



Sustainability Office

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It only takes 1 or 2.

Shake your hands
before drying.

Fold towels to
absorb more.



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USE 1 OR 2 AND YOU'LL REDUCE WASTE

Paper towels consumed by academic and administration building occupants in 2015 totaled 28,938 lbs¹. This equates to 3.4 lbs of paper towels being disposed of per person (faculty, staff & student) within the academic and administration building during the reporting year.

Figures reported via Facilities Management's bi-annual [2014 Waste Audit](#), which assesses the campus' one-day waste behaviours, indicated that 29% of the material found in the waste stream audit consisted of paper towels and napkins. **2016's audit reported 8%; however, waste from the restrooms was not collected for this year's audit, which accounts for the majority of the paper towel disposal.*

Of the 28,938 lbs of paper towel disposed of in 2015, 100% was directly or indirectly sent for disposal at the landfill. Landfill waste increase the risk of soil, water and air pollution, and generates the greenhouse gas methane (CH₄). Methane's impact on climate change is twenty-one times greater than carbon dioxide (CO₂)². Therefore, the direct reduction of paper towels by the UBC Okanagan campus constituents can dramatically impact waste generation at the ground level and directly impact the production of greenhouse gases. In support of material conservation, the Sustainability Office in coordination with Facilities Management offer the following tips to reduce paper towel and napkin waste on campus:

- After shaking excess water off your hands, use 1 or 2 pieces paper towel – folded for best absorbency – to dry your hands.
 - View the fun 2012 TED Talk video by [Joe Smith: How to use a paper towel](#)³ (4:31 length)
- Where available, use the [Dyson Airblade](#) hand dryers found in most restroom facilities in campus.
- Grab 1 napkin with your meal, use another if necessary. All left over, unused napkins will end up in the garbage stream, not back in the dispenser.

****UPDATE:** UBC Okanagan campus' [compost program](#) underwent an update in 2019 that expanded the acceptable materials list. Paper towels and napkin are accepted and are collected and deposited into the

composting collection bins.

Consume Less to Reduce Waste

The paper material consumed by the average restroom user can be significant. As indicated above, 3.4 lbs of paper towel product was consumed per person on campus in 2015 for a total of 28,938 lbs. If the campus consumed 50% fewer sheets, UBC Okanagan would save the following in the production of this product:

- 14,469 lbs of landfilled waste
- Equivalent to weight of 362 18L jugs of water
- Reduce energy consumption by 17,435 kWh
- Equivalent to energy consumed by 100W bulb for 20 years
- Produce 1,327 lbs of CO₂ emissions
- Equivalent to a car running for 30 hours
- 223 m³ of water used
- Equivalent to average water consumed by a 4-person household for 542 days
- Save 61 Trees

Reducing paper product consumption in restrooms in campus academic and administration buildings will help the University improve waste production and diversion efficiencies and achieve reductions in material consumption and associated costs. Our collective actions to manage material consumption will make a difference.

The Sustainability Office encourages all campus constituents do their part to reduce waste and minimize the campus' environmental footprint through waste reduction practices. For more information [contact us](#).

¹ Reported figures provided by BEST Service Pros. Calculation completed via Cascades Tissue Group software.

² [Municipal Solid Waste and Greenhouse Gases](#). Government of Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada. July 2014.

³ Smith, Joe (May 2012). TEDxConcordiaUPortland: *How to use a paper towel*. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/joe_smith_how_to_use_a_paper_towel

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