

Refuse and Recycling - Waste Reduction Tips

Whenever you buy disposable items or products with excess packaging, you're essentially buying trash. Every year, the average American produces nearly 1,600 pounds of trash, most of which still goes to landfills. Although we're recycling more and more, there's an even more effective way to cut down on excess waste. Simply stated, prevent it.

You can help prevent waste whenever you reduce your purchases of disposable, over-packaged (ie: individually packaged, convenience-sized packaging, etc.) or unnecessary items, or even by reusing more of what you already have. You can also help by purchasing durable, long-lasting goods and seeking products and packaging that are free of toxics as possible.

Since consuming and throwing away actually generates waste, proper purchasing/consuming can prevent the generation of waste in the first place. It is the most preferable method of waste management and goes a long way toward protecting our environment.

When you use less and reuse more, you're helping both the "upstream" environment (where products are made and transported) as well as the "downstream" environment (where products are disposed). By not creating waste in the first place – in the form of disposable products or unnecessary packaging – we don't just avoid having to send it to the local landfill. We also avoid expending the energy, consuming the natural resources, and creating the pollution that comes from making it in the first place. So when you're shopping, choose products that you can use repeatedly and avoid excess packaging. It also saves you the extra time and fuel.

When you reduce, you literally buy less of the things you don't need, like excess packaging. For example:

- Choose products with the least packaging, and thank the store managers for stocking them.
- Buy whole fruits and vegetables to avoid the unnecessary trays and wraps.
- Buy the large or economy size (less packaging per pound of product), or buy in bulk when possible.
- When buying just an item or two, say, "No thanks" when offered a bag for them.
- Ask yourself a few questions before you buy something: "Do I really need it?" "Could I borrow one from a friend or neighbor?" "Do I already have something that can do the same job?"
- Remove yourself from unwanted mailing lists.
- Follow the Village Refuse and Recycling Guide

Whenever you buy durable and reusable products, there's less to throw away and less to replace. Some examples include:

- Use durable items such as reusable cups, plates, utensils, cloth napkins, sponges and dishcloths.
- Look for products that are available in refillable packages/containers.
- Reuse jars, boxes, and other containers.
- Maintain and repair durable products.
- Buy reusable alkaline batteries (with no toxic cadmium or mercury).
- Bring your own shopping bags to the store, or reuse theirs.
- Sell or donate things you no longer need, instead of throwing them out.

Economic savings and environmental benefits often go hand in hand. When you practice waste reduction, you (and the Village) can save on the costs of waste collection and disposal. You also avoid the cost of replacing throwaway items over and over again. So think ahead when you buy, and put "**Reduce and Reuse**" at the top of your shopping list. In addition, remember, when you've done all you can to prevent waste in the first place, recycle what is left.

BUYING WISELY TO REDUCE AND REUSE SAVES YOU TIME AND MONEY