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Environmental Protection
Agency

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Solid Waste and Emergency Response (5306)

EPA

WasteWise

EPA's Voluntary Program for Reducing Business Solid Waste

Recycled/Recyclable

Become a WasteWi$e Member!

Many U.S. companies have demonstrated that by reducing and recycling materials that would otherwise become trash, they can reap substantial savings, sometimes millions of dollars per year.

EPA developed the WasteWi$e program to assist businesses in taking cost-effective actions to reduce solid waste.

To accept the WasteWi$e challenge, your company would commit to achievements that **you** choose in each of three areas:

Waste prevention

Recycling collection

Buying or manufacturing recycled products

Why Reduce Solid Waste?

Each of the three waste reduction activities offers distinct benefits, both for the environment and your bottom line.

Waste Prevention

Waste prevention can save your company money through lower purchasing and disposal costs. It can also save your customers money by reducing what they throw out. Avoiding the generation of waste reduces the burden on disposal facilities, conserves natural resources, and often reduces pollution.

Recycling Collection

Collecting recyclables can help keep large amounts of material out of your company's dumpster. It can reduce your waste disposal bill and generate revenues from the sale of some materials. Recycling offers some of the same environmental benefits as waste prevention: extending the life of landfills, conserving natural resources, and reducing pollution.

Buying or Manufacturing Recycled Products

Recycled products are of high quality and can be competitively priced compared to virgin products. Buying and manufacturing goods with recycled content helps ensure that recycling will continue to advance and will eventually help lower the cost of recycled products.

Why Join WasteWi$e?

In addition to the benefits of waste reduction outlined above, participation in WasteWi$e offers several advantages.

- EPA will provide technical assistance via a hotline and electronic bulletin board, "how to" publications, lessons from other companies, and regular program updates.
- Successful waste reduction efforts will be highlighted in EPA documents, business magazines, environmental journals, and trade publications.
- Participating companies also may use the WasteWi$e logo in their advertising.
- WasteWi$e provides an opportunity for your firm to be viewed by peers and customers as a leader in environmental initiatives.

Commit to Achieving Waste Reduction Results

Becoming a WasteWi$e member means committing to achieve results in **each** of these three areas:

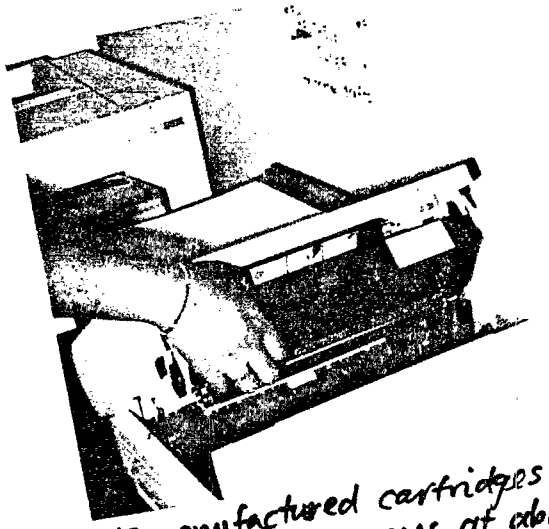
Waste prevention

Recycling collection

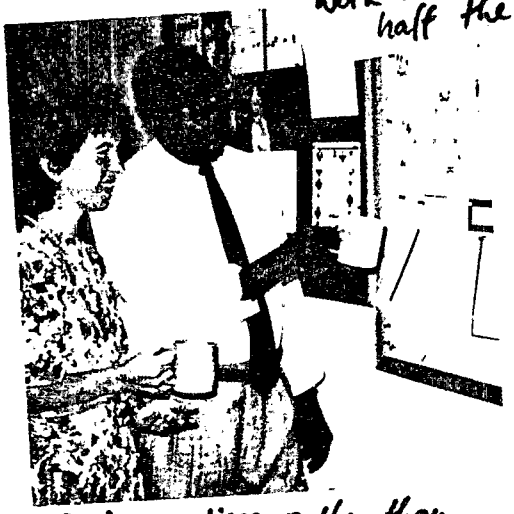
Buying or manufacturing recycled products

Waste Prevention

Waste prevention is eliminating waste before it is created. For many companies, this involves eliminating waste that would go into their own dumpsters, as well as materials that would become waste for their customers. Some ways to prevent waste are to use less of a material, reuse materials and supplies, and purchase products that create less waste.



Remanufactured cartridges work as well as new ones at about half the cost.



