

# Solid Waste Management

## What is Solid Waste?

Garbage, refuse, sludge or other waste matter of a solid nature.

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Solid Waste Management is the process of reducing, re-using and recycling waste products. It requires a change in our habits but does not necessarily mean a return to a more difficult lifestyle. Good solid waste management improves our standard of living. In fact if we do not reduce waste, the economic and social cost of waste disposal will continue to increase and communities large and small will face increasingly harder decisions about managing their trash.

### We need to start re-using

- ♣ Paper
- ♣ Glass Bottles
- ♣ Aluminum Wrapping
- ♣ Organic Waste such as spoiled or unwanted portions of food items, for example, banana skins
- ♣ Plastics

### Precycling & Recycling

Precycling is making purchasing decisions that will reduce waste. Recycling on the other hand is the process of producing goods from waste products or where possible, finding other uses for them. Both help us to make the best use of our limited resources.

- ♣ We *can* all recycle solid waste.
- ♣ We must be dedicated to collecting recyclable items such as plastic bottles and
- ♣ Helping to establish community centres where they can be pooled and sorted for re-use.



Think about purchasing items which can be re-used.

*Our goal should be reducing solid waste!*

## Helpful Tips on Managing Solid Waste in the Home

1. Use sheets of used writing paper to make a message pad
2. Choose cloth diapers over disposable ones
3. Donate usable goods to charity or have a yard sale.
4. Do not be quick to discard items such as appliances and electronic equipment if repairing them will restore them to basically the same level of usefulness as when purchased.
5. Give newspapers to exporters or to be shredded for packing or for stuffing items.
6. Share magazines with a friend or donate them to a hospital, doctor's office, prison or children's home.
7. Never throw garbage into a gully, it all ends up in the sea.
8. Use re-usable containers when you go on picnics or road trips and bring your waste food home to be used as fertilizer in your backyard garden.
9. Buy the item with the least packaging when choosing between two equally good products.
10. If you have an idea on how manufacturers can reduce packaging, write to them with your suggestion.
11. Look for ways to lessen the use of toxic (poisonous) cleaners around the house which contain harmful chemicals. Here are a few:

**Drain Cleaner:** Use a plunger

**Oven Cleaner:** Clean spills as the oven cools using steel wool and baking soda. For tough stains, add salt. **Do not** use this method in self cleaning or continuous cleaning ovens.

**Glass Cleaner:** Mix 1 tablespoon of vinegar or lemon juice in one quart of water. Spray on and use newspaper to dry.

**Toilet Bowl Cleaner:** Use a toilet brush and baking soda or vinegar (this will clean but will not disinfect).

**Moth Balls:** Use cedar chips, lavender flowers, rosemary, or mint.



*Do not throw out your newspaper, give them away*

*If you do need to use products with hazardous contents such as solutions of chlorine bleach and cleaning agents containing ammonia and acids, use only the amounts needed. Left over materials can be shared with neighbours or donated to charity. It is also important however that **in your efforts to reduce the frequency with which you use toxic cleaning agents, that you do not ignore manufacturers instructions on how to clean appliances, equipment, etc.***

13. Consider using low-energy fluorescent light bulbs rather than the round (incandescent) ones (those which give off a yellow light). They will last longer and will use less energy, which means fewer bulbs are thrown out and your electricity cost as well as your cost to replace them over time should also be reduced.
14. For seldom-used items, like party goods such as cups, plates, and cutlery, as well as larger items such as tables, chairs and tents which often collect dust, rust, take up valuable space, and then ultimately end up in the trash, one should consider renting or borrowing these the next time they are needed.

### **On Special Occasions**

- ♣ During the Christmas season, plan before hand how many items you will have to place in the oven in order that you make the maximum use of oven space.
- ♣ Try to purchase durable decorations, and pack these away carefully, this could save you hundreds of dollars next year to replace them.

### **Eating Out**

If your choice is to eat at a fast food restaurant, choose those which do not use disposable plates and cutlery.

### **At the Gas Station**

- ♣ Find out from the gas station operator what they do with used motor oil. If they throw it in a gully, lobby for them to desist, as one litre of oil will contaminate up to two million litres of water!
- ♣ Take used car batteries (“lead-acid batteries”) and motor oil (saved in clean nonbreakable containers) to participating automobile service centres and other motor vehicle battery retailers, which collect these items for recycling.

Look for batteries in general which contain toxic metals such as mercury and cadmium in the lowest possible amounts.

### **At the Supermarket**

- ♣ Re-use plastic bags . Keep a few so that you may take them to the market/supermarket instead of having to purchase new ones. Be aware that some supermarkets add an additional charge to your bill for the cost of shopping bags.
- ♣ Whenever possible, frequently purchased items such as, Baby food, ice cream, bathing soap, shampoo etc. should be purchased in bulk instead of single serving packages.
- ♣ Avoid buying items packaged in aerosol cans, they can not be re-used or recycled
- ♣ Buy products in recyclable, or better yet, refillable containers.

- ♣ Let clerks know when it is not necessary to double wrap a purchase.

### **In the Kitchen**

- ♣ Re-use cooking oil whenever possible
- ♣ Use containers to store food in your refrigerator rather than saran wrap or aluminum foil.
- ♣ In planning lunch meals, try taking your drink/juice in an igloo rather than purchasing a box, bottle or bag juice.
- ♣ For snacks, eat more fruits and vegetables. They are healthier and compared to other snack items they are less often prepackaged.
- ♣ Plan your meals, this may help to reduce food wastage.
- ♣ Save jars and lids for storing leftovers as well as pickles and jams

### **At the Office**

- ♣ Draft letters and reports onto the computer, skip the paper step
- ♣ Photocopy on both sides of the paper
- ♣ Keep scrap paper by printers to print draft copies of documents
- ♣ Re-use large envelopes and file folders by putting new labels over old addresses.
- ♣ Circulate memos instead of duplicating them or try to set up an internal network where inter-office memos may be electronically mailed.

### **At School**

- ♣ Shop at used book stores
- ♣ University and college students, you need not buy all your textbooks, use the school library

### **In the Garden**

- ♣ Use kitchen scraps and yard waste to create a compost heap.
- ♣ Use plastic bottles for planters or as watering cans
- ♣ Start an organic kitchen garden and rely less on shopping for your vegetables
- ♣ Leave grass clippings on the lawn to decompose and return nutrients back to the soil.
- ♣ Instead of using pesticides, plant marigolds in your garden to ward off certain pests.

### **Encourage your Children to:**

- ♣ Make Christmas cards out of the paper from a shoe box and colourful magazine pictures
- ♣ Make toys instead of playing only with those purchased from the store.
- ♣ Save old socks, old magazines and other items for use in arts and craft projects at schools and youth facilities.

♠ Turn used tires (not steel belted ones) with parent's assistance, into swings or other play ground equipment.

### **CAUTION!**

**When re-using containers, do not use those which originally held products such as motor oil or pesticides. These containers and their potentially harmful residues should be discarded (following manufacturers' instructions on the label) as soon as they are empty.**

**Also, never store anything potentially harmful in containers designed for food or beverages. Always label containers and store them out of the reach of children and pets.**

Educate others on source reduction and recycling practices. Make your preferences known to manufacturers, merchants and community leaders.

Be creative! Find new ways to reduce waste quantity and toxicity.

### **Remember**

As a consumer you have the right to a physical environment that will enhance the quality of life. This right involves protection against environmental problems over which the individual has control.

However, it is also your responsibility to understand the environmental consequences of our consumption. We should all recognize our individual and social responsibility to conserve natural resources and protect the earth.



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