

Office Paper Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Fact Sheet

How to Reduce Office Paper Waste

- Perform a “waste basket audit” to evaluate office recycling potential.
- Purchase only the quantity of supplies needed, especially letterhead, envelopes and business cards, to reduce the need to dispose of outdated stock.
- Ask suppliers to reduce unnecessary packaging or packing materials.
- Limit computer printouts. Use electronic mail where possible to send and receive business messages. Review text on screen to limit mistakes on drafts.
- Minimize the use of colored, glossy and special thickness papers that are difficult to recycle.
- Use reusable or two-way envelopes to post your inter-office correspondence.
- Make two-sided copies. Develop a policy to copy reports, letters, memos, etc. on two sides rather than one to conserve paper. Purchase or lease copiers designed to copy on both sides without jamming or malfunctioning.
- Cut down on paper for memos. Place memos on central bulletin boards for everyone to read or use. Routing slips also provide a record of who received and acknowledged a memo.
- Keep mailing lists current.
- Maintain central files instead of multiple files. This option saves not only paper but also reduces the time, space and money spent for filing.
- Actively encourage all employees to use less paper.
- Boost employee participation in office paper recycling programs through incentives and training.
- Locate large containers for paper recycling near copiers, printers and other areas where large volumes of waste paper are generated.
- Maintain copiers, computers and other equipment to minimize scrap generation and prolong the life of these machines.

Reusing Office Paper Waste

- Encourage reuse of paper for scrap paper. Employees can put old paper in bins and reuse it for memos, messages, calculations, etc. Reuse of scrap paper incurs virtually no added costs and saves on both disposal fees and the cost of new paper.
- Set aside special trays in copy machines for draft paper that is the other side of already used paper.
- Convert scratch paper into memo pads, telephone answering slips and similar items.

Recycling Office Paper Waste

Almost all types of paper used in the office can be recycled. It can be separated into various grades ranging from high to low. High-grade papers generally include, but are not limited to, white computer paper, bond, letterhead and ledger. Lower grades may include mixed grades, file stock, ground wood papers, newsprint, and colored paper.

Mixed paper is generally considered low grade even if it contains high-grade paper. Easily identifiable high-grade papers (such as computer printout) should be kept separate if possible to take advantage of its higher market value.

This fact sheet is provided by The Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania at PO Box 25, Bellwood, PA 16617, e-mail prop@epix.net.