

# Florida *Green School Designation Program*

## Best Management Practice

### Waste Reduction, Reuse and Recycling



Many companies and large consumers across the U.S. are working to cut the amount of waste they produce. These wastes represent a significant loss of natural resources and school district funds. Waste Reduction starts by buying less and doing more with what we already have. We must become environmental stewards by implementing waste reduction initiatives.

Schools are notoriously large paper consumers, contributing to the large amount of waste they produce. Committing to a tangible 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) Program will help eliminate much of the waste. Reminding students, faculty, and staff which items can be recycled, and providing tips on how to limit waste goes a long way.



The following information provides Best Management Practices (BMPs) relating to each area of waste reduction. Reducing waste creates a more efficient management process.

#### **General Waste Reduction Best Management Practices**

**Prepare and follow a written waste reduction plan:** A written waste reduction plan is an integral part of any waste reduction effort. The plan should include the scope of the project or efforts, overall goals, and specific waste reduction target measures. Also, the plan should be structured so that the elimination of waste at the source, or source reduction, is the first goal followed by the reuse of material and finally recycling.

**Conduct a school-wide waste audit:** In order to clearly find out which waste is being generated; it is important to conduct a school-wide audit of all generated wastes. The audit can be broken down in specific high waste generation areas, such as the cafeteria and then compiled with data from other areas to get an accurate description of the waste generation issues.

**Track waste generation on a regular basis:** Tracking waste generation is not a difficult process. It can be accomplished by simply tracking the amount of waste that is picked up for disposal. Waste tracking will allow the facility to obtain measurements and data to assist in the waste reduction efforts by highlighting outstanding generation issues.

**Properly identify, track, store and dispose of hazardous materials according to appropriate environmental regulations:** Proper management of hazardous materials reduces the likelihood of exposure to students, staff, and the environment. Common examples of possible hazardous materials are large volumes of paints, oils, chemicals, batteries, pool supplies, and spent fluorescent bulbs. These materials must be stored and disposed of according to the correct environmental regulations. Fluorescent and HID bulbs cannot be disposed of in normal trash receptacles. These

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bulbs must be properly stored and labeled in a padded container and disposed of through a hazardous waste collection service.

**Prepare and follow a written 3R waste reduction plan:** This should be implemented school-wide and should detail each aspect of waste: Reducing, Reusing and Recycling.

#### Source Reduction Best Management Practices

##### **Adopt an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) Policy:**

EPP is a procurement system that leads to direct waste reductions at the source. Common types of EPP are purchasing supplies in bulk, buying products that have minimal packaging and participating in supplier and manufacturer take-back programs for items such as pallets and large containers.



**Set printers and copiers to duplex printing by default:** By printing on both sides, also called duplex printing, paper usage can be reduced by up to 50 percent. Change the default settings on all printers and copiers to print in duplex mode.

**Eliminate the use of polystyrene (Styrofoam) and plastic food service containers:** Plastic and polystyrene food service containers take up valuable space in landfills and are not biodegradable. By substituting these products with biodegradable and compostable materials, less waste will be generated.

**Reduce the purchasing of excess or inventory materials:** Buy only what is needed in the short term to reduce excess materials and waste.

**Remove or eliminate the storage and use of hazardous chemicals:** Although hazardous chemicals may be needed for certain appliances, try to move away from them where possible. Examples include switching from traditional cleaning chemicals to green cleaners. Green cleaners often have less stringent storage requirements than traditional cleaners and can lead to reduced green products. Visit [Green Seal](#), [EPA Safer Choice](#) Labeling, or [EcoLogo](#) to learn more.

#### Reuse Waste Reduction Best Management Practices

**Use old or discarded paper for notepads or class projects:** Used office paper can easily be cut into squares and reused as office notepads. This is especially true if the paper is only printed on one side. If duplex printing is used, shred paper for reuse as material for classroom projects.

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**Compost excess food and landscape trimmings:** in areas where excess prepared food items cannot be donated to local charities, compost these materials. As with excess food, landscape trimmings should not be sent to the landfill. These materials can be shredded or chipped and reapplied as soil amendments, such services can be arranged through local agricultural and landscaping resources.

### Recycling Waste Reduction Best Management Practices

**Develop an onsite recycling program from as many waste materials as possible:** Commonly recycled materials include aluminum, landscape waste, newspapers, cooking grease, food waste, glass, carpet, building materials, motor oils and liquids, plastic bottles and buckets, magazines, and batteries. Recycling services for all the above may not be available in your area. Check your local Recycling Coordinator on the availability of commercial recycling. You can find your local recycling coordinators on the DEP website at [Recycling Program](#). Institute recycling programs for as many as possible.



**Locate recycling containers and bins next to trash receptacles:** The most successful recycling programs make it easy to participate. Locating recycling containers next to trash receptacles will lead to an increased success rate for the recycling program. Also, provide easy instructions and directions on where these bins are located to both guests and staff.

**Clearly communicate what can be recycled:** Materials that are accepted for recycling should be clearly communicated to both guests and facility staff. One common way is to clearly define acceptable materials on the recycling containers themselves. Often a large print sticker can be used.

**Purchase recycled content supplies:** Participate in environmentally preferable purchasing by procuring materials that are made with recycled content instead of first-generation content. If possible, purchase supplies that contain at least 30 percent post-consumer recycled content. Common examples of items containing at least 30 percent post-consumer content are toilet tissue, paper towels, facial tissue, envelopes, office paper, and kitchen napkins.

