

SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO REDUCE WASTE AT HOME AND AT THE OFFICE

At Home

- Sign up for curbside recycling pickup, (and curbside pickup of yard debris if available) from your trash hauler.
- Recycle all the materials accepted in Fort Collins' curbside recycling program. You can recycle newspaper and inserts, aluminum cans, #1 and #2 plastic bottles, glass bottles and jars, and steel/tin cans. To recycle other materials call the City of Fort Collins Natural Resources Department at 970-221-6600 for a "*Recycling Center Directory*" that lists various drop-off recycling centers, or go to the on-line recycling directory at www.fcgov.com/recycling and click on recycling centers.
- Save kitchen food scraps for a compost pile.
- Use cloth napkins instead of paper napkins.
- Use old cotton t-shirts for rags.
- Use outdated or unwanted mail for scratch paper pads for phone messages and shopping lists, etc. Recycle what you can't use.
- Use durable products rather than disposable (e.g., plates, utensils, cloth towel, refillable pens, lighters, and razors).
- Use reusable containers or empty yogurt or butter tubs to store food instead of aluminum foil and cling wrap.
- Use rechargeable batteries.
- Shop at stores that offer products in "loose" form and bring your own durable containers to the store for filling. (e.g., flour, tea, coffee, pasta, beans, spices, nuts, etc.)
- Buy clean and green. Some of our favorite germ-killing cleaners, such as chlorine, are incredibly toxic pollutants. If baking soda and vinegar won't clean it (and they usually will), try some of the many environmentally friendly cleaning products available today. If you need to use household products that are hazardous or toxic, make sure you use all that you buy.
- Fix leaky faucets. A steady drip can waste up to 20 gallons of water a day.
- Run washing machine and dishwasher only when you have a full load.
- Install water saving devices on your showers and toilets.
- Turn off appliances and computers when not in use.
- Turn off water while brushing your teeth and shaving.
- Borrow books from the library rather than purchasing them.
- Choose gifts carefully. Remember, the sentiment will go a long way! Consider tickets, memberships, lessons, charitable donations in someone's name, planting a tree in someone's name, etc.
- Reduce unwanted mail, take your name off mailing list for items you no longer read.
- Donate reusable items to charity or nonprofit organization.
- Avoid impulse buying — do you really need it?

In the Yard

- Skip the yard work. Fifty to eighty percent of drinking water across the U.S. is used for landscaping, and power lawnmowers belch pollutants, and take up lots of our weekend time. When you're buying shrubs, perennials, annuals, and grasses, ask your garden center about *Xeriscape* alternatives—plantings that require little water, fertilizer, and upkeep because they're naturally adapted to your climate.
- Grasscycle: leave grass clippings on the lawn. As they decay, they release nutrients that improve the soil.

- Compost your leaves, grass clippings and yard debris in your own backyard. The finished compost can be used to plant flowers and vegetables.
- Use recycled wood chips as mulch to keep down weeds, retain moisture and prevent erosion.
- Use your compost to aerate and amend soil. It also reduces the amount of chemical fertilizers needed.

In Your Car

- Walk or ride a bike whenever possible.
- Keep your car tuned and check the air in your tires for better fuel efficiency.
- Carpool whenever possible.
- Use a litterbag in your car.
- Recycle your used oil and car batteries.
- Try to use the AC as little as possible.
- Use re-refined motor oil in your car.

When Shopping

In order to reduce or prevent waste, ask yourself the following questions when purchasing a product:

- Do I really need this?
- Can I find it used in a second-hand store or from the classifieds?
- Does this product contain any recycled materials—so I can help "close the loop?"
- Is there a better alternative? (i.e., a more durable product that contains recycled materials and can also be recycled later).
- Can I make do with what I have? (i.e., repair instead of replace it, then give it to someone else who can still use it, then recycle it whenever possible)
- Would it be more cost effective to rent this rather than purchase?
- Can this container or packaging be recycled in Fort Collins?

Other things you can do include:

- Bring your own canvas tote bags instead of using a paper or plastic bag.
- Tell the cashier that you don't need a bag for small purchases.
- Purchase items in bulk, but only if you can use it all.
- Purchase products in concentrate.
- Avoid products with excess packaging.
- Buy goods with minimal packaging. Don't buy single-use products such as disposable razors; paper napkins/towels; paper and plastic plates, cups, and utensils; trash can liners for the bathroom; dryer sheets. Avoid single-serving food items such as juice boxes, lunch items, cereal variety packs, etc., and container-within-container packaging.
- Skip the individual plastic product bags.
- Ask yourself if you really need the product.
- Buy products packaged in recycled materials.
- Buy products packaged in materials that are recyclable in your community.
- Reuse and recycle the shopping bags you take.

At Work

- Copy and print on both sides of the paper – set your copier to default to a double-sided setting.
- Reuse items as much as possible. For example, envelopes, manila folders, paper clips, etc.
- Use e-mail instead of paper correspondence. Remember, don't print your e-mails.
- Ensure all electrical equipment is shut-off in the evening. It saves a lot of energy and money.
- Make sure your department is using recycled content paper.
- Make use of discarded paper by using it for scratch paper.
- Use reusable cups instead of disposable paper cups.
- Pack your lunch in a reusable container rather than sandwich bags or foil.
- Carry your lunch to work in a reusable bag and bring your own lunch set of a plate, bowl, silverware and cup to the office to avoid using disposable products.

Why do it?

Implementing the suggested waste reduction tips can accomplish the following:

- It can save you some bucks!
- By not creating waste, you reduce your garbage disposal costs—composting saves even more!
- Buying in bulk saves you money per unit—remember, about ten cents on every dollar spent is for packaging costs.
- Buying durable products will save you more over the long term and reusable containers reduce your costs on plastic and foil for food storage.
- Buying only what you need and renting or borrowing everything else is money saved and less stuff you have to get rid of in the future!
- Fewer natural resources are consumed using waste prevention strategies.
- It reduces the need to build more landfills thereby providing space for parks and wildlife.
- The energy saved by preventing waste reduces the amount of harmful gases in the air that may lead to global warming.

In turn, this means less air and water pollution for future generations. That's a lot of savings.

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