



# > Eco-Friendly Pet Store Operations: A Sustainability Checklist

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Congratulations on taking steps toward creating a more eco-friendly pet retail environment! This checklist is designed to help you start incorporating sustainable practices to benefit the planet and your reputation with a new breed of conscious consumers who want to feel good about shopping in your store.

Nearly three-quarters of pet owners surveyed by Rover said they are interested in learning how to live more sustainably with their pets and 81% said caring for their pet in an environmentally friendly way is important. Add Shopify's finding that nearly half of consumers across all categories are choosing to buy from brands with a commitment to sustainable retail, and it's clear the demand for cleaner, greener retail is here. Thankfully, so are actionable approaches to meet it.

**Remember, small changes can make a big impact — and even save you money in operating costs over time. Here are some easy ways to get started:**

## **Green Your Scene:**

- Weave sustainability into all points of your shopping experience, from paperless options at checkout to carbon-neutral shipping options online.
- Take inventory of your sustainable offerings. If you don't already stock a wide range of environmentally responsible products, start building out the category by researching suppliers who prioritize sustainably and ethically sourced ingredients and materials.
- Promote eco-friendly brands both in-store and online to establish your point of view and ensure customers know eco-conscious products are available.
- Train your staff to suggest sustainable alternatives in products such as food, toys, kitty litter and shampoo so customers can make more informed purchase decisions. Many shoppers are happy to pay more to support mission-driven brands.
- Use only low or zero VOC (volatile organic compound) paints in store remodels and redesigns.



## Send Plastics Packing:

- From shopping bags to packaging, plastic is not fantastic. Offer reusable totes for purchase and encourage shoppers to bring their own.
- Push paper: With shoppers growing accustomed to seeing paper-based food containers on store shelves, a McKinsey & Company report notes U.S. consumers want to find more of this showing up in their pet food aisles as well.
- Wondering if shoppers will really pay more for sustainable packaging? According to McKinsey, 60% to 70% of consumers say they will. Respond to this increasing demand by upgrading your product mix with fiber-based and 100% recyclable packaging.



## Look for Hidden Energy Wasters:

- Conduct a professional energy audit to identify inefficiencies and address trouble spots.
- Create a comfortable atmosphere for pets and people alike without draining resources by investing in energy-efficient LED lighting and heating and cooling systems, as well as high-efficiency washers if you offer in-store grooming services.
- Let there be (natural) light! Use windows to your advantage whenever and wherever possible.



## Think Outside the Box:

- Set up dedicated recycling stations for staff and customers — serving as a community collection point for hard-to-recycle items will garner goodwill and attract shoppers to your store.
- Create loyalty-building incentives to reward your shoppers' eco-conscious efforts, such as bringing their own bags or choosing natural pet food brands.
- Host workshops to educate your team about the latest sustainable practices in pet care — and encourage them to share tips with shoppers.
- Support your area's animal shelters and conservation programs and participate in local environmental events and initiatives to demonstrate your commitment to caring for the well-being of the entire community.

