

Environmental Policy for ARPO

Preamble

ARPO recognizes its environmental responsibility and is committed to minimizing its ecological footprint. This policy outlines our commitment to environmental sustainability across all aspects of our operations, including our offices, field activities, and engagement in tribal areas. Given the significant challenge of plastic waste in our state, this policy prioritizes the reduction and responsible management of plastic.

Core Principles

- **Minimizing Environmental Impact:** We strive to minimize our environmental impact through all our activities, including energy consumption, waste generation, water usage, and transportation.
- **Conservation and Preservation:** We are committed to conserving natural resources and preserving biodiversity.
- **Compliance and Responsibility:** We will comply with all applicable environmental laws, regulations, and standards.
- **Continuous Improvement:** We will continuously review and improve our environmental performance through regular assessments and the implementation of best practices.
- **Education and Awareness:** We will raise awareness among our employees, stakeholders, and communities about environmental issues, with a strong focus on the dangers of plastic pollution and the importance of sustainable waste management.
- **Respect for Indigenous Knowledge:** In our work with tribal communities, we will respect and integrate traditional ecological knowledge and practices wherever possible.
- **Addressing Plastic Pollution:** We will prioritize the reduction and responsible management of plastic waste throughout our operations.

Office Environment

- **Energy Conservation:**
 - Implement energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
 - Encourage the use of natural light and ventilation.

- Promote the use of electronic devices in lieu of paper whenever possible.
- Implement a policy for the responsible use of office equipment and electronics.
- Waste Reduction and Management:
 - Plastic Reduction:
 - Ban single-use plastics: Prohibit the use of single-use plastics such as plastic bottles, cups, cutlery, and straws within the office.
 - Promote reusable alternatives: Encourage the use of reusable water bottles, coffee mugs, and lunch containers.
 - Refill stations: Install water refill stations to discourage the use of plastic water bottles.
 - Comprehensive Waste Management: Implement a comprehensive waste management program, including:
 - Recycling: Separate collection and recycling of all recyclable materials, including paper, plastic (where possible), glass, and metal.
 - Composting: Implement a composting program for organic waste.
 - E-waste Disposal: Ensure responsible disposal of electronic waste through certified e-waste recyclers.
 - Minimize the use of single-use plastics and disposable items.
 - Promote the use of reusable containers and utensils.
 - Encourage the use of electronic communication and minimize paper usage.
- Water Conservation:
 - Implement measures to conserve water, such as low-flow fixtures and efficient irrigation systems.
 - Encourage employees to conserve water in their daily activities.
- Indoor Air Quality:
 - Maintain good indoor air quality by ensuring proper ventilation and minimizing the use of harmful chemicals.
- Green Procurement:
 - Prioritize the procurement of environmentally friendly products and services, with a focus on products with minimal plastic packaging.

Field Operations

- Sustainable Transportation:
 - Minimize travel distances and optimize travel routes.
 - Encourage the use of public transportation, carpooling, and cycling.
 - Utilize fuel-efficient vehicles and minimize vehicle idling.
- Water Bottles: All field trip participants are required to carry their own reusable water bottles. Refill stations will be identified at field sites where safe drinking water can be accessed.
- Beverages: Foldable cups provided by ARPO or personal reusable cups/tumblers should be used for tea, coffee, and other beverages to avoid the use of disposable cups.
- Food Packaging:
 - When ordering food from restaurants or caterers at documentation sites, prioritize ordering in bulk quantities using steel containers to minimize the use of single-use plastic packaging.
 - Avoid individual packaged meals and opt for bulk orders whenever possible.
- Utensils: All participants, including fellows, are required to carry their own steel plates for meals (provided by ARPO)
- Resource Conservation:
 - Minimize the use of natural resources such as water and fuel during field activities.
 - Plastic Reduction:
 - Minimize single-use plastics: Avoid the use of single-use plastic bags, bottles, and containers during field operations.
 - Pack lunches in reusable containers.
 - Properly dispose of all plastic waste.
 - Properly dispose of waste generated during field operations.
 - Avoid disturbing natural habitats and minimize the impact on local ecosystems.
- Community Engagement:
 - Engage with local communities in the planning and implementation of field activities.
 - Seek input from local communities on environmental concerns and best practices, including the management of plastic waste.
 - Conduct awareness campaigns with local communities on the dangers of plastic pollution and the importance of waste reduction.
- Emergency Preparedness:

- Develop and implement emergency response plans to minimize environmental impacts in case of unforeseen events, including the proper disposal of any hazardous materials.

Tribal Areas

- Respect for Indigenous Knowledge:
 - Acknowledge and respect the traditional knowledge and practices of tribal communities regarding environmental management and waste disposal.
 - Seek input from tribal communities on environmental issues and incorporate their perspectives into our decision-making processes.
- Sustainable Livelihoods:
 - Support the development of sustainable livelihoods for tribal communities, such as ecotourism, sustainable agriculture, and traditional crafts that minimize plastic usage.
- Conservation of Natural Resources:
 - Work with tribal communities to conserve and sustainably manage natural resources, such as forests, water, and wildlife.
- Community-Based Conservation:
 - Support community-based conservation initiatives that empower tribal communities to protect their environment, including the reduction and management of plastic waste.
- Addressing Environmental Justice:
 - Address environmental justice concerns in tribal areas, such as the impacts of plastic pollution and climate change on vulnerable populations.

Monitoring and Reporting

- Regular Environmental Audits:
 - Conduct regular environmental audits to assess our environmental performance and identify areas for improvement, with a specific focus on plastic waste

reduction and management.

- Data Collection and Analysis:
 - Collect and analyze data on our environmental impacts, including data on plastic waste generation and reduction.
- Reporting and Transparency:
 - Publicly report on our environmental performance and progress towards our sustainability goals, including our efforts to reduce plastic waste.

Employee Training and Awareness

- Environmental Training:
 - Provide training to all employees on environmental awareness, best practices, and emergency response procedures, with a strong emphasis on the dangers of plastic pollution and the importance of plastic waste reduction.
 - Organize workshops and seminars on plastic pollution and sustainable waste management.
- Communication and Engagement:
 - Encourage employee participation in environmental initiatives and provide opportunities for feedback.
 - Recognize and reward employees for their contributions to environmental sustainability.

Continuous Improvement

- Regular Review and Updates:
 - Regularly review and update this policy to reflect evolving environmental challenges and best practices, with a particular focus on addressing the plastic waste crisis in our state.
- Innovation and Adaptation:
 - Encourage innovation and explore new technologies and approaches to improve our environmental performance, including the development of innovative solutions for plastic waste reduction and management.

Compliance

- Adherence to Laws and Regulations:
 - Ensure compliance with all applicable environmental laws, regulations, and standards, including those related to plastic waste management.
 - Maintain accurate records of environmental performance and compliance.

Consequences for Non-Compliance

- Warnings: Initial violations may result in verbal or written warnings.
- Disciplinary Actions: Repeated violations may result in more severe disciplinary actions, which may include:
 - Deductions from pay or bonuses.
 - Suspension from field trips or other work-related activities.
 - Termination of employment or fellowship (in severe cases).

Whistleblower Policy

- Any employee or individual associated with ARPO can utilize the organization's Whistleblower Policy to report any observed violations of this environmental policy, including the non-adherence to the plastic reduction measures.
- The Whistleblower Policy ensures the confidentiality of the whistleblower's identity and protects them from any retaliation for reporting legitimate concerns.

By adhering to this policy, ARPO aims to be a responsible environmental steward, minimizing our impact on the planet and contributing to a more sustainable future, particularly in addressing the critical issue of plastic pollution in our state.

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