



Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Florida *Green School Designation* 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 with 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 go a long way.

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

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 as 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 wastes are 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 school 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 waste materials according to appropriate environmental regulations

Proper management of hazardous materials reduces the likelihood of exposure of students, faculty and the environment. Common examples of possible hazardous materials are large volumes of paints, oils, chemicals, pool supplies and spent fluorescent bulbs. These materials must be stored and disposed of according to the correct environmental regulations. Fluorescent bulbs cannot be disposed of in normal trash receptacles. These bulbs must be properly stored and labeled in a padded container and disposed of



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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 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 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 applications, 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 exposure to harmful substances.

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.

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.



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