

## LiveGreen Ambassadors FAQ

- **Recycling**

- What can I recycle?
  - Almost everything, keep reading!
- How do I recycle?
  - All paper goes in the blue deskside bin or grey, locked bin. Metal and rigid plastic go into the (almost always) green containers. Keep reading for specialized items.
- What happens to the items I place in the recycle bins?
  - Materials in the recycling bin are taken to our local recycling facility, Firststar Fiber. The material is sorted and put into large bales by Firststar Fiber, which are then shipped to material reprocessing facilities or manufacturers to use as raw material.
- How much are UNMC and Nebraska Medicine currently recycling?
  - As of December, 2015, our campus is recycling 19% of all waste generated on campus. The campus goal is to recycle 35% of all waste by 2023.
- Can I recycle batteries on campus?
  - Yes, single use alkaline batteries from campus are recycled! Containers are provided for free and can be requested online, as can pick-up for full containers.
- Can I recycle pens on campus?
  - Yes, pens, highlighters, markers, and mechanical pens are recycled. Place them in a Terracycle container in your area.
- Can I recycle printer and toner cartridges?
  - Yes! Sharp will collect their own cartridges, the rest can be boxed and General Supply picks them up to be recycled.
- Can Styrofoam be recycled?
  - No, Styrofoam is not plastic and is not currently recyclable.
- What is “universal waste”?
  - Universal Waste is regulated waste. Biohazardous materials, chemicals, etc. These items must be disposed of properly regardless of recyclability. i.e. a plastic bottle that is biohazardous must go in a redbag container, not a recycle bin. Aerosol cans must go to Environmental Health and Safety (but are then recycled).
- What is the “Supply Exchange”?
  - The Supply Exchange is located on the LiveGreen website and is a free place for people to list on-campus items that they no longer need or have a surplus of. Others can save money by using these items while diverting material from the landfill. Reusing is better than recycling!
- Speaking of reusing, what about reducing?
  - You are correct! Reducing (or outright Refusing) is the best option in the first place. Don't print if you don't need to, double-side print if you must, bring your own drink/cup/water bottle, buy less, place a large order once instead of multiple shipments, buy items in bulk/with minimal packaging, shop with reusable bags, etc.
- What constitutes paper vs. cardboard?

- For recycling on this campus paper is anything that is paper; this includes copy paper, newspaper, notebook paper, construction paper, envelopes, post-its, virtually anything that is paper, are all recyclable. While an attempt should be made to remove non-paper items, staples, paperclips, and the plastic envelopes in the windows are OK to go in the paper recycling bins.
  - Cardboard is any grade of cardboard. While most people think of corrugated cardboard, which is commonly used for shipping, to be the cardboard we recycle, we also include the thinner grade of cardboard (which some people call paperboard). This grade of cardboard is seen in frozen meal boxes, tissue boxes, containers used for shipping office supplies (pens, paper clips, etc.), cereal boxes, soda cases, etc. Hanging file folders are now recycled with cardboard...if they can't be repurposed.
- Where does the cardboard go?
  - Cardboard is collected in a separate bin, picked up by our vendor, and recycled. Paper and cardboard collected in their "own" stream (i.e. without plastic and metal) have less contamination and recycle better.
- Can a department request a bin for a cardboard container?
  - We currently do not have bins available for cardboard recycling. Larger cardboard boxes should be broken down and placed between the wall and your paper recycling or trash bin(s). Small cardboard items can go in the same place. If this is not possible, any container can be used to collect these small items, including another cardboard boxes. Work with your EVS person so they know what your plans are and can retain your container if needed and get your recyclables to the right place.
- Can we request signage for new recycling containers?
  - Please email [livegreen@unmc.edu](mailto:livegreen@unmc.edu) to request a sign for metal/plastic containers. Signs for cardboard and paper are being developed.
- Do we have to notify EVS of a new container?
  - Please speak with the EVS person who works in your area so they are aware of what you are doing. They are on-board and ready to help, they just need to know what's happening.
- Pizza boxes are not recyclable, right?
  - Pizza boxes are cardboard, but soiled/dirty/greasy cardboard cannot be recycled. If the pizza box, or more likely top of your box, is clean it can be recycled. Please place dirty cardboard in the trash.
- Can you put coffee cups in the green recycling containers?
  - Green containers are for metal/plastic. If you have a cup that is plastic/metal, it can be placed there. Most coffee cups are not plastic; if they are a low wax and/or low plastic contents they can be recycled with cardboard. Cardboard sleeves (to make your cup easier to handle) are cardboard and should be recycled as such.
  - Don't know if your cup has wax or plastic? Quick test: scrape a fingernail across the cup, if you have wax under your nail, the cup goes in the trash. If your cup has a very slick feel to it or is shiny in appearance (common in fast food beverage cups) it has a high plastic content and should also be placed in the trash.

