

The “3-Rs”: Reduce, Reuse & Recycle



# • Reduce, Reuse & Recycle

Save resources, raise awareness and reduce waste & disposal costs

- “the design, manufacture, purchase, use [or reuse] of materials or products (including packages) **to reduce their amount or toxicity** before they enter the municipal solid waste stream. Because it is intended to *reduce* pollution and conserve resources, source reduction should not increase the net amount or toxicity of waste generated throughout the life of a product. “

Source Reduction Practices include:

- • **decreasing consumption**
- • **minimizing materials use**
- • **minimizing use of toxics**
- • **reusing products and packaging**
- • making and using more durable and repairable products & packaging

# Source Reduction: If you don't create it, you don't have to deal with it!

## At Grocery Checkout “Paper or Plastic?”

- **Recycling Approach:** Reduce trash disposal and save raw materials by collecting plastic grocery bags for recycling and incorporate them into a new product such as plastic lumber **or** collect paper bags and convert them into corrugated cardboard and kraft paper.
- **Source Reduction Approach:** Take no bag at all, saving natural resources & energy used to first produce, then collect and re-process disposable bags. Using a reusable canvas or string bag would have similar environmental benefits as a reusable bag could replace thousands of disposable/recyclable bags over their useful life.
- *Any review of waste management strategy should first consider ways to reduce waste and incorporate reusable products to achieve the maximum benefit to the environment.*

# Functional Areas For Source Reduction

1. **Procurement:** Write source reduction into **bid specifications** for purchasing that avoid or reduce waste generation. For example, "Preference will be given to products that create the least solid and hazardous waste while fulfilling their intended function." Use criteria like: repairable, durable, reusable, less packaging, no toxics and source-reduced alternative.
2. **Assessment:** Perform a source reduction/waste audit of municipal facilities to identify source reduction (and recycling) opportunities and cost savings.
3. **Advocacy:** Establish an interdepartmental source reduction task force. Encourage innovative ideas and reward results.
4. **Case Studies & Recognition:** Research and **showcase examples of best source reduction** practices.
5. **Plans & Policies:** Include a **source reduction goal** along with the recycling goal in your solid waste management plan.
6. **Practices:**

# Source Reduction at School: Examples from Audience?



## Back to School Sales Tax Holiday this weekend!

# Source reduction can start with shopping for school

### Here is a list of Eco-friendly shopping ideas:

- **Backpacks** - Reuse your backpack! If you absolutely need a new pack then look for backpacks that have a lifetime warranty or can easily be washed and reused by other family members.
- **Lunchboxes** - Purchase a lunchbox and then fill it with reusable containers. It will save you money over the school year by decreasing your use of disposable plastic and paper bags, as well as reduce your school's garbage.
- **Refillable pens and pencils** - When you use refillable pens or pencils you are saving natural resources as well as the need for your student to carry a pencil sharpener or worry about breaking their pencil in the middle of a test.
- **Folders, Notebooks and Paper** - If you are shopping for pocket folders, notebooks, and paper **look for the made from recycled paper symbol** . This symbol identifies products made from recycled material, and by purchasing these products you help to **close the loop** on recycling.
- **Calculators** - Have you ever considered a solar calculator for your student? Solar calculators are a great way to reduce the need of disposable batteries



# Source Reduction at School: Practices.....

1. Make double-sided copies whenever possible.
2. Instead of making individual copies for everyone, use a routing slip when circulating information to staff, or post notices on a bulletin board.
3. Use reusable envelopes for interoffice mail.
4. If applicable, use electronic mail instead of making hard copies of all communications.
5. Request the removal of your name from junk mail lists by writing to the Direct Mail Marketing Association, P.O. Box 9008, Farmingdale, N.Y. 11735-9008.
6. If possible, limit the number of subscriptions to periodicals and have classrooms share them. This will reduce both trash and subscription costs.
7. Arrange to have a vendor collect and recharge empty laser printer toner cartridges. Such cartridges can be recharged several times, saving money and reducing waste generation.



## Source Reduction at School: Practices (cont).....

8. Encourage employees and students to reuse paper clips, rubber bands and brass fasteners. These should be removed before recycling white office paper anyway.
9. Use scrap paper for messages. If you have access to a wax binder, you can make your own scrap pads.
10. Require suppliers who deliver products on pallets or in metal drums to take them back.
11. Have your cafeteria switch to reusable utensils and crockery instead of throwaways whenever possible. Investigate the possibility of switching to refillable containers for milk and juice.
12. Encourage students who bring their lunch to use a reusable lunch box and thermos instead of brown paper bags and disposable drink containers.





## Source Reduction at School: Practices (cont)

13. Set up vermi-composting bins in individual classrooms or on school property as part of your science program.
14. Replace ball-point or felt tip pens with ones that take refills.
15. Do not purchase envelopes with cellophane windows or use self-adhesive labels. If the windows are necessary, purchase envelopes with window cut-out to display internal address on letter.
16. Purchase reusable and washable cleaning cloths, aprons, tablecloths, etc., rather than single-use disposable products.
17. Buy institutional sizes of cleaning supplies, food products, beverages, etc. and repackage into smaller, reusable dispensers.



# Reuse

“ the recovery or re-application of a package or product for uses similar to or identical to its originally intended application. Unlike recycling, reuse does not involve manufacturing or preparation processes that significantly alter the original condition of the package or product.”

## Reuse Activities at School:

1. Hold a "**SWAP DAY**". Have student bring in items from home to swap with other children. (Of course parental permission will be needed.) You may want to limit the types of items that can be brought in to items such as books or small toys to facilitate "even" trading. This can be made part of history lesson in the development of trade and monetary systems.
2. Collect used greeting cards for St. Jude's Ranch for Children. The children at St. Jude's trim the old cards and paste them onto new backs. They then sell the cards as a fund raiser for the organization. Such a project helps to teach the children business skills, as well as raising money for a children's charity. Cards can be sent to:  
*St. Jude's Ranch for Children* [http://stjudesranch.org/help\\_card.php](http://stjudesranch.org/help_card.php)  
*Recycled Card Program*  
*100 St. Jude's Street*  
*Boulder City, NV 89005*  
*877-977-SJRC (7572)*
3. Partner with Rappahannock Goodwill & collect other reusables such as clothing for local charities.

## Reuse Activities at School:

4. Maintain a **free listing service** of used musical instruments and sporting equipment in your school newsletter. It may encourage some children to try an activity that their family might not otherwise be able to afford .
5. Incorporate the **use of reusables into your art program**. Host a sculpture contest in which the children make their creations from items that would have been recycled or thrown away. This can be fun even without the added incentive of a contest.
6. Incorporate the **use of reusables into your science program** by hosting an inventors fair. Have the children design some machine or other contraption from found items. You will be amazed at what the children come up with!
7. Establish a bird feeding/observation area with **bird feeders made from containers that have already been used once for another purpose such as milk jugs, paper milk cartons, soda bottles**, etc. Establish a site where these feeders can stay for an extended period of time. Allow the children some observation time to record which birds frequent the different feeders.





**QUESTIONS or DISCUSSION?**

