

Facts About...

Source Reduction at the Office

Maryland
Department
of the
Environment

The Facts

The average office worker generates 3 pounds of waste each day*. A breakdown of waste generation rates for businesses has been developed by the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) and is available at www.ciwmb.ca.gov/WasteChar/WasteGenRates/default.htm. CIWMB has also compiled a comprehensive list of the types of waste materials disposed by certain types of businesses www.ciwmb.ca.gov/WasteChar/BizGrpCp.asp. While specific to California, the data presented can be used by similar businesses everywhere in identifying their waste management options.

What is Source Reduction? Simply stated, Source Reduction is the elimination of waste before it is created. It involves the design, manufacture, purchase, or use of materials and products to reduce the amount or toxicity of what is thrown away. Source Reduction, can go a long way to reducing the costs associated with the transportation, disposal or recycling of waste. Best of all, practicing Source Reduction can save you money!

What Can Your Office Do?

Save Paper and Save Money!!!

- 💰 Make double-sided copies.
- 💰 Circulate one copy of a memo rather than issuing one copy to every employee.
- 💰 Request that your office be removed from catalog and junk fax mailing lists.
- 💰 Post announcements on bulletin boards or e-mail announcements to employees.
- 💰 Use the back of old letterhead and memos for copies of drafts & internal documents.
- 💰 Compose, edit, and submit for approval all documents on computer prior to printing.
- 💰 Make documents available on-line.
- 💰 Use e-mail and voice mail instead of memos whenever possible.
- 💰 Use the telephone instead of fax whenever possible.
- 💰 Use the backs of old envelopes for phone messages.
- 💰 Use a central filing system.
- 💰 Update distribution lists.
- 💰 Reduce the size of business forms.
- 💰 Test the copier with short runs before making a large run.
- 💰 Use only targeted direct mailings.
- 💰 Use reversible "two-use" envelopes for items that require a response.
- 💰 Post a list of paper saving tips at each copy machine.



Reduce and Reuse



- Replace towel dispensers with hot air hand dryers.
- Rent infrequently-used tools and equipment.
- Practice preventive maintenance on office equipment.
- Reupholster office furnishings.
- Donate unused furniture and equipment.
- Use reusable table settings, glassware, mugs, and table linen.
- Use rechargeable batteries.
- Use tape dispensers and reusable calendars.
- Shred waste paper for use as packing material.

Smart Buying

- 💡 Buy only what you need.
- 💡 Buy retread tires for fleet autos.
- 💡 Buy refillable toner cartridges.
- 💡 Buy refillable pens and mechanical pencils.
- 💡 Buy sturdy office supplies and equipment.
- 💡 Request reduced packaging from your suppliers in bid specifications.
- 💡 Give a price preference for items that meet source reduced guidelines.
- 💡 Implement an inventory management system to control waste.



*Average of 1992 Washington State Waste Characterization Study, 1994 Montgomery Co. Non-Residential Waste Generation Analysis, 1998 CA. Integrated Waste Management Board Generation Rates, and EPA's 1977 Office Paper Recycling Guide.

Sources:

1. National Office Paper Recycling Project, *Office Paper Recycling Guide*, 202-223-3089
2. EPA, *Waste Prevention Pays Off*, (EPA/530-K-92-005), 800-424-9346
3. EPA, *Business Guide for Reducing Solid Waste*, (EPA/530-K-92-004), 800-424-9346
4. EPA, *Reusable News*

MDE would like to thank the Anne Arundel County Dept. of Public Works Waste Management Services Recycling Division for the use of their source reduction informational sheets.



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