- Want to be more sustainable? Get a reusable cup! There's less waste, they are better for your health, and they keep your beverage the correct temperature for a longer period of time.
- What do we do with glass?
  - It is currently very difficult to recycle glass in Omaha, which makes it difficult to recycle on campus. As new options come on-line we will let you know.
- What about liquids left in plastic containers?
  - All liquids, regardless of container should be dumped into a sink before being placed in the correct container.
- Do the dining halls give a discount if you bring your own container?
  - The C-Store located in the Michael Sorrell Center currently provides a medium coffee (most reusable containers are a medium/16oz) at a small price if you bring your own cup.
- If we recycle a frozen meal (i.e. Lean Cuisine) box, does that need to go in a lined recycling container?
  - No, cardboard that is not wet/dirty does not need to go in a lined container. Please flatten the box and place it with your other cardboard to be recycled. The frozen meal tray is plastic and this can be recycled (please remove uneaten food) in the green, metal/plastic containers, which should always have a liner.
- Is trash and recycling **at ECCP** (only) handled the same way as 42<sup>nd</sup> & Dewey?
  - The same items are recyclable, but they are handled differently **at ECCP**:
  - **Blue Desk-Side Recycle Bins at ECCP:** All paper must go into the desk-side recycle bin (usually blue). This bin should contain paper only. Throughout the week, a designated colleague from each floor will unlock the large 96 gallon containers (strategically placed on each floor, usually next to the freight elevator) for you to dump your paper into when your personal desk-side recycle bin is full. By policy the large bins are to remain locked, but paper can be placed through the slot into the container at any time. All types of paper including newspaper, envelopes, post-its, etc. can be placed in this container as well. If you do not have a blue desk-side recycling bin, please contact EVS at 9-4073, and one will be provided for you.
  - **Desk-Side Recycling Baskets at ECCP:** All desk-side recycling baskets (usually black) are meant for recycling of metal and/or plastics, **NOT FOR TRASH**. Please use this container for any metal and/or rigid plastic (must hold shape, but plastic number does not matter; i.e. water or soda bottles, pop cans, straws – YES. Plastic bags, cellophane, bubble wrap – NO). Do not place any food, glass, Styrofoam, plastic bags, or paper into these containers as they are not meant for trash and should not have a liner. If your desk-side recycle basket has a plastic liner, it is recommended that you remove the liner so there is no confusion for the person cleaning your area, as this container is designated for metal and plastic recycling only and should not be used for trash.
  - **Non-Recyclable Trash at ECCP:** Any item that is not recyclable should be placed in the larger lined trash cans (not your desk container). These larger containers are lined with a plastic bag, usually gray or taupe in color, and can be found strategically placed throughout the floor. Items such as glass,

napkins, tissues, food, gum, wrappers, plastic bags, bubble wrap, Styrofoam, etc. can be placed in the larger non-recyclable trash containers.

- **Blue Saddlebags at ECCP:** Saddlebags are the small containers that attach to your desk side containers. While they are designed to hold items that cannot go into the paper or metal/plastic recycle containers, they are not something serviced by Aramark (our cleaning crew). If you choose to use your saddlebag for trash, you will need to empty it into one of the large trash containers located on your floor (not your desk containers). Please be courteous to your neighbors and make sure to keep them clean so they do not start to smell. Placing the saddlebag on the paper recycle container will make it easier for Aramark to collect your other recyclables.
- **Cardboard at ECCP:** Breakdown all cardboard boxes, label front or top box “recycle”, and stack boxes in a main hallway and/or near a large recycling bin or trash container. It must be labeled in order to be picked up as the cleaning crew does not know what boxes are to be saved vs. boxes to be recycled.

- **Energy**

- What is energy curtailment? Why do we do it?
  - Energy Curtailment Days are days where we manage the systems that heat/cool differently in order to save energy. These are almost always days of high heat and/or humidity when our systems are stressed, as are the communities. Reducing energy eases the strain on our system, ensures people across campus have the energy they need, and (hopefully) keeps us from hitting a new ‘peak’ which saves money.
- What is a peak?
  - Peak electrical use is the maximum amount of electricity we are using at any given moment. That peak sets our electrical rate for the next year, so any increase will cost us for a long time.
- If we are trying to save energy on campus, why are some rooms so cold in the summer?
  - This is part of energy curtailment. Even though it seems illogical, we are actually saving energy by reducing the amount of heat we are producing on those days...but this means there’s usually more air conditioned air coming into a space. Most spaces require a certain air pressure or air flow and that cannot be changed due to patient safety requirements or lab function. This means the air is always ‘on’. Your house turns the air on when it needs to adjust the temperature, and then off when it’s at temp. Because we require air to always flow in some spaces we control the temp by mixing hot and cold air. It’s kind of like filling a bathtub. The water is constantly flowing and you adjust the temp of your bath water by mixing hot and cold water together. That’s what normally happens here, with air, to heat/cool your space. But during curtailment we produce less hot air (because it’s crazy to use resources to produce heat when it’s super hot outside) which means you still have the same amount of air coming in to your office but more of it is cold air so your space is cooler. It does seem crazy, to be cold on the hottest days, but it makes a huge difference in energy use and savings!

