

101 WASTE REDUCTION TIPS FOR BUSINESSES



Recycling Tips

1. Designate a recycling coordinator to be in charge of the recycling program.
2. Label and/or color-code recycling and trash bins appropriately. List the specific materials that can (and cannot) go into the bins.
3. Make sure containers are appropriately sized. Bins that are too small or too large can create problems.
4. Place recycle bins in convenient locations so staff will use them instead of garbage containers. For example, place paper-recycling containers near photocopiers and printers.
5. Make sure every garbage can has a recycling bin next to it.
6. Educate all employees about your recycling program. Reinforce the message regularly.
7. Collect CRV containers from the break room and use the money for a staff function or to buy supplies for the lunchroom.
8. Reward individual employees (or departments) for "contaminant-free" recyclables. Offer incentives such as gift certificates to restaurants/cafes.
9. Create contests to maintain interest in the recycling program.
10. Provide employees with updated information on how programs are succeeding (using graphics, like a thermometer, to chart progress is effective "How much CRV have we collected?"). Tracking success is important to keep employees interested and to market your efforts.
11. Know your waste - understanding what your wastes are and how much waste your business is generating will help you develop the most cost effective waste reduction program.
12. Keep up-to-date with existing legislation concerning solid waste management; make sure that florescent bulbs/tubes, batteries and electronics are not ending up in your trash.

Business Reuse Options

13. Prior to recycling or disposing, find out if packaging materials could be reused by your company or another business.
14. Look for opportunities to exchange waste by-products (for example, pallets or cardboard boxes) with neighbors.
15. Reuse large and/or padded envelopes for mailings.
16. Reuse cardboard boxes for outgoing shipments. Produce a "We Reuse" label to place on boxes. Most customers will appreciate your efforts to reduce waste.
17. Establish a reuse center in the office where employees can pick up unwanted binders, stationary supplies, etc.
18. Sell/give away old office equipment to employees or donate it to reuse centers or charitable organizations.
19. Give away old copies of journals, newspapers and magazines to interested organizations or staff. See the Recyclopedia at DavisRecycling.org for a list of organizations that accept materials for reuse.
20. Purchase products with no packaging, less packaging, or reusable packaging. Ask vendors and suppliers to provide supplies that are not over-packaged and request that they take back excess packaging for reuse.
21. Reduce wood waste by requiring suppliers to collect crates, pallets, barrels, and spools for reuse. These items may also be used internally or can be given to employees to take home.

Office Waste Reduction

22. Purchase 100% recycled content stationary and other office supplies with recycled and/or recyclable content.
23. Buy solar-powered calculators, refillable pens, pencils, and tape dispensers, and reusable calendars. Reuse is better than recycling!
24. Refill your spent printing cartridges, or if that is not a possibility, recycle them.
25. Email or circulate memos rather than copying for everyone.
26. Encourage staff not to print out emails unless necessary.
27. Set photocopiers and printers for automatic two-sided copies.
28. Program fax machines, photocopiers, and printers so they do not produce unwanted header or report sheets.
29. Edit work-in-progress reports on a computer before printing it out on paper.
30. Make two-sided printing and copying standard practice (set machines to default to two-sided printing).
31. Encourage single spacing of documents. Reduce font sizes and margin sizes wherever possible to reduce paper when printing.
32. Use the reverse side of paper for note taking.
33. Use white boards with erasable markers instead of paper flip charts.
34. Avoid over production of marketing and publicity materials by reviewing distribution lists and regularly updating databases.
35. Design marketing materials that require no envelope – simply fold and mail.

Break Room Waste Reduction

36. Encourage employees to bring drinks, soups, sandwiches, etc. in reusable or refillable containers.
37. Provide reusable utensils, plates, bowls, mugs and glasses for employees.
38. Purchase lunchroom condiments such as coffee, sugar and cream in bulk and dispense in reusable containers.
39. Encourage employees to take their food waste home for composting. Or call the City Recycling Program (757-5686) for assistance in setting up a worm composting bin.

Restaurant Waste Reduction

40. Distribute condiments from behind the counter, or use health department-approved, refillable condiment dispensers instead of individual packets.
41. Donate leftover food from the kitchen to local food banks. California's "Good Samaritan" law protects the donor from liability if the food is properly stored and handled.
42. Collect produce scraps for composting or donate them to local farmers for composting or animal feed.
43. Work with suppliers to minimize the use of materials that are difficult to recycle, such as waxed cardboard.
44. Serve beverages from a beverage gun or dispenser, buy bar mixes in concentrate form, and buy milk in 5-gallon dispenser boxes.
45. Buy shelf-stable food supplies in bulk when sales volume and storage space allows.
46. Consider buying your lettuce pre-cut during those times of the year when the pre-cut cost is equal to (or less than) the cost of the bulk product.
47. Buy meats in bulk or uncut form and cut to size.
48. Whenever possible, prepare foods to order.
49. When prepping food, only trim off what is not needed.

