



-Offices and Office Buildings- Waste Reduction Fact Sheet

GENERAL TIPS

- ◆ Buy products in bulk to minimize the amount of packaging. Bulk products are generally less expensive than smaller and individually packaged items.
- ◆ Familiarize staff with the proper operation of office equipment to eliminate waste through misuse and ensure that all office equipment is regularly serviced to prevent malfunctions.
- ◆ Ensure staffs are aware of and familiar with all company waste reduction programs, policies and objectives. Keep them informed. Set up a waste reduction committee.
- ◆ Install a computerized thermostat to control the heating and air conditioning system.
- ◆ Work with suppliers to ship materials with no, or reusable, or recyclable containers/packaging.
- ◆ Make it policy to purchase products with recycled content, which are durable, refillable, reusable or at least recyclable.
- ◆ Purchase second hand office furniture. Sell old office equipment to employees, or donate it to reuse centres or charitable organizations.
- ◆ Establish a reuse-it centre in the office where employees can pick-up unwanted binders, hole punches, stationary supplies, etc. for use at home.
- ◆ Have special exchange days where employees bring in unwanted clothes, jewellery, books, etc. and swap.

In order to achieve the target of at least 60% diversion of waste from disposal by 2008, the Province of Ontario has passed regulations requiring specific waste generators to conduct waste audits, develop waste reduction workplans and source separate recyclable materials. Details of Ontario's 3Rs Regulations and guides on audits and workplans can be found on the Ministry of the Environment's website, www.ene.gov.on.ca/pic.htm.

Many companies have already instituted waste reduction programs knowing that the financial benefits to their business would be substantial. These benefits come in the form of reduced disposal charges, lower supply cost and an enhanced corporate image. In general, waste reduction is a means of achieving a higher degree of efficiency in your operation.

This fact sheet and others in the series have been developed by the Association of Municipal Recycling Coordinators (AMRC), and funded by the Province of Ontario, to assist you in your waste diversion efforts. The tips given here are by no means a complete list of possible reduction methods, but they will provide a solid basis for beginning a waste diversion program.

- ◆ Use cloths for general cleaning and not paper towels.
- ◆ Set up a recycling program for all "blue box" materials and provide receptacles in convenient locations around the office.
- ◆ Eliminate personal garbage pails to make disposal less convenient; instead, provide centralized containers.
- ◆ Purchase a vermicomposter for organic waste.
- ◆ Make it a policy to turn off lights and other office equipment when they are not in use.
- ◆ Centrally post or circulate memos, documents, reports, etc. as opposed to providing each person with an individual copy. Use an electronic bulletin board for private memos.
- ◆ Purchase non-hazardous cleaners and inks.
- ◆ Re-ink toner cartridges, typewriter and computer printer ribbons.
- ◆ Install hand dryers or cloth towel dispensers, along with water saving devices in all bathrooms.
- ◆ Replace incandescent light bulbs with energy efficient halogen or fluorescent versions.

PHOTOCOPIER AND FAX MACHINE

- ◆ Minimize the use of these machines. Do you need a copy? Do they?
- ◆ Make two-sided photocopies. If a single-sided machine is being used, reverse the pages and feed them through a second time.
- ◆ Use the reduction feature on the copier to fit more on one page.
- ◆ Purchase a "plain paper" facsimile machine to eliminate the need for non-recyclable thermal facsimile paper.
- ◆ Use a facsimile stamp or reusable fax forms instead of a cover page to minimize paper waste.
- ◆ Use old paper (i.e. one side has been used) in the fax machine.

AT YOUR DESK AND COMPUTER

- ◆ Use computer disks to edit/alter draft documents. Only print out a hard copy of the final document.
- ◆ Single space the text of documents.
- ◆ Reuse scrap paper, envelopes, etc. for notes, messages and draft work.
- ◆ Use refillable pens, pencils, and tape dispensers.
- ◆ Bring litterless lunches, and reusable coffee mugs.
- ◆ Close the curtains or blinds in your office before you leave. This minimizes heat loss in the winter and keeps the office cool in the summer.
- ◆ Save and reuse old file folders, hanging files, etc.
- ◆ Can you replace your memo or letter with a telephone call or face-to-face conversation?
- ◆ Reuse envelopes by placing a new address label over the original name. Plain labels with your office's address can be used to cover the original return address.
- ◆ Get involved in the office 3Rs program.
- ◆ Turn off all equipment on your desk when not in use, and the lights if you are the last to leave.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

*Ministry of
the Environment
Public Information
Centre*
1-800-565-4923
picemail@ene.gov.on.ca
www.ene.gov.on.ca/pic.htm

*Association of
Municipal
Recycling
Coordinators (AMRC)*
519-823-1990
amrc@amrc.ca
www.amrc.ca

*Ontario Waste
Management
Association
(OWMA)*
905-791-9500
mgoulding@owma.org
www.owma.org

*Your
Local Municipality*

Note—There are many websites dedicated to “greening” offices and meetings. Environment Canada has prepared, “WORKING YOUR WAY TO A GREEN OFFICE: A Guide to Creating an Environmentally Friendly Office,” available online at www.atl.ec.gc.ca/udo/office/office.html. You can search for other sites, or ask your local municipality for more information.

This publication is part of a series of Waste Reduction Fact sheets that are available from your local municipality. Additional Fact Sheets can be obtained on a variety of industrial, commercial and institutional sectors (automotive, commercial printing, etc.), and various business operations (e.g. offices, cafeterias and lunch rooms, etc.). Please contact your local municipality for more information.