

# What Is Waste Prevention?

**It is not recycling! It's proven strategies that can save you money on disposal and supplies by reducing or preventing waste at the source - stopping garbage before it starts. Take a look at what others are doing to successfully reduce their waste.**

## Reusing Materials In-house

- **Nordstrom** (Seattle, WA) - Replaced plastic garment bags used to cover clothes on trolleys with reusable nylon bags.
- **Dominion Automotive Industries** (Kent, WA) - Reuses roughly 70% of incoming shipping cartons instead of purchasing new cardboard boxes.

## Purchasing to Prevent Waste

- **Masonic Home of Washington** (Des Moines, WA) - Buys concentrated glass, floor and disinfectant cleaners in large 5 gallon jugs that are attached to a uniform dispensing system. Once emptied, the supplier takes back the 5-gallon jugs for refill.
- **Budget Rent A Car** (SeaTac, WA) - Installed three 120-gallon tanks to hold glass cleaner, whitewall cleaner and car wash soap. The tanks, which are directly filled from containers on a suppliers's truck, have replaced 55-gallon drums. From here the company refills 5-gallon buckets that are distributed to all their locations throughout the Puget Sound area.

## Reducing Product Packaging

- **Millstone Coffee** (Everett, WA) - Switched to smaller plastic bags for light roasted coffee instead of using the same size bag for all beans. Light roasted beans are smaller and do not require the same size bag.

- **Kema Hair** (Issaquah, WA) - Established a dispensing center for hair care products where customers can receive a \$1.00 discount when they bring back their used containers to be refilled from bulk dispensers.

## Donating Reusable Items

- **Washington Mutual Tower** (Seattle, WA) - Provides unused toilet paper, removed during nightly restroom maintenance, to five nonprofit organizations.
- **United Airlines** (SeaTac, WA) - Donates unprepared or prepared, but unserved food to area feeding programs through Seattle's Table, a nonprofit, food-collection agency.

## Reusing Materials Through a Supplier

- **Puget Consumers' Co-op** (Seattle, WA) - Arranged a system to send local produce, headed for PCC's markets, in reusable plastic containers. These containers replaced unrecyclable one-use, waxed cardboard boxes. Empty plastic containers are backhauled at the same time deliveries are made.
- **Elf Atochem North America** (Tacoma, WA) - Worked with their supplier to ship deliveries of chromium catalyst in reusable drums in place of single-use bags. The drums are collected, cleaned and returned for refill.

## Improving Efficiency to Prevent Waste

- **K.D. Auto Body** (Puyallup, WA) - Reduced masking paper waste by switching to a liquid spray mask that protects painted surfaces, glass and trim from overspray, and can be washed off with water when the job is finished.
- **American Building Supply** (Kent, WA) - Streamlined office forms to reduce their size from five pages to three.

## Saving Paper and Money

The following waste prevention ideas can be put to use in your organization.

- ❑ **Modify or eliminate the fax cover sheet.** Instead of using a full page, use a half page. Better yet, don't use a cover sheet at all. Attach small Post-It™ fax transmission stickers to the first page of your fax, or purchase a rubber stamp that imprints a place to write the transmittal information directly on the top sheet.
- ❑ **Reduce "junk mail."** Directly contact the publishers of written materials your business receives but are not used. It is helpful to provide them with the exact wording of the mailing label on the publication. To reduce outgoing mail, periodically update all mailing lists and provide recipients with options to reduce the mail they receive from you. As a direct mailer, unwanted mail costs you money.
- ❑ **Send two-way envelopes for mailings requiring a response.** You can save on paper and postage by eliminating an additional return envelope.
- ❑ **Make scratch pads and forms from unused discarded paper.** Collect paper printed on just one side and have it "padded" and cut to size at any print shop. In addition to blank note pads, make other commonly used internal forms such as "While You Were Out" message pads.
- ❑ **Set up an office materials reuse station.** This includes paper products such as incoming mailing envelopes and boxes of all sizes. Cross out or use adhesive labels to cover old

addresses. If necessary, rubber stamps can be bought that say, "This envelope is being reused as part of our environmental commitment."

- ❑ **Buy a plain paper fax machine.** Faxes come out on plain paper so unneeded faxes can be easily recycled. Since the faxes are less apt to fade, this eliminates extra photocopying. The initial machine expense is greater than the cost of buying a thermal fax machine, but the lower cost of plain paper and the disposal cost savings from being able to recycle the faxes means a more cost-effective and environmentally beneficial investment over the long term.

## Getting Started

- ❑ Put waste prevention on the agenda at staff meetings.
- ❑ Brainstorm and record waste problems facing your department.
- ❑ Ask open-ended questions to identify the underlying cause of each problem. Use the Rule of 5: ask "Why?" 5 times.
- ❑ Identify the most critical problems based on cost to the department and impact on customer satisfaction.
- ❑ Set a goal for dealing with your No. 1 problem. Agree on how to measure your success.
- ❑ Brainstorm solutions to meet your goal. Come up with as many creative alternatives as possible.
- ❑ Agree on the criteria for making your decision.
- ❑ Create an action plan.
- ❑ Reinforce, reward, and publicize positive results.
- ❑ Problem solving is a continuous process. Go back to your original list of problems.

## At Your Service

The Resource Venture provides *free* information, assistance and referrals to help Seattle businesses improve their environmental performance. We are a partnership of the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce and Seattle Public Utilities.