50. Use vegetable and meat trimmings for soup stock.
51. Adjust the size of meal portions if you find they are consistently being returned unfinished.
52. Use reusable coasters (or nothing at all) instead of paper napkins when serving beverages from the bar.
53. Use reusable table linen and dinnerware.
54. Use reusable hats for kitchen employees instead of disposable paper ones.
55. Ask customers if they want a straw or not.
56. Serve straws from health department-approved dispensers rather than pre-wrapped, and offer only one straw per drink.
57. Minimize the use of unnecessary extra packaging of take-out foods. Use less packaging for eat-in foods than for food being taken out, or use none at all.
58. Offer customers a discount if they bring their own mugs, containers, or bags.
59. Place a recycling bin in the dining area for your customers' empty beverage containers.

Hotel Waste Reduction

60. Minimize waste by replacing disposable room amenities with refillable or reusable substitutes.
61. Establish purchasing guidelines to encourage the use of durable, repairable equipment, and high-quality, reusable products such as linen and tableware.
62. Donate soap and toiletries to local shelters.
63. Reuse old linens as aprons or towels, or donate them to local charities.
64. Donate old furniture and equipment to institutions or charity.
65. Urge guests to reduce waste in their guest rooms. For instance, a guest may choose not to have linens and towels replaced every day.
66. Place recycling containers for guests to use or have cleaning staff collect old telephone books, magazines, newspapers and beverage containers for recycling.
67. Before a conference, announce to participating corporations, associations, and attendees that waste prevention and recycling will be taking place.
68. If plastic badge holders are used at conferences, place collection bins at the meeting to collect them for reuse at another conference.
69. Don't offer wasteful gifts and premiums that conference attendees are likely to just throw away after the conference. Give something useful, such as commuter mugs with the corporation logo.
70. Use recycled paper products and plan for recycling by placing recycling containers at all meeting sites.

Property Management Waste Reduction

71. Use durable, recycled and recyclable materials when doing maintenance and repairs.
72. Obtain and recycle material through the California Materials Exchange (CalMAX) or a local material exchange. Materials exchanges help businesses and institutions locate markets for materials they have traditionally discarded and to find materials suitable for reuse.
73. Contact local processors who accept construction/renovation debris for recycling.
74. Use sensors or timers to automatically turn equipment on and off. This can reduce wear on equipment and energy costs.

75. Purchase reusable air filters or air filter frames. Completely reusable air filters require cleaning with hot water (no soap); reusable frames have a disposable filter insert. Some organizations have found it cost effective to hire a firm that replaces filter inserts on a regular schedule.
76. Make recycling available to residents.
77. Inform all residents of the recycling program.
78. Tour new residents through your property; show them where the recycling containers are.
79. Use a bulletin board in a common area, or an email list to send residents community updates instead of sending paper bulletins.
80. When residents move out, encourage them to donate their unwanted materials instead of throwing them away.
81. Encourage new residents to recycle their cardboard boxes when they move in.
82. Recycle motor oil, antifreeze, paint, etc., used by grounds keeping and maintenance staff.

Retail Waste Reduction

83. Give your customers the choice of whether or not they want their purchase bagged.
84. Offer a discount to customers who bring their own bag.
85. Offer reusable bags for sale.
86. Accept plastic and paper bags back from customers for recycling.
87. Offer products that are made from recycled material and/or are recyclable or compostable.

Custodial Waste Reduction

88. Purchase cleaning supplies in bulk and concentrate form. These give you more product for less packaging, and are usually less expensive.
89. Use cleaners without toxic, corrosive and flammable chemicals. Read labels. Look for products that do not require special handling and/or do not have warnings.
90. Dispense cleaning solutions in refillable containers like pump-spray bottles. Use products in non-aerosol containers where possible.
91. Use cloth towels for cleaning, rather than the paper equivalents.
92. Use multipurpose cleaners that can be used for all types of surfaces rather than cleaners that are job specific.
93. Eliminate trash bag liners in waste cans where no wet trash is disposed.

Landscaping Waste Reduction

94. Compost yard trimmings and use them as a topsoil amendment.
95. Chip tree trimmings and use as mulch.
96. Plant drought-tolerant plants, they use less water and produce fewer trimmings.
97. Avoid over-fertilizing and over-watering, which lead to thatch buildup and excess lawn clippings.
98. Practice "grasscycling" by leaving grass clippings on the lawn as you mow, and allow them to decompose naturally.
99. Practice integrated pest management, which encourages biological pest controls and minimum applications of pesticides.
100. Return plant containers to vendors.
101. Turn off automatic irrigation in the winter when it rains.