

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



WasteWise

Conserving Resources, Preventing Waste

"I attended the 2008 WasteWise Conference and walked away with several exciting ideas for waste reduction from our networking and conversations at the conference."

— Mariah Titlow,
Senior Environmental
Program Coordinator,
Genzyme

"Our waste reduction achievements converted to greenhouse gases is another WasteWise tool we use to bring out the results of our recycling efforts, and this brings all our efforts closer to home."

— George Kesterson,
Business Development Consultant,
Tennessee Department of
Environment and Conservation

What Is WasteWise?

A free partnership program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), WasteWise helps organizations achieve cost savings, improve efficiency, and reduce their climate footprint through waste reduction.

Any organization can join. Our partners range from large and small businesses to nonprofit organizations to federal, state, local, and tribal governments. Regardless of your organization's size or structure, the flexibility of WasteWise allows you to design a waste reduction program tailored to meet your specific needs.



WasteWise Hall of Fame Member
Verizon Wireless

What Is Waste Reduction?

Waste reduction is simply the process of preventing or reducing the generation of waste. The cornerstones of any waste reduction program are waste prevention, recycling, and buying/manufacturing recycled-content products.

Waste prevention, also known as source reduction, is the most fundamental way to control municipal solid waste and is the main focus of WasteWise.

Recycling saves energy and helps keep valuable materials out of landfills and incinerators. When waste cannot be prevented, recycling is the next best option.

Composting converts organic materials, like food waste and yard trimmings, into a valuable soil amendment that contributes to soil health and keeps organic wastes out of landfills.

Buying or manufacturing recycled-content products helps to close the "recycling loop" and creates a market for recycled materials.



WasteWise Offers a Full Service Helpline

Why Does Waste Reduction Makes Sense?

Waste reduction makes good business sense because it helps your organization promote environmental stewardship, reduce its climate footprint, and save money.

Promotes environmental stewardship. In today's world, consumers are increasingly interested in organizations' environmental profiles. By joining WasteWise, you can show your employees, shareholders, customers, and communities that your organization cares about conserving resources, preventing waste, and saving money.

Reduces climate footprint. Through waste prevention and recycling, you can greatly reduce your greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by conserving raw materials and the energy needed to retrieve and process those materials for use in manufacturing new products.

Saves money. Waste reduction saves your organization money through reduced purchasing and disposal costs and improved operating efficiency.

“By participating in EPA’s WasteWise Program, we have been able to enhance our commitment to reduce, reuse, and recycle by utilizing the program’s experience, expertise, and support.”

– Todd Johnson, Recycling/Environmental Coordinator,
NEC Electronics America, Inc.

How Does WasteWise Help?

As a WasteWise partner, you can access a wealth of free technical assistance that will help you design and implement effective waste reduction activities. Through our network of experts and peers, you will learn cost-cutting waste reduction strategies and gain valuable insight from other partners. Key benefits include access to:

- WasteWise Technical Assistance Team helps you design and implement your unique WasteWise program.
- WasteWise Helpline offers toll-free access to information specialists trained to answer programmatic as well as technical questions about WasteWise.
- WasteWise Web site contains a variety of resources, including publications, program news, and links to additional waste reduction Web sites.
- WasteWise Re-TRAC, our free data management and reporting system, allows you to track your organization's waste generation and reduction activities. Through this automated, secure system, you can input data, track waste reduction activities, and generate customized reports whenever the need arises. You can also calculate your GHG emission reductions and their environmental impacts.
- Educational webinars provide information and training on technical topics.
- WasteWise Awards Program offers special recognition for partners that demonstrate outstanding efforts in all areas of the program.
- Meetings and mentoring opportunities allow you to exchange information with and learn directly from other partners.
- Personalized Climate Profiles provide you with information on your organization's GHG emission reduction efforts.
- Publications guide you in developing and implementing your WasteWise program through partner case studies, discussions of specialized topics, and coverage of specific business sectors.

How Can I Become a Successful WasteWise Partner?

