nature of their business, they wanted to focus on reducing their company's carbon footprint and reducing waste. They envision a workplace where every process has been "greened" and they are known in the industry as the ABC Green Pros.

## CREATING A BASIC GREEN (ENVIRONMENTAL) POLICY

### (COMPANY) GREEN POLICY PLANNING WORKSHEET

**Step 1:**

Think about what your company wants to achieve through your Green policy. Brainstorm a list of action words or very short phrases that reflects your company’s environmental commitment to your employees, customers, and the community.

**Throughout the company, not a separate program but a way of doing business, stop driving as much, recycle, compost, better office energy efficiency, “think green” all the time, make it a way of life, build a green image in the community, show measurable results, be green leaders for our customers and community, train our employees**

**Step 2:**

Drawing on the list of words and phrases you have brainstormed above, put them together into a one or two sentence statement.

**At ABC Pros, we apply green thinking to every action and every decision to benefit our customers, our community and our employees. We are committed to making a positive impact on the environment by becoming pros at developing and implementing effective green practices.**

**Step 3:**

List the ways that your company is, or plans to, achieve the commitment(s) expressed in the statements above.

**Focus on reducing carbon footprint by reducing energy use (electricity and gas) and reducing vehicle emissions. Reduce waste in day to day office operations. Implement a green training program for all employees, including all management personnel.**

**Step 4:**

Draw on the list you developed in Step 3 to put together a statement of how your company will fulfill its environmental commitment(s).

**We are dedicated to taking the following actions to achieve our green vision:**

- **Reduce our company’s carbon footprint**
- **Reduce the amount of waste our company produces**
- **Increase our green knowledge**

**Step 5:**

Combine the statements you developed in Steps 2 and 4 and fine tune them to make your complete green policy.

#### **ABC Pro Green Policy**

**At ABC Pros, we apply green thinking to every action and every decision to benefit our customers, our community and our employees. We are committed to making a positive impact on the environment by becoming ABC Pros at developing and implementing effective green practices and procedures as a rule, not as an exception.**

**We are dedicated to taking the following actions to achieve our green vision:**

- **Measurably reduce our company’s carbon footprint**
- **Reduce the amount of waste our company produces**
- **Increase our green knowledge**

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**POLICY SAMPLE STATEMENT 1****AAA PRINTERS Green Policy**

*AAA PRINTERS provides comprehensive printing services while protecting the Earth. To accomplish this, the employees of AAA PRINTERS will deliver high quality services through the use of safe and environmentally sound printing products and business practices and work to foster a culture focused on excellent environmental performance. AAA PRINTERS follows through on this commitment by complying with environmental laws and regulations, wisely investing resources toward managing environmental affairs, and training all employees in the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their job in a safe and environmentally responsible way.*

**Last Reviewed: DD/MM/YY**

**Next Review: DD/MM/YY**

**Signed: .....**

**Title: .....**

**Date:.....**

## **POLICY SAMPLE STATEMENT 2**

Here is another sample Green policy which you can utilize as a starting point to develop your own company Green policy. It is designed for general use, with no industry bias.

*[BUSINESS NAME] is committed to being environmentally aware, actively support programs that reduce our company's environmental impact and continually improve our environmental performance as an integral part of our business strategy and operating procedures.*

*We seek to understand the effects our business activities have on the environment by supporting initiatives such as:*

- *Reduction of material, water and energy consumption*
- *Waste minimization*
- *Recycling of all resources*

*We will encourage our customers, suppliers and other stakeholders to do the same.*

*We recognize that we have a responsibility to the environment to meet or exceed legislative and regulatory requirements.*

*We will ensure that this policy and all procedures relating to it are understood, implemented and maintained by all company employees.*

**Last Reviewed: DD/MM/ YY**

**Next Review: DD/MM/ YY**

**Signed: .....**

**Title: .....**

**Date:.....**

## **Next Steps**

As soon as your policy statement has been written and fine tuned, it must be formally adopted within your business so you can achieve the following key benefits:

- Gain **senior management support** through formal process to ensure that the appropriate commitment of time and resources are allocated to succeed
- Ensure that **everyone has a share in the policy** to help to build good relations across teams/departments within the company, making implementation easier.
- A formal policy and committed management who encourage **participation and cooperation** are essential to the company's green program success. Many barriers to change in environmental sustainability are people issues rather than technical ones.
- **Ongoing motivation and education** are keys to the success of your environmental sustainability program that can be reinforced through your Green policy.

### **Promote and display your policy**

The policy should be on public display and on your company website. Incorporate a review of your policy during staff, contractor and supplier meetings and include in corporate communications.

Post your policy in:

- your front office or reception
- your boardroom
- places where people regularly have meetings
- behind a sales counter

### **Review and continual improvement**

Your policy is not a static document. Review and update the policy periodically to ensure it remains relevant as your organization grows and changes.