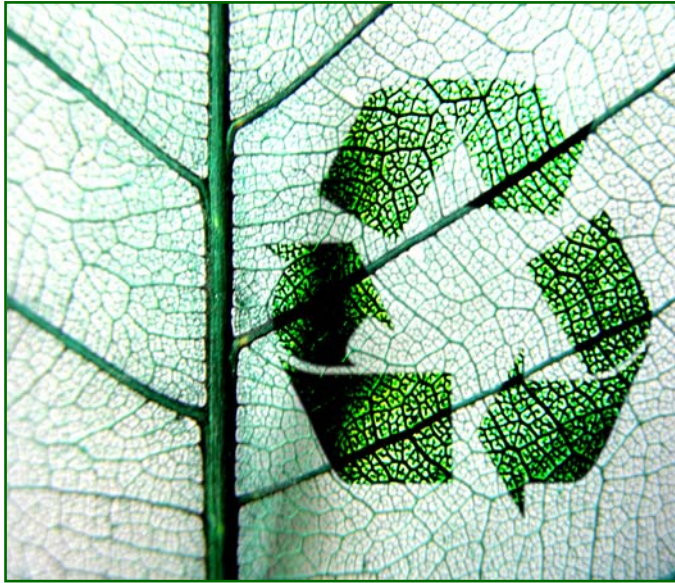


Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle!!!



OVERVIEW

In the past 35 years, the amount of waste generated per person has almost doubled from 2.7 to 4.4 pounds per day. Throughout the country, many businesses, communities, and individuals have found creative ways to better manage Municipal Solid Waste, more commonly known as trash or garbage, by practicing and implementing programs that reduce, reuse and recycle.

WHAT ARE THE 3 R's?

- * **Reduce** refers to waste prevention, or “source reduction,” meaning consuming and throwing away less. Source reduction actually prevents the generation of waste in the first place, therefore, it is the most preferred method.
- * **Reuse** defines the further or repeated use of a waste material. Reusing products surpasses recycling due to the fact that the material does not need to be reprocessed before it can be used again.
- * **Recycle**-Recycling turns materials that would otherwise become waste into a valuable resource. Furthermore, it generates a multitude of environmental, financial, and social benefits.

PUTTING THE 3 R's TO PRACTICE

Reduce

1. Buy products that don't have a lot of packaging.
2. Start a compost bin to dispose of certain foods and yard waste. Over time, the materials will breakdown through a process called decomposition. The compost makes a good soil amendment for your yard and means less waste will go into the landfill.
3. Use a computer! Many newspapers and magazines are online now. Instead of buying paper versions, view them on the Internet instead. This helps reduce the amount of excess waste paper generated through entertainment.
4. When purchasing items you use less often, order only what you need-avoid excess!

Reuse

1. Avoid throwing away clothes, furniture, toys, etc., that you don't want anymore. Give them to a center that collects donations, friends, or even have a yard sale.
2. Use cloth napkins or towels instead of paper material.
3. Save coffee cans, shoe boxes, empty glass jars, plastic containers, and other types of containers to store household items or to hold leftover food.

Recycle

1. Set up household recycling bins for products you use everyday that contain recyclable material, like paper, aluminum, plastic, and tin cans.
2. In addition to recycling the products you buy, help "close the loop" by purchasing items made from recycled materials.



BENEFITS OF THE 3 R's!!!

- * **Conserves natural resources**-Anytime consumers throw items away, waste is created. However, waste is also created throughout the life cycle of a product. By reusing items or creating less of a product, fewer materials will need to be recycled or transported to landfills.
- * **Reduces costs**-Preventing waste from entering the landfill provides economic savings for businesses, communities, and individual consumers. Examples of reduced cost include: "pay-as-you-throw" programs, profit margins for businesses practicing source reduction, and consumer savings for individuals who purchase products with less packaging.
- * Prevents emissions of many greenhouse gases and water pollutants. Recycling saves energy that would otherwise be spent producing virgin raw materials and provides a reduction in the need for new landfills and incinerators.
- * Recycling creates new jobs while stimulating the development of greener technologies.

SOURCE REDUCTION AND REUSE FACTS

- More than 55 million tons of municipal solid waste was source reduced in the United States in 2000, the latest year for which these figures are available.
- There are more than 6,000 reuse centers around the country, ranging from specialized programs for building materials and unneeded materials to local programs such as Goodwill and the Salvation Army.
- Since 1977, the weight of a 2-liter plastic soft drink bottle has been reduced from 68 grams each to 51 grams. That means 250 million pounds of plastic per year has been kept out of the waste stream.
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RECYCLING FACTS AND FIGURES

- In 1999, recycling and composting activities prevented about 64 million tons of material from ending up in landfills and incinerators. Today, this country recycles 32 percent of its waste, a rate that has almost doubled during the past 15 years.
- Twenty years ago, only one curbside recycling program existed. By 2005, almost 9,000 curbside programs have been implemented across America.
- As recycling has grown in general, recycling of specific materials has grown even more drastically: 52 percent of all paper, 31 percent of all plastic soft drink bottles, 45 percent of all aluminum used beverage cans, 63 percent of all steel packaging, and 67 percent of all major appliances are now recycled.

Figure 3. Recycling Rates of Selected Materials, 2006

