



Reducing Our Waste



Encourage everyone in your family to take an active role in recycling.

Reducing waste is one of the most effective ways for you to have a positive impact on the environment. Turning your property's refuse into new products instead of burning or burying them makes both ecological and economic sense. Recycling saves finite natural resources and reduces the need for incinerators, ocean dumping, and expensive new landfills. In addition, reducing waste saves energy and reduces air and water pollution.

Commitment is key

To begin or expand your waste reduction program, one of the foremost things you will need to achieve success is *commitment*. At first, waste reduction is not as easy as throwing everything in the trash. It involves behavioral changes and practice. Waste reduction also involves *thought*. Instead of disposing of everything in one garbage can, you will have to get used to separating different types of materials— glass, paper, plastic, metal, newspapers, and trash— and disposing of them according to your town ordinance or recycling center requirements. Once you get into the habit, however, it will be just as simple and easy as tossing everything into one container. You won't believe that you formerly threw away so many valuable raw materials.

Successful Waste Reduction

1. Precycle

Buying recycled products drives the recycling market. If you don't buy recycled products, all those items that are recycled simply stockpile with nowhere to go.

- When shopping, look for packaging and products made from recycled materials.
- Buy recycled office paper and stationary.
- Order printed materials for your office or school on recycled paper.
- Support businesses that recycle and use recycled products.
- Buy beverages in returnable containers.
- Buy products in reusable or recyclable containers or in simple

The Big Picture

We have three basic issues to face: what we take, what we make, and what we waste. In natural cycles, all materials are reused, all energy comes from the sun, and nothing is wasted. Is what we are taking renewable, or are we drawing from a limited source? Is what we make (or buy) created using unlimited energy sources, such as solar or wind, or is it produced using limited supplies of stored solar energy, such as coal or oil? Is the product and the material created during the production of that product able to be reused and/or degrade into organic components in a reasonable amount of time, or does it create new material that has unknown or harmful effects on water and air quality, wildlife, and humans?

*Quoted and adapted from:
The Ecology of Commerce:
A Declaration of Sustainability
Paul Hawken*

2. Refuse

So much waste comes our way unsolicited, or accepted unconsciously. Choose to refuse.

- Bring your own shopping bags to the market or refuse a bag.
- Think before you buy! Reduce consumption of products that are not truly needed.
- Borrow rather than buy items when possible.
- Avoid over packaged items. Some items, such as a popular brand of tea bags, can have as many as five layers of packaging.
- Reduce junk mail! Request that you be taken off the list. Contact:
Direct Marketing Association
11 West 42nd Street
P O Box 3861
New York, NY 10163

3. Reduce

Reduce the amount of garbage you generate by purchasing and using wisely. Waste reduction is a key component of solving solid waste problems.

- Purchase in bulk whenever possible.
- Photocopy on both sides of paper.
- Share magazine and newspaper subscriptions.

4. Reuse

Buy reuseable products and containers instead of disposables.

- Reuse plastic and glass containers for food storage, nails, tacks, etc.
- Use cloth napkins, towels, shower curtains.
- Use blank, backsides of paper.
- Try to repair before you replace tools, equipment, clothing, shoes, and appliances.
- Give outgrown clothing to friends or donate it to local charity.

5. Recycling

Investigate resources.

Ask your local government or cooperative extension service what materials are being recycled in your community and where the nearest drop-off points are. You can also look in the yellow pages and contact recycling or scrap dealers to find out which recyclables they accept.

Material Exchange

A material exchange is an operation that enables industrial process wastes, byproducts, surpluses, or materials that do not meet specifications to be transferred from one company to another company where they are used as a process input.

Because many of these materials are typically of low or negative value, it usually does not pay to transport these materials great distances. A material exchange is therefore a regional venture by nature while at the same time large enough to include a variety of industries.

- **Plan**
In most cases, you can redesign the area where you currently store trash to include space for recyclables. Materials can be placed in sturdy containers, such as heavy brown bags, corrugated boxes, or plastic bins. Your town or county ordinance, or recycling center regulations will determine how much you have to separate each type of material. Many communities stipulate that only newspapers need to be set aside, while glass, plastic, and metal can be left together. In other cases, each material needs a separate container. Check with your local recycling center or landfill to determine what is expected.
- **Make it easy**
Label storage containers so everyone knows exactly what goes where. Also be sure that containers are accessible. Avoid setting up a situation where it is easier to just throw everything in the trash. Most importantly, educate those who will be involved. Point out recycling containers and encourage active participation.
- **Evaluate**
Anticipate that the first few months of recycling will be experimental. By periodically evaluating your difficulties and successes, you can refine your program as needed. We also encourage you to evaluate your savings, both in terms of financial savings and waste reduction.

6. Compost

Reduce garbage and generate a healthy soil amendment by composting food scraps.

- Build or buy a composting structure.
- Pick a spot that is out of the way.
- Start your pile.
- Manage your pile.
- Contact AI for more information about composting.

e-Source

Visit our online information center for fact sheets on a variety of environmental topics:

www.auduboninternational.org/e-source

Audubon International
46 Rarick Road
Selkirk, NY 12158
(518) 767-9051

Helpful Web Site

- <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/kids/quest/intro.htm>
- <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/edurec.htm>
- <http://www.ovam.be/jahia/Jahia/pid/29>
- <http://www.enviroworld.com/>



RECYCLE

Waste Reduction Plan

Who

Coordinator(s)

The coordinator is responsible for developing the collection system, selecting a waste dealer, getting people involved, and tracking the progress of the program.

Monitor(s)

Monitors are responsible for making sure the containers are relatively free of non-recyclable trash, notifying the coordinator if a container overflows, and encouraging people to participate.

What

Check with recycling center, town offices, scrap dealers, or your waste hauler. Remember, it's best to start small, build success, and expand, rather than take on too much too soon.

Glass	Cardboard	Batteries	Food Scraps
Plastic	Newsprint	Motor Oil	Yard Waste
Aluminum	Office paper		Hazardous waste

How must materials be separated and processed?

Where

List names, addresses and phone numbers of dealers/transfer station/recycling center

Where will materials be stored?

bins needed _____

Type of bin _____

When

When will materials be:

- sorted

- collected