

Solid waste

is an increasing problem in today's "throw-away" culture. From single serving food containers and food waste itself to junk mail and toner cartridges, household waste is abundant. When it enters a landfill or washes into the stormwater system it has a huge impact on water quality. The EPA suggests the following 12 ways to reduce solid waste.

- 1 Reduce the amount of unnecessary packaging
- 2 Adopt practices that reduce waste toxicity
- 3 Consider reusable products
- 4 Maintain and repair durable products
- 5 Reuse bags, containers, water bottles and other items.
- 6 Borrow, rent or share items that are used infrequently
- 7 Sell or donate goods instead of throwing them out
- 8 Choose recyclable products and containers, and recycle them.
- 9 Select products made from recycled materials
- 10 Compost yard waste and food scraps
- 11 Educate others and state your preferences to manufacturers and merchants
- 12 Reduce waste creatively!

Additional Resources

Visit the websites of the Green Country Stormwater Alliance (GCSA) and the Metropolitan Environmental Trust (Met) for more information on proper handling and disposal of household chemicals and wastes.



Green Country Stormwater Alliance
www.stormwaterok.net

Contact Information

For information about the Green Country Stormwater Alliance, contact INCOG at 918-584-7526 or by email at stormwater@incog.org. For local information, contact your city or county stormwater coordinator.

For more information about stormwater protection, contact the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Water Quality Division at 405-702-8100 or visit the DEQ web site at www.deq.state.ok.us/WQDnew/stormwater/index.html

For stormwater related complaints, call the DEQ statewide hotline at 1-800-522-0206. This number is answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Citizens may fill out an online complaint form at the DEQ web site at www.deq.state.ok.us/ECLNew/Complaints/onlncompl.htm and submit it electronically to the DEQ. The site also provides contact links to DEQ.



For more information about household pollutant disposal options, visit the Met website at www.metrecycle.com or call 918-584-0584.

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A Homeowner's Guide to Recycling & Reuse





Get to know the Three R's:

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Reduce

Reduce the consumption of little-used items, such as power tools and party goods which can be rented or shared with friends and family members. The same holds true for newspapers, magazines, camera equipment and other goods.

Reducing consumption also includes:

- Purchasing clothing at *resale shops* or holding clothing “swaps” with others at your school, place of worship, or community center.
- Purchasing *energy efficient items* such as compact fluorescent light bulbs, low flow faucets and toilets, and ENERGY STAR® products.
- *Borrowing* books, DVDs or CDs from the library.
- Purchasing products with *recycled content* or that are packaged using recycled materials.
- Using the Mail Preference Service of the Direct Marketing Association to be *removed from mailing lists*, thereby reducing the amount of delivery mail.
<http://www.dmaconsumers.org/offmailinglist.html>
- Asking yourself, “*Do I really need it?*” Often, the answer is “No”
- Checking your *ecological footprint* (the amount of land and water it takes to support your lifestyle) at www.earthday.net/footprint/



Reuse

- Use a *coffee mug* instead of a Styrofoam cup.
- Buy *rechargeable* batteries and printer cartridges.
- Use *cloth* napkins, sponges and dishcloths.
- *Avoid single-use* items.
- Reuse *plastic containers and egg cartons* for crafts, or as garden and art containers.
- Use a *mulching mower* for lawns, and raked leaves as mulch around bedding plants.
- Reuse *gift and store bags* for other purposes.
- Consider whether or not you *need a bag* at all when purchasing items.



Greenscaping:

- *Reuse yard waste* such as grass clippings to mulch bare spots to reduce soil erosion.
- *Compost* household waste, such as grass clippings, fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, shredded newspaper and more.
- Use specialized *plants and beneficial insects* as alternatives to insecticides.

Home landscaping and yard work waste is second only to paper in the municipal solid waste stream. Lawn and garden pesticides and fertilizers can threaten water quality.

Recycle

Recycling at home is not just for *aluminum cans* any more. Recycling can also include:

- *Plastic* containers and other plastic items.
- *Paper and cardboard*, such as newspapers, office paper, mail and phone books.
- Household, computer and car *batteries*.
- Oil-based *paint* and household *chemicals*.
- *Electronic* products (see e-cycling below).

The EPA's WasteWise program helps organizations and businesses promote the use and reuse of materials more productively over their product life cycles. Visit their website at: <https://www.epa.gov/smm/wastewise>

E-cycling:

The exponential growth in electronics has given rise to a new environmental challenge: the proper management of electronic waste. Many electronic devices are made with valuable materials including steel, aluminum, glass, plastic, and precious metals.

Types of e-cycled electronics include computers, TVs, cell phones, DVD players and more. Visit the Met website at www.metrecycle.com for local electronic recycling options.