Joining WasteWise is easy! To join, register online at www.epa.gov/wastewise. Once you sign up, just follow these steps:

- 1. Identify your waste reduction opportunities.** One of the first steps in designing a successful waste reduction program is identifying areas where waste can be reduced. A waste audit is not expensive or time consuming and will likely save you money in the long run. WasteWise can provide tips for conducting a successful waste audit.
- 2. Plan your program.** The WasteWise Technical Assistance Team will help you identify waste reduction opportunities in three key areas:
 - Waste prevention
 - Recycling and composting
 - Buying/manufacturing recycled-content products
- 3. Educate your employees.** An employee education campaign can boost program success through increased awareness and participation.
- 4. Track and measure your progress.** Knowing how far you've come will help you assess your current efforts and plan your next steps. With the WasteWise Re-TRAC data management system, you can easily manage waste reduction activities at multiple facilities and run real-time reports to determine the environmental and economic benefits of your program.
- 5. Report your progress.** As a WasteWise partner, you will be required to report baseline and annual data. With WasteWise Re-TRAC, you can submit these data with a click.

“The Helpline is great for networking opportunities with other WasteWise partners. They inform me of what other partners are doing, so I can model our waste reduction efforts after them.”

— Ed Abrams,
Environmental Programs Coordinator,
U.S. Postal Service—Alabama District

What Is a WasteWise Endorser?

EPA launched the WasteWise endorser program to help spread the WasteWise message to more organizations. Endorsers are state and local government agencies, trade associations, nonprofit organizations, and businesses that help their members, constituents, or customers realize that reducing solid waste makes good business sense. WasteWise endorsers commit to recruiting organizations to become WasteWise partners and providing members with ongoing promotional or technical information.

Where Can I Get More Information?

General WasteWise program information is available online at www.epa.gov/wastewise and through the WasteWise Helpline at 1-800-EPA-WISE (372-9473).

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WasteWise Success Stories

Lawyers Go Electronic – Through its Law Office Climate Challenge, the American Bar Association is challenging law offices across the country to prevent paper waste by instituting electronic document and double-sided printing and copying policies.

Furniture Giant Strives for Zero Waste – Herman Miller, Inc., is looking to send zero waste to the landfill by 2020. The company has already reduced its waste to landfill by more than 88 percent, or from 12,500 to 1,500 tons per year, from its 1994 baseline, and generated \$3.3 million in recycling income in one year. This performance is part of Herman Miller's overall sustainability goals for 2020.

Subaru Reduces GHG Emissions – Subaru of Indiana Automotive has implemented extensive waste prevention and recycling initiatives. Subaru is now able to recycle 99.9 percent of waste generated from its manufacturing process, reducing its GHG emissions by approximately 46,000 metric tons of carbon equivalents.

Waste Reduction Saves Verizon \$31 Million – In 2009, Verizon Wireless' HopeLine® program collected, refurbished, or recycled nearly 1.1 million used cell phones. Other Verizon programs have allowed the company to realize more than \$31 million in waste prevention savings and recycling revenues.

Book Reseller Generates \$22 Million – In 2008, Better World Books generated more than \$22.5 million in revenues and avoided \$192,585 in disposal costs from the resale/reuse of 5,255 tons of books and other materials. In addition to benefitting the environment, a portion of the proceeds from every book sold helps fund literacy programs around the world.

College Food Feeds Livestock – Each year, Rutgers University sends more than 3,800 tons of food waste to a local farm for cattle feed, saving the university more than \$200,000 a year in operational, maintenance, storage, and hauling costs.



Webcor Tackles Construction Wastes – Webcor Builders has demonstrated innovation and commitment to waste reduction in the construction industry by diverting 75 to 95 percent of wastes generated during its construction and demolition projects. The builder frequently reuses materials from its demolition projects as raw materials for its construction projects, and often donates reusable materials to local charities.

Steelcase Offers 100 Percent Recycled – Steelcase offers furniture with environmentally friendly options including fabric made with 100 percent recycled beverage bottles, components made from biobased materials, and particleboard made with 100 percent pre-consumer recycled wood fiber.

Massachusetts Spreads the Word – The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection has expanded its WasteWise program to the state's 351 cities and towns. Every year, this endorser reaches out to organizations through forums, municipal workshops, business associations, and its own WasteWise Web site.