



## **A GUIDE TO CARBON NEUTRAL AND GREEN EVENTS**

*Building a Better UNB*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The University of New Brunswick is proud to support various events throughout the year on campus. However, events can contribute a major source of green house gas (GHG) emissions. Electricity, heating and air conditioning, transportation, paper and other material use are just some of the ways that events can contribute to emissions. UNB Sustainability would like to provide the resources and assistance to create efficient events by lowering the impact on climate change. This can be accomplished by either holding a green or carbon neutral event. Green events incorporate sustainable lifestyle choices and reduce the impact on the environment, whereas carbon neutral events work to mitigate the use of emitted carbon from lights, heat or air conditioning, and any other resources.

The benefits to running a carbon neutral or green event include the opportunity to publically demonstrate commitment to climate change and sustainability, inspire participants to take action by choosing low carbon options in their own lives, and save money through reducing energy consumption. The following document includes a step by step process that informs users on how they can pursue a green or carbon neutral event.

## 2.0 GREEN EVENTS

Green events can be characterized as any attempt to reduce emissions, waste, or promote environmental sustainability through action oriented measures. There are ways to adjust your actions to make your event more sustainable, from planning and promotion to implementation and clean-up.

### 2.1 Planning

- Consider the venue location; try to choose places with natural lighting that can be easily accessed by public or active transportation.
  - Consider providing a carpool option to event attendees.
- Consider materials being used and/or purchased for the event; try to limit waste and promote reuse and/or recycling (UNB Sustainability has portable outdoor recycling bins that can be used for events).
- If your event will include food and/or beverages:
  - Try to provide local produce or Fair Trade products or try to ensure a vegan/vegetarian option is provided, or consider going completely meat-free.
  - Request pitchers of water and juice rather than bottles or cans and request that condiments be provided in bulk dispensers rather than individual packets (ketchup, salt, pepper, sugar, butter, milk, cream).
  - Sodexo charges \$1 per person to provide reusable glassware at the event; incorporate this fee into the budget for your event.
  - Use compostable dinnerware or request that event attendees bring their own reusable dishware (mugs for a coffeehouse, for example)
  - Reach out to the Campus Food Strategy Group or the Ville Cooperative to look into composting options.

- If your event will include community partners or sponsors, try to select local organizations with a sustainable mandate or mindset
- Contact UNB Sustainability and request free event consultation for additional ideas on how to green your event
- Apply for Green Event Certification

## 2.2 Promotion

- Advertise your event as 'Green'
  - Download the Green Events logo and feature it on your promotional materials
  - Inform event attendees of the sustainable choices that were made while planning the event and encourage them to use similar practices in their everyday life
- Limit promotion and marketing to digital content
  - Create a Facebook event page
  - Circulate posters (check out [canva.com](https://canva.com) for templates) online only; if you are printing posters, use recycled paper. If it's a reoccurring event, avoid putting specific dates and times on the posters so they can be reused.
  - Get relevant groups/societies/faculties to share your event on their own social media channels
  - Share your event on myUNB News
- Promote the use of carpooling and active, alternative transportation, whether it's internally organized or left up to guests, make it clear that it is an option!
- Encourage event attendees to bring their own mug/reusable dishware if food and refreshments are going to be available

## 2.3 Implementation and Clean-Up

- Make sure all windows are closed prior to the event start and during the event (in winter)
- Identify the closest recycling bin and point it out to event attendees.
  - If the event has catering and the food is being composted, make sure you remind event attendees before and during the event
- Turn off all lights and unplug electronic equipment when it's not in use
- Avoid passing out printed materials or other unnecessary waste
- Ensure all waste is cleaned up and properly sorted; ensure the compost is picked up

## 3.0 CARBON NEUTRAL EVENT

### 3.1 Identify Emissions

The first step in creating a carbon neutral event is to identify all of the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the event. Major emission sources include travel, energy consumed, paper and resource use and waste generation. By identifying any sources of emissions, they can be measured and mitigated. If any assistance is required, please do not hesitate to contact UNB Sustainability at [sustain@unb.ca](mailto:sustain@unb.ca). We are more than happy to help you through any step in the creation of your event.

### 3.2 Reduce Emissions

Emissions can be reduced through a variety of measures, such as:

- Requesting organic, locally produced food and beverages to cut transportation emissions. If this is not possible, try to serve Fair Trade products.
- Considering vegetarian options if a meal is being offered.
- Reducing waste produced by eliminating any disposable items such as cups, plates, containers, etc. Avoid plastic water bottles and cans as well.
- Using online ticket options, such as Eventbrite, or e-mail ticket confirmation if tickets are being sold for the event. Also, try to avoid printing by using electronic promotion of the event. If posters are required, try printing on recycled paper.
- Encourage carpooling or provide shuttles to the event to reduce transportation emissions.
- Reduce energy use by minimizing light, water, and heating/air conditioning used.
- If there are prizes, consider items that promote sustainability, such as coffee thermoses, mugs, or reusable bags.
- Use goods or services that result in minimal environmental impact.

These are just a few suggestions, there are plenty of ways to eliminate waste. It is also important to ensure the venue is able to provide required data for monitoring and evaluating energy and water use throughout the event. Facilities Management currently monitors university buildings through smart metering, so if the event is on the UNB Fredericton campus, contact UNB Sustainability at [sustain@unb.ca](mailto:sustain@unb.ca).

### 3.3 Engage Participants

Engage event participants to raise awareness of climate change issues and actions that can be taken to reduce emissions by stating it on event promotional material, press releases, on tickets and by promoting it at the event.

### 3.4 Measure Emissions

To calculate the emissions produced, contact Facilities Management prior to the event, they monitor buildings on campus in terms of electricity, steam, and water usage and can confirm if they will be able to record the numbers on the building of Interest.

It is also useful to consider how many individuals are driving to the event and how far they are coming from, an estimate is sufficient for this value. The approximate weight of food present at the event is important to note as well, specifically meat products. Furthermore, trash should be weighed after the event to determine the amount of waste produced.

After this Information is gathered, online calculators will assist in determining the amount of carbon dioxide produced at the event. A few recommended resources include:

**Trees Canada:** <https://treecanada.ca/en/programs/grow-clean-air/carbon-calculator/#tabs1-energy>

**Environmental Protection Agency:** <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator>

**My Climate:** [https://co2.myclimate.org/en/event\\_calculators/new#general](https://co2.myclimate.org/en/event_calculators/new#general)

These online calculators will indicate the amount of carbon dioxide produced at the event based on the inputted data.

### **3.5 Offset Emissions**

There are several ways to implement an offset for the emissions produced. Tree planting is the main one used at UNB, as trees naturally take carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it. UNB Sustainability and Facilities Management are willing to assist in this step as well by potentially providing and planting trees.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

UNB Sustainability would like to create a better university by promoting and implementing green standards on campus. By incorporating sustainability into events by making them carbon neutral or green, you are not only influencing the environment through actions, but also by engaging participants. Behavioral change in individuals makes a huge difference for the environment. Please contact UNB Sustainability if you have any questions surrounding the creation of a green or carbon neutral event.

