

KNOW YOUR NUMBER:
MINISTER GORMLEY CALLS ON EVERYONE TO FIND THEIR
CARBON COUNT NUMBER TO HELP TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

Monday 5th May 2008: The Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, Mr. John Gormley, T.D., will today (Monday 5th May) launch a user-friendly Irish Carbon Calculator, as part of the Government's national Climate Change awareness campaign to encourage everybody in Ireland to find out what is their carbon count number. Minister Gormley said that everybody in Ireland has a Carbon Count Number and that no matter how low or high it is we can each take some action to reduce that number and help tackle climate change. As well as calculating an individual's carbon count number, the calculator will provide advice and goals on how to reduce that number, which will also help to save money. Furthermore, if a person opts to register their details, the carbon calculator will contact them regularly to remind them to keep improving their behaviour. Find your carbon count number by logging onto www.change.ie – it takes 5-10 minutes to complete.

“Finding your carbon count number is only the first step. The big commitment that we want people to make is to reduce and to manage their carbon emissions so that together we can reduce Ireland's carbon emissions and tackle climate change,” said The Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, Mr. John Gormley, T.D. “For those who register to find their carbon count number on www.change.ie the calculator will prompt them and remind them to manage their carbon count number and we'd recommend that people update their data regularly.”

The biggest contributor to climate change is carbon dioxide, which mostly comes from burning fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas and peat). Much of what we do involves the use of energy generated through burning these fossil fuels, so the way we live, work and travel has a huge bearing on climate change. On average in Europe we each generate 8.7 tonnes of carbon (CO₂) per year. We should each be aiming for a 20% reduction in our carbon number.

This first phase of the Carbon Calculator takes account of energy and heating in your home and travel patterns. It is intended to include more details in future versions of the calculator so that in time people will be able to include other behaviours, such as water usage in order to get an even more accurate Carbon Count Number.

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“It is like a diet; everything is on the menu but some of our activities have a higher carbon count number than others. I am asking people to think about what they are doing and where possible try to make choices that result in a lower carbon count number, such as using public transport where possible, cycling or walking to the shop instead of driving, changing to CFL lightbulbs or getting your house insulated.”

The calculator was developed as part of the Change campaign using AMEE, the World’s Energy Meter, which was adapted to include relevant data for Ireland (including data from Bord Gais and the ESB). Ongoing development of the calculator will be advised by experts from the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, the EPA, Met Eireann, Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI), The Department of Transport, The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, The Department of Agriculture, Teagasc, Fáilte Ireland.

It’s all part of Change, the Government’s awareness campaign to tackle climate change in Ireland. For more information visit www.change.ie or lo-call 1890-242 643.

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