

Reduce Solid Waste

Source: EPA website: <http://www.epa.gov/osw/wycd/catbook/the12.htm>

When evaluating the types of strategies to incorporate in order to reduce the amount solid waste disposed of; the major waste reduction strategies are source reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting. Source reduction involves businesses designing and manufacturing products to reduce waste and toxicity of their products. Source reduction is practiced when individuals & businesses deliberately purchase or use materials (such as products and packaging) in ways that reduce the volume of trash created and/or to reduce the toxicity of trash created.

A product's packaging serves many purposes. Its primary purpose is to protect and contain a product. It also can prevent tampering, provide information, and preserve hygienic integrity and freshness. Some packaging, however, is designed largely to enhance a product's attractiveness or prominence on the store shelf. Since packaging materials account for a large volume of the trash we generate, they provide a good opportunity for reducing waste. In addition, keep in mind that as the amount of product in a container increases, the packaging waste per serving or use usually decreases.

Reducing Product Packaging:

Source: EPA website

When choosing between two similar products, select the one with the least unnecessary packaging.

- Remember that wrenches, screwdrivers, nails, and other hardware are often available in loose bins. At the grocery, consider whether it is necessary to purchase items such as tomatoes, garlic, and mushrooms in prepackaged containers when they can be bought unpackaged.
- When appropriate, use products you already have on hand to do household chores. Using these products can save on the packaging associated with additional products.
- Recognize and support store managers when they stock products with no packaging or reduced packaging. Let clerks know when it's not necessary to double wrap a purchase.
- Consider large or economy-sized items for household products that are used frequently, such as laundry soap, shampoo, baking soda, pet foods, and cat litter. These sizes usually have less packaging per unit of product. For food items, choose the largest size that can be used before spoiling.
- Consider whether concentrated products are appropriate for your needs. They often require less packaging and less energy to transport to the store, saving money as well as natural resources.
- Whenever possible, select grocery, hardware, and household items that is available in bulk. Bulk merchandise also may be shared with friends or neighbors.
- It is important to choose food services that are appropriate to your needs. One alternative to single food services is to choose the next largest serving and store any leftovers in a reusable container.

Reducing Product Waste Toxicity:

Source: EPA website

In addition to reducing the amount of materials in the solid waste stream, reducing waste toxicity is another important component of source reduction. Some jobs around the home may require the use of products containing hazardous components. Nevertheless, toxicity reduction can be achieved by following some simple guidelines.

- Take actions that use nonhazardous or less hazardous components to accomplish the task at hand. Instead of using pesticides, for example, plant marigolds in your garden to ward off certain pests. In some cases, you may be using less toxic chemicals to do a job, and in others, you may use

some physical method, such as sandpaper, scouring pads, or just a little more elbow grease, to achieve the same results.

- Learn about alternatives to household items containing hazardous substances. In some cases, products that you have around the house can be used to do the same job as products with hazardous components. [Source Reduction Alternatives Around the Home](#),
- If you do need to use products with hazardous components, use only the amounts needed. Leftover materials can be shared with neighbors or donated to a business, charity, or government agency, or, in the case of used motor oil, recycled at a participating service station. Never put leftover products with hazardous components in food or beverage containers.
- For products containing hazardous components, read and follow all directions on product labels. Make sure the containers are always labeled properly and stored safely away from children and pets. When you are finished with containers that are partially full, follow local community policy on household hazardous waste disposal. If at any time you have any questions about potentially hazardous ingredients in products and their impacts on human health, do not hesitate to call your local poison control center.

Reducing Paper Consumption:

- Elect to opt out of junk mail, yellow pages, magazines, etc.
 1. <https://www.catalogchoice.org/?gclid=CPCu9rb-h6cCFUS5Kgod6zajfA>
 2. <http://www.yellowpagesoptout.com/homepage>
 3. <https://www.optoutprescreen.com/?rf=t>
- Pay bills on-line and receive your monthly statements on-line.
- Print drafts on blank used paper or better yet develop work from your computer only.
- Print and make copies on front and back of paper.
- Reduce font sizes and expand margins to decrease volume of documents.
- Store files electronically and not a paper copy.
- Communicate through voice or by electronic methods.

Reducing Tree, Yard and Food Waste:

- Consider composting yard waste and food waste.
<http://www.epa.gov/wastes/conserves/composting/index.htm>
- Practice grass-cycling which leaves grass clippings on our yards.
<http://www.kansasgreenyards.org/p.aspx?tabid=32>
- Consider mulching your tree limbs.