

How To Reduce Waste

Recycling is great, but true source reduction (reducing the amount of waste put into the world) is where it all begins. Here are a few suggestions from the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance (OEA):

- Use as little paper as possible, and eliminate junk mail. The average Minnesota trash can contains 40% paper by weight after recycling, according to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. And Minnesota businesses contribute another 10 to 13% of Minnesota's municipal garbage in office paper. According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, this is roughly the same as using six square miles of a clear cut forest—423 million pounds of trees—annually. To conserve paper, produce double-sided documents and reuse the backsides of non-confidential documents for drafts and notes. To cut down on junk mail, see the information below.
- Ask for paper bags instead of plastic. When buying your groceries, paper bags are the better environmental choices—they hold more items, can be reused several times, and are easily recycled. The most environmentally responsible choice, however, is using sturdy canvas bags that you bring to the store yourself and reuse each time.
- Buy products with less packaging. Half the paper Americans consume is used to wrap and decorate the products they buy, and 32% of Minnesota's municipal garbage is from packaging waste. Before you buy something, consider if it is packed as efficiently as possible. For example, OEA research shows that buying breakfast cereal in one 20-oz box instead of six 3.67-oz boxes cuts both waste and cost in half.
- Use energy-efficient lighting. Lighting accounts for 20 to 25% of all electricity sold in the United States. Compact fluorescent (CF) light bulbs use 75% less energy than standard incandescent bulbs and last 10 to 13 times longer. Over its

lifetime, the use of one 30W CF (versus 135W of incandescent light) will save 50 to 75%, prevent the mining of 2.5 tons of coal, and prevent 15,000 pounds of carbon dioxide (contributes to global warming), sulfur dioxide (contributes to acid rain), and nitrogen oxide (contributes to acid rain and smog) emissions. However, CFs must be disposed of properly because they may contain mercury.

- Conserve energy whenever possible. Energy for transportation consumes about 60% of the oil used in this country. Look for opportunities to share rides or use mass transit, and plan your activities to make the most of each trip with a vehicle. Instead of turning up the heat in your home, dress more warmly. Be aware of other opportunities to conserve energy—turn off lights in rooms that aren't being used and turn off idle equipment if possible. For example, the 350 employees in St Paul's City Hall Annex work together to save more than \$24,000 a year by turning off computer monitors at night.
- Use less stuff. Think of ways you can decrease your impact on the environment. According to Zero Population Growth, by the time a baby born today reaches age 75, he or she will have produced 52 tons of garbage, consumed 43 million gallons of water, and used 3,375 barrels of oil. Stewardship means taking responsibility for our daily actions and making sure those actions place the least burden on the earth and future generations. Join the effort.

Reducing Junk Mail -

HOUSEHOLDS

Households can significantly reduce their advertising and unwanted mail (junk mail) by taking the following simple steps:

1. Register with the Direct Marketing Association's free *Mail Preference Service*. It's as easy as sending a postcard with your name and address to:

**Mail Preference Service
P.O. Box 643
Carmel, NY 10512**

2. The nation's major consumer credit bureaus – Equifax, Experian, Innovis and Trans Union – established a toll-free number to get off lists for pre-approved credit card solicitations. The recording will ask for you social security number, full name, address and telephone numbers.

**1-888-5-OPTOUT
(1-888-567-8688)**

The service allows you to opt out for two years or permanently. You can “opt back in” at any time by calling the same number.

3. And finally, you can contact individual mailers to be removed from distribution lists. Not all companies use national systems. **Any junk mail that you DO receive can be recycled!!!**

For more information, visit the Office of Environmental Assistance,

<http://www.moea.state.mn.us/campaign/junkmail/index.html>

BUSINESSES

1. **Dun and Bradstreet** collects information on more than 60 million business establishments. A business may have its information removed from business marketing lists published by Dun & Bradstreet. This “delisting” can be requested orally or in writing by an authorized representative of the business, resulting in its removal from marketing directories, publications, and/or mailing lists.

Dun & Bradstreet Customer Service Center: 1-800-333-0505

2. **InfoUSA** has information on more than 12 million businesses in the U.S. To be removed from their lists:
Fax a letter to 402-331-0176. The letter should include the business name, address and phone number, the name and title of the person requesting the deletion, and that person's signature. You can also send this letter by regular mail to:

**InfoUSA
P.O. Box 27347
Omaha NE, 68127**