



Waste Fact Sheet

CLEAN UP YOUR OFFICE!

Clean Up Australia supports the four-tiered approach to waste – Avoid, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. This approach can be applied easily to your own office to minimise waste going to landfill and to conserve natural resources.

Typical waste in an office may include paper products, toners and cartridges, cleaning chemicals, stationery equipment and electronic office equipment such as computers, fax machines and photocopiers.

A 'green' office program can have many benefits from a healthier office to achieving better economic efficiency, as well as doing your bit for the environment. It is important for a business to be realistic about setting their waste goals. Targets must be achievable and measurable and most importantly involve all members of the business in order to enhance ownership of office changes.

There are many simple and effective ways in which businesses can Avoid, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle their office waste. The following definitions and examples of useful tips for around the office can help to convert your office waste into valuable resources.



- Avoid waste** by identifying ways of producing and using goods that generate less waste.
- Reduce waste** by using products that can be used efficiently, recycled in your area, and have minimal packaging.
- Re-use** containers, packaging or waste products.
- Recycle** waste material into useable products.

Office-Wide

Avoid waste by reducing excess packaging by **contacting suppliers to reduce their packaging** of products.

Reduce by ordering supplies in bulk to minimize packaging waste and **return damaged materials** instead of throwing them away.

Develop a policy to ensure that the most **energy efficient equipment** is purchased.

Reuse old supplies and equipment, or donate them to charity.

Send **cartridges and ribbons** to a re-manufacturing firm for recycling.



Individually

Avoid generating excess waste by **using email as much as possible**, circulating one copy of a memo and have people sign it after reading, and editing rough drafts on computer.

Reduce paper waste by **photocopying double sided**, printing double sided or using singled sided waste again as notepaper or for drafts.

Reuse old binders, file folders, report covers and general office equipment.

Recycle all suitable waste by **supporting office-wide recycling initiatives** and activities for all waste such as paper, plastics or organics.

continued over 

Waste Fact Sheet

Green Buying

Creating a green buying policy is an effective way for your office and staff to show their commitment to reducing waste and its impacts on the environment. This can include being selective in purchasing products such as;

- **Recycled paper** (preferably with a % of post consumer content).
- Purchasing recycled office furniture or furniture made out of recycled material
- **Reusable toners** and cartridges.
- **Biodegradable** cleaning products.
- Non-bleached recycled toilet paper.
- **Refillable pens.**

Lunch Room

The lunch room is another area in which an office generates excess waste. By changing a few simple processes a business can reduce its waste significantly.

- **Avoid disposable** products (eg. polystyrene cups) and buy bulk supplies.
- Reuse items as much as possible such as **reusable containers**, coffee mugs, permanent dishes and cutlery, cloth towels, reusable coffee filters, etc.
- **Recycle** aluminium, glass and plastic **drink containers** (make sure you provide bins).

Business Clean Up Day Involve your business

Businesses have the opportunity to register an official Business Clean Up Day site – either the workplace or another nominated location – and then take positive steps to clean up or rehabilitate the area.

Participation in Business Clean Up Day offers a **valuable community service** with real rewards – from team building and **staff morale** to **environmental awareness** and business recognition.

Business Clean Up Day is held across the country on the Tuesday prior to the annual Clean Up Australia Day (1st weekend in March).

In-house Activities

There are many simple activities you can do in your office to make minimising waste fun!

Plastic Free Day

Staff are challenged for one day a week not to use any non-recyclable plastic (eg. plastic wrap, plastic bags or take-away containers).

Worm Farm

Compost or Worm farm for organic waste – Establish a worm farm at work and create a roster for staff to look after it (worm farms can be inside the office and are often a great way for staff to understand the process of reducing organic matter to landfill).

Green Workshops

Have a guest speaker from your local council, environment centre, school or another business once a month to help staff learn about waste management or alternatively have a staff member present on a particular waste or environment issue.

Recycling System

Introduce recycling bins throughout the office. This may include a paper reuse section, plastic, glass and aluminium bins and organic bins.

Clean Up Your Office!

Action

There are many more obvious ways in which an office can reduce its waste to landfill, ask your staff for ideas, become a WRAPR participant.

WRAPR is Clean Up Australia's waste reduction program for businesses – big or small – and we encourage *all* businesses to participate.

A list of additional contacts that have specific waste information is provided at right.

For further information
call Clean Up Australia on **02 9552 6177** or check out our website at
www.cleanup.com.au

Further Contacts

Visy Recycling
Recycling Services – Business
www.visy.com.au

Waste Not Want Not site –
www.wastenotwantnot.com

Environmental Protection Authority
www.epa.nsw.gov.au

NSW Recycled Organics Unit
www.recycleorganics.com

Reference

Environment Canada. (2001)
Waste Minimisation Fact sheets –
Offices and Institutions.
Canada. Online – www.ns.ec.gc.ca