Posting notices, rather than distributing copies to all staff, can dramatically cut paper use.

What Would I Do as a WasteWi$e Member?

As a WasteWi$e member, you would commit to identify and implement three significant waste prevention actions. Your firm would choose these actions after you have determined that they are practical and cost-effective. The types of actions your firm could implement include:

- Purchasing supplies in reusable containers.
- Reducing paper use through electronic communication and double-sided photocopies.
- Leaving grass clippings on the lawn.
- Redesigning products or packaging to use less material.
- Working with vendors to reduce transport packaging.
- Using two-way envelopes for billing customers.

Recycling Collection

Recycling collection involves the separation, collection, storage, and removal of recyclable materials. It also includes composting materials off-site, such as in a municipal composting program. Items collected for recycling will vary depending on the materials your company generates and the availability of markets for those materials. Collection of recyclables is a high-profile activity that many companies are already enthusiastically implementing.

Employee education is essential to the success of your recycling program.

Igloos can be used to collect glass and other materials for recycling.

What Would I Do as a WasteWise Member?

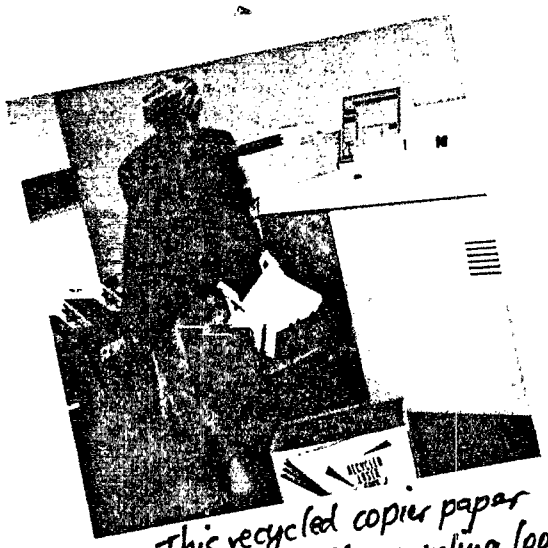
As a WasteWise member, you would commit to expand or improve programs for collecting recyclables on company premises. This may mean starting a new program, if you don't already have one. It could also mean making improvements to an existing program by adding new materials to be collected, improving program efficiency through activities like employee education, or providing community outreach.

Common recyclables include:

- Computer printout paper
- Corrugated cardboard
- Newsprint and magazines
- High-grade paper (e.g., copier paper)
- Low-grade paper (e.g., colored paper)
- Glass containers
- Plastic containers
- Aluminum containers
- Steel containers

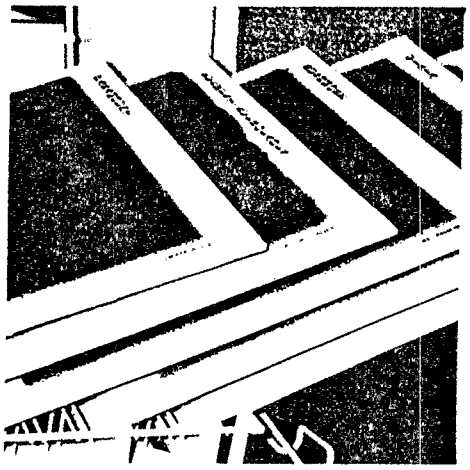
Buying or Manufacturing Recycled Products

Buying recycled means purchasing products that contain both preconsumer and postconsumer recovered materials. Company purchasing officials can work with your suppliers and vendors to determine which products contain recycled content. Often these products are competitively priced compared to virgin products.



This recycled copier paper helps close the recycling loop.

Manufacturing recycled, an option available to manufacturers, means increasing the amount of postconsumer recovered materials in products, thus ensuring that collected materials are used in new products.



Many products are available with recycled content like these carpets made from recycled bottles.

What Would I Do as a WasteWise Member?

For this part of the WasteWise program, **nonmanufacturing firms** would commit to increase the recycled content in purchased products, either by purchasing recycled products instead of virgin products or by increasing the recycled content in those recycled products that you already buy.

If you are a **manufacturer**, you have two options for meeting this part of the program: increase the recycled content in products purchased as described above **or** increase the percentage of postconsumer recovered material in your products. Some of the many products that contain recycled content:

Office/Printing

- Office paper
- Computer paper
- Newsprint

Fleet Management

- Lubricating oil
- Retread tires

Construction Products

- Dry wall
- Insulation
- Carpets
- Paving materials

Janitorial

- Tissue products
- Trash can liners

Shipping and Receiving

- Containers and packaging
- Pallets

How Does the Program Work?