- Does turning off a light really save energy? I've heard leaving it on if I'm going right back in is better because turning the light on and off takes so much energy.
  - Yes! It doesn't seem like much but it all adds up! New lighting technology has made it best to turn off lights when leaving a room, even if you will return to the room in a few minutes.
- What the heck is a fume hood sash and why do I need to shut it?
  - Fume hoods are found in research and some clinical labs. They have a sash (panel that opens and closes) to allow work to take place inside. This sash can be closed when the hood is not in use. This reduces the amount of air (that we just paid to heat/humidify/cool) that gets sucked out of the building. It's like having a 6'wide 3' tall window with a box fan in it and trying to maintain room temps!
- I adjusted my thermostat and the temp in the room didn't change. Why?
  - This is part of energy curtailment. You have control over your thermostat in normal conditions, but are 'locked out' during energy curtailment days. If you have adjusted it, make sure you adjust back to a comfortable temperature or you'll be in for a shock when energy curtailment is over!
- What have we done to reduce energy use 25%?
  - So much! Facilities has upgraded equipment (did you know we have a new chiller that took the place of 2 others and the refrigerant in it is super-efficient? It's one of only 7 in the world!) in buildings, as well as operating systems (Siemens controls). That has allowed us to find inefficiencies and fix them. You have been vigilant about turning off lights, shutting sashes, powering down computers, turning off monitors, shutting blinds, etc. etc. and that has all led to this incredible reduction.
- How much money has the Med Center saved in energy costs over the last five years (2010-2015)?
  - It's important to note the difference between savings and cost avoidance. True savings is money that was already in our budget and not spent; i.e. if we budget \$7million to pay for utilities and our bills were only \$6million so we have \$1million in our account. While some of our efforts result in savings, many result in what is called cost avoidance. Utility budgets at UNMC are funded by tax dollars and this amount rarely receives a budget increase. But utility rates continue to rise, and rise higher, faster, with more use. So as we reduce energy use we can counteract those increases; i.e. our budget is still \$7million, but due to increases, our bills will be \$8million, but by reducing use we can keep our cost at \$7million. That \$1million isn't in our account as savings, but it is money we didn't have to find, and we literally avoided that cost.
  - Cost avoidance on energy is a bit of an estimation. As we use more energy our peak energy use (see above) goes up, and so does our rate. Because we used less energy it's hard to predict what those numbers would have been. We can say that if our energy use would have remained the same we would have had to spend \$10million more on utilities over that 5 year span than we did!! If you follow the trend of energy use increases prior to our reduction

and assume that would have continued, and increased the rate even more, we actually cost avoided something closer to \$25million!!

- It's crazy to think about that kind of savings and to know how everything from equipment changes to lots of "little things" like turning off the lights when you leave a room can add up!
- What good has that energy reduction done?
  - It has met every aspect of our triple bottom line. By not using that energy (enough to power 9,000 homes for a year!) we reduced the amount of air pollution/emissions in Omaha. This is great for the environment and climate, but also has health benefits. It especially helps those with lung diseases, like bronchitis and asthma, and leads to fewer ER visits, hospital stays, and lost work days. Our utility bills in those 5 years would have cost us at least \$10million more than we paid, but more likely around \$25million, which would have had an impact all over campus.
- Our department told us not to turn off computers because they are doing IT upgrades. So do we turn off our computers or not?
  - Please shut down your computers and turn off your monitors when you leave for the day on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. ITS runs "patches" on Monday and Wednesday overnight and they prefer you leave your computer on. You can still turn your screen savers off, put your computer to sleep, and turn your monitors off on those nights.
- How are we funded to create more energy savings?
  - Many energy savings have no cost (turning off lights) but for the items that do we use a variety of sources. Grants, low-interest bonds, and Federal stimulus dollars have all been used. The money saved by using these new items are then used to pay off any bonds. We have already done that, so any money saved in the future can be used to create future energy savings.
- **Food**
  - What is this about a Styrofoam ban?
    - The student senate passed a resolution with the other 3 University of Nebraska campuses in February 2016 banning all Styrofoam on campus no later than 2020. Styrofoam cups and soup bowls in the cafeterias and C-Stores have already been replaced with more environmentally friendly options. Plans are underway to eliminate the remaining Styrofoam in the cafeterias next year, and across on campus as fast as possible. If you order supplies for your department there are alternatives to Styrofoam listed online and in eShop. Make the choice to be healthier and help the environment by making the switch now!
  - Why do I still see Styrofoam on campus?
    - Styrofoam is being phased out as we look for the best possible solution. We want to do it right the first time and not negatively impact other goals or force the consumer to bear the burden of cost.
  - Why don't we compost? Will we ever?
    - We don't right now because of cost, space, and logistics. I think we will...we've started the conversation but it will take work as we want to make sure we meet all requirements governing hospital spaces.
  - What happens to uneaten food on our plates?

