



# Florida *Green School Designation* Program Best Management Practices



## Waste Reduction, Reuse and Recycling

Many 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 with buying less and doing more with what we already have. We can protect environmental resources by implementing waste reduction initiatives.

Schools are large paper consumers, which contributes to the significant amount of waste they produce. Committing to a tangible 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) program will help eliminate much of that waste. Reminding students, faculty and staff which items can be recycled and providing tips on how to limit waste will help conserve natural resources.

Use Best Management Practices (BMPs) to help create an efficient waste reduction program.

### General Waste Reduction BMPs

#### **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. The plan should be structured so that the elimination of waste at the source, or source reduction, is the first goal, followed by reuse of materials and recycling.

#### **Conduct a facility-wide waste audit.**

To find out which wastes are being generated, conduct a facility-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 generated at your school.

#### **Track waste generation on a regular basis.**

Track the amount of waste that is picked up for disposal. Waste tracking will allow the school to obtain measurements and data to assist in the waste reduction efforts.

#### **Properly identify, track, store and dispose of hazardous waste materials according to appropriate environmental regulations.**

Proper management of hazardous materials reduces the likelihood of exposure of students, staff and the environment as a whole. Common examples of possible hazardous materials are large volumes of paints, oils, chemicals, pool supplies and spent fluorescent bulbs. All of these materials must be stored and disposed of according to appropriate environmental regulations. In particular, fluorescent bulbs cannot be disposed of in trash receptacles. These bulbs must be properly labeled, stored in a padded container, and disposed of through a hazardous waste collection service.



# Florida *Green School Designation* Program

## Best Management Practices



### **Prepare and follow a written 3R, Waste Reduction Plan.**

The plan should be implemented school-wide and should detail each aspect of waste: Reducing, Reusing and Recycling.

### **Source Waste Reduction BMPs**

#### **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 or 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 purchases 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 applications, 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 other cleaners and can lead to reduced exposure to harmful substances.

### **Reuse Waste Reduction BMPs**

#### **Use old or discarded office paper for notepads or class projects.**

Used office paper can easily be cut into squares and reused as office notepads, especially if the paper is only printed on one side. If duplex printing is used, shred paper for reuse as material for classroom projects.

#### **Compost excess food and landscape trimmings.**

In areas where excess prepared food items cannot be donated to local charities, compost these materials. Landscape trimmings can be shredded or chipped and reapplied as soil amendments. Such services can be arranged through local agricultural and landscaping resources.



# Florida *Green School Designation* Program Best Management Practices



## Recycling Waste Reduction BMPs

### **Develop an onsite recycling program for as many waste materials as possible.**

Commonly recycled materials include: aluminum, landscape waste, newspapers, food waste, glass, carpet, building materials, motor oil and liquids, plastic bottles and buckets, steel containers, office paper and supplies, electronics, ink cartridges, cardboards, fluorescent bulbs, magazines and batteries. Recycling services for all the above may not be available in your area. Check with your local Recycling Coordinator on the availability of commercial recycling. You can find local recycling coordinators on the DEP Web site at: [www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/categories/recycling](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/categories/recycling) 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 the trash receptacles will lead to an increased success rate for the recycling program. Also, provide easy instructions and directions where these bins are located to both students and staff.

### **Clearly communicate what can be recycled.**

Materials that are accepted for recycling should be clearly communicated to both the students and staff. List 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 made with recycled content. If possible, purchase supplies that contain at least 30 percent **post-consumer** recycled content. Common examples include toilet tissue, paper towels, facial tissue, envelopes and office paper.

### **Print educational and promotional materials on recycled paper or materials.**

Printing on paper with recycled content will lead to less pollution and energy consumption during the paper production process.