

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Appendix A

Waste Reduction Ideas

Below are some ideas that businesses have used to reduce waste. You might be able to adapt some of these to your business after considering your particular needs and local conditions.

Writing/Printing Paper

- Establish a company-wide double-sided copying policy, and be sure future copiers purchased by your company have double-sided capability.
- Reuse envelopes or use two-way ("send-'n-return") envelopes.
- Keep mailing lists current to avoid duplication.
- Make scratch pads from used paper.
- Circulate (rather than copy) memos, documents, periodicals, and reports.
- Reduce the amount of advertising mail you receive by writing to the Direct Marketing Association Mail Preference Service, P.O. Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735-9008, and ask that your business be eliminated from mail lists.
- Use outdated letterhead for in-house memos.
- Put company bulletins on voice or electronic mail or post on a central bulletin board.
- Save documents on hard drives or floppy disks instead of making paper copies.
- Use central files to reduce the number of hard copies your company retains.
- Proof documents on the computer screen before printing.

- Eliminate unnecessary reports.

- Donate old magazines and journals to hospitals, clinics, or libraries.

Packaging

- Order merchandise in bulk.
- Purchase products with minimal packaging and/or in concentrated form.
- Work with suppliers to minimize the packaging used to protect their products.
- Establish a system for returning cardboard boxes and foam peanuts to suppliers for reuse.
- Request that deliveries be shipped in returnable and/or recyclable containers.
- Minimize the packaging used for your products.
- Use reusable and/or recyclable containers for shipping your products.
- Repair and reuse pallets or return them to your supplier.
- Reuse newspaper and shredded paper for packaging.
- Reuse foam packing peanuts, "bubblewrap," and cardboard boxes, or donate to another organization.

Equipment

- Rent equipment that is used only occasionally.
- Reuse worn out tires for landscaping, swings, etc.
- Purchase remanufactured office equipment.
- Establish a regular maintenance routine to prolong the life of equipment like copiers, computers, and heavy tools.
- Use rechargeable batteries where practical.
- Install reusable furnace and air conditioner filters.
- Reclaim usable parts from old equipment.
- Recharge fax and printer cartridges or return them to the supplier for remanufacture.
- Sell or give old furniture and equipment to other businesses, local charitable organizations, or employees.

Organic Waste

- Compost yard trimmings or ask your landscape contractor to compost them.
- If unable to compost on site, investigate participating in a municipal composting program.
- Choose a landscape design that needs low maintenance.
- Use a worm bin to convert non-fatty food wastes into potting soil (called vermicompost).
- Use a mulching lawnmower and leave grass clippings on the lawn.

Inventory/Purchasing

- Implement an improved inventory system (such as systems based on optical scanners) to provide more precise control over supplies.
- Avoid ordering excess supplies that may never be used.

- Advertise surplus and reusable waste items through a materials exchange.
- Set up an area in your business for employees to exchange used items.
- Donate surplus produce to food banks, if still edible.
- Substitute less toxic or nontoxic products for **products such as inks, paints, and cleaning solvents.**
- **Use products that promote waste reduction (products that are more durable, of higher quality, recyclable, reusable).**
- Where appropriate, order supplies in bulk to reduce excess packaging.

Consumer Education

- Teach your customers about the importance of reducing waste (effective tools include promotional campaigns, brochures and newsletters, banners, newspaper advertisements, product displays, store signs, and information on labels).
- Offer customers waste reducing choices, such as:
 - Items in bulk or concentrate.
 - Solar-powered items, such as watches, calculator, and flashlights.
 - Rechargeable batteries.
 - Durable, repairable merchandise.
 - Returnable bottles.
- Encourage reuse of shopping bags by offering customers the choice of buying their own bag, providing a financial incentive for reuse.
- Offer customers a rebate when they reuse grocery bags, containers, mugs, or cups for refilling.