



# Checklist Guides for Domestic Workers & Gardeners

## ***Guides to get your household staff involved in saving energy and water***

Greening a home is a team sport – everyone has to pull together. And some of the most important team members might not be in your family. Domestic workers are often the main users of some of the most energy-intensive appliances and play a key role in managing waste in a home, while gardeners often use more water outside than the family uses inside. My Green Home has put together checklists on the following pages that you can share and discuss with your staff, helping them to play a greater role in saving energy, water and waste.

### ***Talk about it***

Explain to your housekeeper and gardener that you are looking for ways to save electricity and water. You might want to show them your bills or pre-paid vouchers, which will make the issue abundantly clear. Emphasize that you also don't want them to waste their time on unnecessary tasks – often saving energy and water means doing less work, not more.

### ***Bonus incentives***

If you really want to sharpen your gardener's enthusiasm for saving water, consider incentives, since he can directly influence water bills. This usually works as a six-month or year-long (time-limited) measure to establish good habits. Show him the pattern of water expenses over the past year, and offer him a percentage of any savings for each month in the coming year, compared to the same month the year before. (But remind him that the plants mustn't suffer.)

### ***If they live on your property***

The greening process is incomplete if you make your house energy efficient but ignore an outbuilding where electricity is being wasted. Make sure that lighting there is as efficient as possible, preferably LED. If winters are cold, offer or encourage warm clothing and bedding, even electric blankets, rather than excessive heating. Request that if electric heaters are used, windows and doors are kept closed. (Gas heaters are not recommended for small rooms and bedrooms unless their fumes are vented.) In short, all of My Green Home's recommendations – from low-flow shower heads to insulation – apply to outside rooms as much as inside rooms.

### ***And if they have their own home elsewhere***

If your staff pay for their own electricity at home, it's probably a bigger percentage of their budget than it is of yours. Consider what you can do to help. Ask what they are currently using for cooking, heating, hot water and lighting. For example, how many globes do they use, of what type, size and socket shape? LEDs might be an even brighter Christmas gift than biscuits.



# Checklist for Domestic Workers

***Please try these ideas whenever possible to help save electricity and water and cut down on waste that goes to the landfill. If you have questions about any of them, please ask.***

## ***Laundry***

- Wash laundry in cold water, unless there is a special need for hot water.
- Don't wash clothing that isn't dirty just because someone forgot to hang it up.
- Wait until you have a full load to run the washing machine, unless you're asked for an urgent wash. A front-loader can be filled to the top, but not packed tightly.
- Only wash sheets every week if you are asked to. Every second week is usually OK in winter and if the family members wash themselves in the evening.
- Only use a tumble drier if really necessary. Wait for dry weather to use the washing line unless there is a rush, or dry clothes indoors on a rack.
- Don't iron things with wrinkles that don't matter, such as pajamas, underwear or fitted sheets. To reduce wrinkles in the first place, shake and smooth them out when drying and fold them carefully when dry.

## ***Dishwasher***

- If a dish fits in the dishwasher, put it there instead of handwashing it.
- Try not to rinse dishes before putting them into the dishwasher unless necessary.
- Run the dishwasher only when it is full.
- Use the lowest temperature setting on the dishwasher, such as 35° or 45°.
- Turn off the heat-dry button. Open the dishwasher to air-dry instead.

## ***General cleaning***

- If you have a smooth microfibre cloth for glass, wet one with very little water to wash windows and dry with a second microfibre cloth. No sprays are needed.
- Dust with microfibre dusting cloths, using no sprays unless asked to.
- Whenever you use cleaning chemicals, use as little as possible.

## ***Rubbish and recycling***

- Keep clean paper and cardboard separate from the rubbish for recycling.
- Keep glass bottles, tins and plastic containers separate from the rubbish for recycling. (But broken vases and drinking glasses do go in the rubbish; they cannot be recycled.)
- Remove lids from plastic bottles and flatten boxes, cans and plastic, whenever possible.
- Rinse bottles with very little water. Clean very dirty tins, but try not to use hot water.
- If there is a compost heap, ask if any food scraps should be kept for it.
- If there is a worm farm, keep these for worm food: tea bags, coffee grounds, fruit and vegetable scraps - but not these: onions, chillies, and citrus fruit like oranges.



# Checklist for Gardeners

***Please try these ideas whenever possible to help save water and cut down on waste that goes to the landfill. If you have questions about any of them, please ask.***

## **Lawns**

- Lawn clippings and leaves should not be mixed with rubbish. Ask whether they should go to the compost heap or be saved for municipal composting.
- Some lawns do not need to be watered and can go dry for a season. Ask first which areas of grass should be watered.
- If a lawn is to be watered, wait until the soil is dry. Stick your finger into the soil to check if it's dry or still moist under the surface.
- Water lawns in the mornings, before 10 a.m. if possible, to reduce evaporation losses.

## **In the garden beds**

- Don't rake the soil unless asked to. Let leaves stay on the soil as mulch, which makes plants grow better. A layer of mulch acts like a blanket to keep the soil moist for longer, regulates temperature and reduces weeds.
- Try not to turn the soil. Pull weeds by hand instead.
- Don't use pesticides without checking with your employer first.
- Some beds need watering more than others, and some not at all. Ask first which beds should be watered.
- Water only if the soil is very dry beneath surface. Stick your finger into the soil to check.

## **Sweeping and cleaning**

- Sweep driveways and patios with a broom, not with water from a hosepipe.
- Wash cars using a bucket of water, only using the hosepipe if needed for a rinse.

## **Pool**

- You don't need to backwash every week. Check the pressure gauge on the pool filter. If the needle is in the red zone, or above 120 kPa, then it is time to backwash.
- Before you leave each day, make sure that the pool pump has switched itself off and the timer not on override.