- Currently, this food is dumped in the trash and ultimately ends up in the local landfill. As part of the Sustainability Master Plan, the food service goal is to divert 90% of kitchen and café waste from reaching a landfill by 2023. There is still work to do in this category.
  - What happens to leftover food that isn't served?
    - Depends on the food. Some food can be packaged and sold later (baked goods) but what cannot be safely served would be trashed. To keep costs low, Sodexo follows trends to minimize food waste and makes many foods made-to-order.
  - Is there recycling in the cafeteria?
    - Yes. Sodexo recycles metals and plastics that food comes in prior to being prepared.
    - Yes, if you do: When leaving Clarkson Café there is a bin for trash and a bin for metal and plastic recycling.
    - Maybe. Some recycling takes place behind the tray return in the Nebraska Café. This happens if customers have left items in a recyclable form (not having shoved their apple core and cellophane into their yogurt cup) and the tray return is not overloaded. If it is, cleanliness and customer service because the top priority. You are welcome to take recyclable items with you and place them in a green bin (there's 2 in the lobby upon your exit!) until a better system is put into place.
  - Will the new materials in the cafeteria (after Styrofoam replacement) be recyclable?
    - Alternatives of all types (reusable, recyclable, compostable) are currently being considered; stay tuned!
  - Will the food vendors at DRC and other places also replace Styrofoam?
    - All Styrofoam on campus will be replaced with other options and this includes vendors and departments.
  - Catered lunches generate a lot of containers, sometimes cardboard or paper, but the recycling bins nearby are not large enough to handle all those containers. How can we handle that?
    - We love that you want to recycled these items! We are working on other options for large events like this. In the meantime, remember that reducing is the best option...order from caterers who have reusable items, use less packaging, and encourage people to bring their own drinks/cups.
- **Transportation**
  - Is the bus pass just for the main campus?
    - Currently all of TravelSmart, including the bus pass is just for the 42<sup>nd</sup> and Dewey campus.
  - Can I try out the bus pass without giving up my parking pass?
    - Absolutely! You can try out or participate in any part of TravelSmart without giving up your parking permit. You can keep your parking permit and still participate in all aspects of the program for free. Giving up your parking permit allows you to save more money, if you choose to use active transportation more frequently.
  - How much reserve capacity is there for the Emergency Ride Home program? What if 40 people needed a ride home at the same time?
    - Don't worry, we have plenty of capacity for the Emergency Ride Home; we contract with a company that has hundreds of cars available.

- What if I give up my parking pass and then one day I need to drive to campus?
  - We have Daily Rate Flex Parking just for that purpose. There are 3 lots with spaces, it's only \$3, covers you for the day, and you can come and go without paying. Payment is easy too, either online on your computer or phone, or with a free smartphone app.
- **Earth Week**
  - When do UNMC and Nebraska Medicine celebrate Earth Week?
    - We celebrate Earth Week the week of Earth Day, which is April 22<sup>nd</sup>. If this falls on a Friday we may celebrate the following week.
  - Can I help with Earth Week this year?
    - You bet! We can always use volunteers at events and I'd love to have input and help on events. New ideas will keep people coming back and help to keep things fresh.
- **Water**
  - Are there any water bottle fill stations on campus? Can we get more?
    - Yes and yes! There are currently stations in MSC, CON, PDD, and DOC, as well as new construction. Acronym quiz to follow. More are in the works, and this will become the campus standard.
  - What have we done to reduce water use 23%?
    - You've helped by calling in leaks, reporting drippy faucets, and not leaving items running. We've worked to irrigate responsibly and have planted drought-tolerant plants and installed rain gardens. A water intensive piece of equipment was replaced, and inefficient practices using water for cooling were reduced.