

WASTE REDUCTION WEEK

IT'S WASTE REDUCTION WEEK!

There are lots of things we can do to reduce our waste generation in all parts of our lives. Follow these daily tips at the office, home, school, shopping and in your community.

Every little bit does help.

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MONDAY – WORK

There are lots of opportunities to reduce waste at the work-place. This includes reducing or re-using manufacturing waste but also the recycling of office and cafeteria wastes.

- Conduct a waste assessment or audit and develop reduction strategies.
- Set up a green team of diverse staff who will investigate, document and motivate change in your business. Your green team should develop a waste reduction policy outlining the direction and specific commitment for improvements.
- Maximize recycling of manufacturing wastes (e.g. metals, wood etc).
- Set up a green procurement policy that looks for and buys recycled materials where practical.
- Cut down on paper use by networking computers and sharing files electronically. Use e-mail and voice-mail.
- Buy paper products with post-consumer recycled content. Do double-sided photocopying and encourage staff to use one-sided paper for scrap paper notepads.
- Recycle office paper, cardboard, beverage containers and other recyclables.
- Recycle laser printer toner cartridges and copier machine developer.

TUESDAY – HOUSE & HOME

We spend a large part of our day at home. Small changes to reduce household consumption and improve efficiency can really impact our daily waste. Here are some things you can do at home to reduce, reuse and recycle waste:

- **Use your Blue box to the fullest.** This presents a great opportunity to recycle.
- Put your leaf and yard wastes at the curb or take it to a depot. Remember to save some leaves for your backyard composter.
- Start back-yard composting – it cuts down on household waste by as much as one-third! Composting produces a valuable nutrient-rich product called compost that is great for your garden and lawn. Even people in apartments can compost using compact vermi-culture containers.
- Replace disposable items with reusable ones. For example, buy a reusable coffee filter; replace disposable batteries with rechargeable ones; use cloth towels instead of paper.
- **Before you throw it away, think of how you can reuse it!** Egg cartons, foil plates, popsicle sticks, yogurt cups, and paper towel rolls make great craft items for schools and daycares. If you sew, use old jeans or curtains to make sturdy reusable shopping bags.
- Make a “no flyer” sign to reduce junk mail delivery, cancel the newspaper while you’re on holidays and recycle all paper products.
- Take your hazardous materials (e.g. paint, batteries) to the W 12-A landfill for recycling (check the City’s waste calendar for details).

WEDNESDAY – SCHOOL

Did you know a lunch packed with reusable items is typically 45% less expensive and contains 90% less waste than a lunch packed with single use items? School is the perfect place to practice waste reduction. Run your own composting or recycling programs. The lessons children learn in school can become lifetime habits. Below are some activities for teachers and students;

- Hold a “waste-free” lunch day, week or month! Encourage students to pack their lunches in a reusable bag or lunch box, use resealable containers for sandwiches or snacks, a thermos for drinks and a cloth napkin and reusable utensils.
- Involve the whole school in a competition measuring each class’s waste, hold a secret tally and announce the winning class at an assembly.
- Recycle paper and beverage containers.
- Vermicomposting is a great way to compost indoors - using Red Wiggler worms. These critters eat and excrete their own weight in left-over lunch scraps every day! You can feed your worms vegetables and fruit, coffee grounds, tea bags and egg shells.
- Students can research a product’s lifecycle to discover the amount of natural resources needed to design, produce, deliver and dispose of commercial goods. Students can pick an item like a car, T-shirt, banana, running shoes, etc. and then consider:
 1. What kind of equipment is required to grow or extract the raw resources?
 2. What kind of fuel is required to extract, process, manufacture and transport the resources?
 3. How might some of these environmental impacts be avoided?
- Crayon Recycling Program – Gather up old and broken crayons and ship them to: LAF Lines Ltd., 16830 Edgewood Avenue, Wayzata, Minnesota, USA 55391. For every pound of crayons received, you will receive one “Crazy Crayon” back (just include your return address inside the box).

THURSDAY – SHOPPING

Smart shopping is an important way to reduce waste. Shoppers have the power to prevent waste before it begins. Some shopping tips:

- For every item you buy, think of how you will consume it, store it, maintain it or dispose of it. Buy only what you need.
- Only keep things you enjoy or use regularly. Give unused or unwanted items to a second-hand store or charity.
- **Buy products, not packaging.** You'll save money and energy. In the produce section, you can pay up to 45% more for food packaged on a shrink-wrapped plastic tray and you'll be paying twice – first for the cost of the product, then to dispose of it!
- **Buy bulk** – it reduces packaging and costs less. Buy only what you need and consider splitting extra-large items with friends and family.
- **Buy local** – transportation consumes huge amounts of fossil fuels and adds to greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Buy recycled** – take note of the percentage of recycled content that is “post-consumer”. Post-consumer recycled products (as opposed to post industrial) are in fact, “more recycled” because individuals have already used them.

FRIDAY – COMMUNITY

You can reach out to your community during Waste Reduction Week and all year round. Here's how:

- Support local environmental groups and local environmental initiatives.
- Join a local environmental group such as the Thames Region Ecological Association and help promote environmental awareness. See www.trea.ca for details.
- Support local groups such as London Composts that link the benefits of compost-use with food production and helping the London Food Bank.
- Participate in community events such as London's Clean and Green Day and the London Cares Foodbank Drive (combined with Blue Box collection).
- Distribute or organize a community litter clean-up and separate the litter into recyclable and non-recyclable components.
- **Become an environmental citizen.** Take responsibility for the health of your community in two ways: learning and acting. Get involved in education and decision-making around environmental issues.
- Have a garage sale, swap or sale of used sporting goods, books, clothing or household items.

Remember to have fun!