There are four basic steps to setting and achieving your WasteWi$e goals.

1. Sign Up

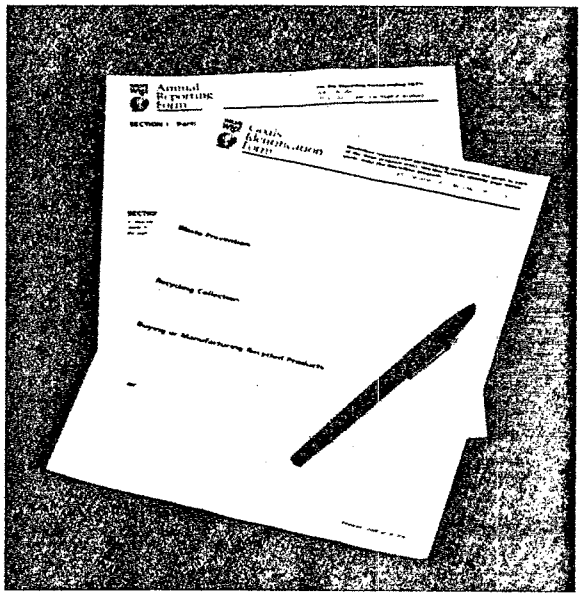
To join the WasteWi$e program, fill out the registration form at the end of this brochure and mail or fax the form to EPA. Be sure to complete sections A and B. Before completing the form, you'll need to determine:

- **The facilities that initially will be included in the program.** The challenge can be taken by your entire company or by individual segments, such as corporate headquarters or a specific region, division, or facility. If you start with a segment of your firm, you can always expand to other facilities in a year or two.
- **The senior official who will commit your company to the program.** Joining WasteWise requires the signature of a senior official who can commit company resources to the waste reduction program. It is also helpful if this person can effect changes in company operations such as purchasing and facilities management.

2. Get Started

To get started in WasteWi$e, it's important to understand your company's waste and how it is generated and handled. EPA will provide WasteWi$e members with *A Business Guide for Reducing Solid Waste* to get you started. The guide will help you take a look at your operations and make educated decisions about waste prevention, recycling, and buying recycled.

EPA will provide case studies of businesses that have achieved cost savings and improved operations through waste reduction. We'll also provide "tip sheets" that provide information on waste prevention, recycling, and buying recycled materials.



3. Choose Your Goals and Take Action

Based on your review of company operations, you'll choose the **waste prevention, recycling,** and **buying or manufacturing** actions that make the most sense for your firm. Using a one-page form that EPA will provide, let us know what your plans are, so that we can develop and provide targeted technical information to assist your waste reduction program. We'll also be available via telephone and electronic bulletin board to answer questions.

4. Share Your Results

After your program is underway, we'll ask you to share your results with EPA so that we can highlight waste reduction opportunities for others and gauge the program's progress. Using a simple form that EPA will provide, let us know each year how your waste reduction initiatives are progressing and estimate your firm's achievements in terms of:

- Waste prevented (weight or volume).
- Recyclables collected (weight or volume).
- Amount spent on products with increased recycled content **or** the increased amount (in terms of dollars or weight) of postconsumer content in products that you manufacture.

We'd also like to hear about any cost savings or other successes resulting from your waste reduction program.

EPA Assistance

The WasteWi$e program will offer several forms of technical assistance to help participating companies find waste reduction opportunities and set waste reduction goals. The following resources will be available to provide details on the elements of a successful program:

- EPA's *A Business Guide for Reducing Solid Waste.*
- Case studies of successful waste reduction by businesses.
- Tip sheets on waste reduction.
- Program updates.
- Additional sources of waste reduction information.

WasteWise staff will be available by telephone **(1-800-EPAWISE)** to assist you with questions on:

- Enrollment
- Waste assessments
- Goal setting
- Waste reduction tips
- Reporting

EPA's technical assistance will focus on nonmanufacturing waste reduction actions.

Waste Reduction Successes

These are just a few of the many firms that are successfully cutting waste . . .

Waste Prevention

State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company estimates that it saves approximately $300,000 each year through numerous waste prevention measures, including:

- Reducing or eliminating shrink wrap packaging on forms and handbooks.
- Using double-sided copies and electronic mail.
- Reusing remanufactured laser cartridges, pallets, three-ring binders, and packing materials.

