CALCULATING YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

A **Carbon Footprint** is an estimate of how much carbon dioxide an individual, a family or even a business produces. Since carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas, a carbon footprint can give you an idea of how much you contribute to global warming. Think of your carbon footprint as a measure of your impact on the environment. For example, when driving a car, the engine burns fuel, which creates a certain amount of CO₂, depending on its fuel consumption and the driving distance. (CO₂ is the chemical symbol for carbon dioxide). Heating a house with oil, gas or coal, also generates CO₂. Even if a house is heated with electricity, the generation of the electrical power may also have a certain amount of CO₂ since almost half of the electricity generated in this country comes from coal. The production of the food, clothing and other things people purchase also emits large quantities of CO₂.

Having a small carbon footprint is obviously better than having a large one, and a good goal is becoming what is known as "carbon neutral." That’s when the combination of all your activities releases the same amount of CO₂ as they absorb. When you are "carbon neutral," your carbon footprint is zero.
FAMILY SURVEY

Answer each question for a yearly total (multiply a monthly total by 12).

1. Number of miles driven per year ___________ × (multiplied by) the vehicle’s average gas mileage ______ = ______ gallons of gasoline used.
   (Do this for each vehicle your family owns)

   ________________ × ________________ = ____________

   ________________ × ________________ = ____________

   ________________ × ________________ = ____________

   Total ____________

2. Number of miles of air travel for your family ________________.

3. Average number of miles your family travels by bus/other mass transit______________.

4. Kilowatt-hours of electricity used _____________________.
   (Look at your utility bill to find out a monthly amount and multiply by 12.)

5. *Therms* of natural gas used ________________________.
   (Look at your utility bill to find out a monthly amount and multiply by 12.)

6. Gallons of propane or bottled gas used ________________.

7. Other sources of energy your family uses?

   ____________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________

8. Total number of people living in your household ___________.


Your “Footprint” on the Global Environment – Use the information you gathered in your Family Survey to calculate how much CO₂ you generate per year. Carbon dioxide is one of the main greenhouse gases responsible for global warming.

1. Gallons of gasoline used _______ x 22 pounds CO₂/gallon = ____________.
2. Miles of air travel _______ x 0.9 pounds/mile = ______________.
3. Miles on mass transit _______ x 0.5 pounds/mile = ______________.
4. Kilowatt hours _______ x 1.5 pounds/ kWh = ______________.
5. Therms natural gas _______ x 11 pounds/therm = ______________.
6. Gallons of propane _______ x 13 pounds/gallon = ______________.
7. Total pounds of CO₂ generated (add up the numbers on the right) ____________.
8. Total pounds generated X number of people in your household = ____________
   (Total You and your family Generated)

How can you reduce you and your family’s impact?
In the space below, write down some actions that you and your family could do to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide you are emitting.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________