

Carbon footprint



A carbon footprint is a way to measure the impact that we have on the environment. The carbon footprint relates to the amount of greenhouse gases that are produced through burning fossil fuels for electricity, heating, and transportation. There are two sections to the carbon footprint: primary footprint and secondary footprint. The primary footprint is a measure of the emissions of CO₂ that we have control over such as the burning of fossil fuels in furnaces and water heaters, and for transportation.

The secondary footprint is the measure of indirect emissions of CO₂ from the manufacturing and breakdown of products such as the production of plastic for water bottles and the transportation of water. For this project, I used the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website (http://epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind_calculator2.html) to calculate my family's carbon footprint. Looking at the results, I have noticed that my household uses less CO₂ per year than the average carbon footprint of a household of the same size.

The difference is quite impressive: my family's footprint of 69, 643 lbs CO₂/year, and the average of 83, 00 lbs CO₂/year. However, we can still try to reduce the footprint even more. Some actions that we can take include turning off appliances not in use, turning down the heating system which includes the water heater, furnace, and A/C. Also, we can try to not drive as much, but, instead, carpooling with friends, walking, or biking.

Another option for my family is to upgrade the insulation on our home, as well as checking for air leaks around windows and doors. Also, energy saving light bulbs can be placed in our house to save even more energy. Everyone

should take these actions and continue to look for more ways to decrease our individual carbon footprints. Being responsible and aware of what we use can help us lower the production of greenhouse gases and preserve our planet for a much longer time.