McDonald's has made waste prevention part of its everyday business. Over the past year, through reductions in children's meal boxes and bags, sandwich wrap resizing, container packaging redesign, and other reductions, the average McDonald's restaurant in the United States has decreased its packaging by more than 650 pounds. These reductions resulted in a total of nearly 3,000 tons of avoided packaging waste from the 9,000 McDonald's restaurants.

Recycling Collection

In 1986, a small group of employees at **Honda of America's** Marysville, Ohio, auto assembly plant, called the "Wastewatchers," started a corrugated cardboard recycling program. Honda estimates that from 1990 to 1992, approximately 15,000 tons of corrugated cardboard were recycled, saving the company hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in avoided disposal costs.

Buying or Manufacturing Recycled Products

E.I. DuPont Company currently buys $63 million worth of recycled packaging materials and other recycled products each year. Since 1990, a "buy-recycled" team has worked to increase the company's purchases of packaging, paper products, plastics, office supplies, and construction materials with recycled content.

WasteWi$e Frequently Asked Questions

General

Q: What materials are included in the WasteWi$e program?

A: WasteWi$e is a municipal solid waste program focusing on reduction of materials that would otherwise end up in your trash dumpster. We also want to reduce materials that would end up in your customers' trash, if your firm's products or mailings eventually are discarded. Some examples of typical materials are corrugated cardboard, office paper, food scraps, packaging, and wood pallets. The program does not include hazardous or industrial waste or recycling of materials within a manufacturing process.

Q: What kind of technical assistance will EPA provide to help me get started?

A: A WasteWi$e hotline and electronic bulletin board will answer your questions about joining and implementing the program. In addition, you will receive business case studies and other materials to assist in planning your waste reduction program shortly after joining WasteWi$e. Although limited resources prevent EPA from visiting your offices to personally conduct a waste assessment, you will receive *A Business Guide for Reducing Solid Waste* to assist you in conducting a waste assessment. Tip sheets and program updates will be distributed periodically and be available through the bulletin board.

Q: What kind of public recognition does WasteWi$e provide to member companies?

A: EPA will provide the press with news stories and program updates on the collective behalf of member companies. Likewise, EPA will attempt to place notices (such as WasteWi$e public service announcements and special supplements) in trade publications, environmental magazines, and business journals. By distributing ready-to-use WasteWi$e materials, EPA will encourage members to publicize their participation. Members also may use the WasteWi$e logo in their own advertising. In addition, special recognition will be provided for exemplary programs on a regular basis.

Sign-Up

Q: Who signs the WasteWi$e registration form for my company, and do all company facilities have to sign up at once?

A: Any senior company official able to commit all or some of your facilities to a waste reduction program can sign the registration form. It is also helpful if this person can effect changes in company operations like purchasing and facilities management. The WasteWi$e challenge can be taken by your entire company or by individual segments, such as corporate headquarters or a specific region, division, or facility. If your initial commitment does not apply to your entire company, please specify which divisions or facilities will be participating in the program.

Q: My company is a member of another solid waste challenge program. May I still join WasteWi$e?

A: **Yes!** EPA applauds and strongly supports existing programs that promote one or more aspects of waste reduction. Such programs include the Conference of Mayors' *National Office Paper Recycling Project*, the National Recycling Coalition's *Buy Recycled Business Alliance*, and the Coalition of Northeastern Governors' (CONEG) *Challenge to Reduce Packaging*. Under these and other programs, many companies have taken the initiative to prevent waste, recycle, or buy and manufacture recycled products. If you have recently made a commitment under one or more programs, it is very likely that your actions will satisfy the parallel WasteWi$e component. We'll be happy to work with you to build on such efforts.

Q: My company has already made significant progress in reducing waste, recycling, and buying or manufacturing recycled. Do our past achievements qualify us for WasteWi$e membership?

A: EPA applauds the efforts of those companies that have taken the lead in waste reduction. We would like to hear about your earlier progress so that we may publicize exemplary efforts and share your successes with other member companies. The goal of WasteWi$e is to spur **additional** progress in business waste reduction nationwide. Therefore, we ask that new or expanded waste reduction initiatives be implemented for WasteWi$e membership.

Implementation

Q: How long do I have to achieve my WasteWi$e commitments?

A: The amount of time it takes to meet your WasteWi$e goals is up to you. It may take some time to get your waste reduction program up and running to the point where you have measurable results. Regardless of where you are in the process of implementing your program, EPA would like to hear from you at least once a year. Let us know about the progress you've made and obstacles you've encountered in implementing your waste reduction program.

Once your program is established, we would like to receive the following estimates each year by March 1:

- Waste prevented (weight or volume).
- Recyclables collected (weight or volume).
- Amount spent on products with increased recycled content **or** the increased amount (in terms of dollars or weight) of postconsumer content in products that you manufacture.

We will provide a simple form for you to use to report these estimates. Each year, EPA will compile WasteWi$e results into a progress report. Beginning after the first year of the program, EPA will provide special recognition on a regular basis for companies that have achieved outstanding results and supported this progress with numerical estimates.

Waste Prevention

Q: WasteWi$e requires companies to undertake three "significant" waste prevention actions. What qualifies as "significant"?

A: Although you will be the ultimate judge of which actions are significant and feasible for your company, significant waste prevention actions generally will result in a substantial reduction in the material being targeted.

For example, office paper is one of the largest components of many companies' waste. A significant effort to reduce paper usage probably would be composed of several smaller efforts such as double-sided copying, posting memos rather than routing to individuals, and reducing the number of "all employee" memos. Companies have found that these paper

reduction activities can dramatically reduce paper consumption, sometimes by hundreds of tons per year.

EPA will share examples of waste prevention programs that other companies have implemented and view as significant for their operations. Based on these examples and your firm's waste assessment, you can then decide what actions are significant for you.

Recycling

Q: My company already has a great recycling program. We collect office paper, metal cans, glass, and plastic. What can I do to expand or improve my program?

A: EPA recognizes that some companies already have well-developed collection programs. There are several potential ways to improve even the most comprehensive collection programs. First, check your operations to see what additional materials could possibly be collected (e.g., corrugated cardboard) and see if local markets make collection of these materials cost-effective. If collecting additional materials is not feasible, you could make sure that your collection program has been expanded to all possible facilities and offices, try to increase the proportion of each material you are already collecting, or decrease contaminants (e.g., colored paper in the white paper bin) through more employee education. For example, if your company has an orientation course for new employees, you could incorporate information on recycling. Where in-house recycling is well developed, you might also consider providing community education and outreach on recycling.

Buying or Manufacturing Recycled Products

Q: When buying recycled products, does both the preconsumer and postconsumer content of the products count as recycled content?

A: Yes, EPA's goal is to increase the total amount of recycled content in purchased goods, both preconsumer and postconsumer material. In order to provide additional incentive to manufacturers to use materials collected from business and community recycling programs in their products, WasteWise does encourage increases in recycled content to consist of postconsumer material.

Q: For manufacturing purposes, what is a postconsumer recovered material?

A: A postconsumer recovered material is a finished product or other material that has served its intended use and has been discarded for disposal or recovery, having completed its life as a consumer item. Postconsumer materials do not include those materials and by-products generated from, and commonly reused within, an original manufacturing process.

Q: What would my company do if it chooses the "manufacturing recycled" option?

A: Identify the product or product lines that you believe can accommodate increased postconsumer material and each year report your progress in achieving this increase. When you have achieved your goal, report the increased percentage of postconsumer content and the total increase in postconsumer material (in dollars or weight) attributable to the increased percentage. For example, if your company increased a product's postconsumer content from 10 to 15 percent, you would report the 5 percent increase and the dollars spent on acquiring the additional postconsumer material for all units of the product (or if this information is confidential, the weight of the additional postconsumer material).

WASTE WI$E

Registration Form

☐ **My company is ready to become a WasteWi$e member.** (Please complete both Sections A and B.)

☐ **I would like more information about the program.** (Please complete Section A.)

Section A

Company Name _____

Company SIC Code _____

Principal Contact _____

Title _____

Address _____

_____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____ Fax _____

Section B

My company is ready to become a WasteWi$e member! Please send a membership packet.

Facilities to be included in initial waste reduction efforts
(e.g., corporate headquarters only, regional facilities, all plants)

_____

Approximate number of employees in these facilities _____

Signature of Senior Official _____

Print Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

Please cut and mail to the WasteWi$e program at the address indicated. Or, fax to WasteWi$e at 703-308-8686.

cut here

WI$E

PLEASE
PUT
STAMP
HERE

WasteWi$e (5306W)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
401 M Street, SW
Washington, DC 20460

fold and seal