

## 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 Green Country Stormwater Alliance web site listed below for more details about recycling and reuse



**Green Country Stormwater Alliance**  
[www.stormwaterok.net](http://www.stormwaterok.net)

### Contact Information

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](http://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/ECLsnew/Complaints/onlncmpl.htm](http://www.deq.state.ok.us/ECLsnew/Complaints/onlncmpl.htm) and submit it electronically to the DEQ. The site also provides contact links to DEQ.

For local information about recycling, visit [www.metrecycle.com](http://www.metrecycle.com).



Brochure Rev.: 10-26-06



## A Homeowner's Guide to Recycling & Reuse





*Get to know the Three R's:*

# Recycle, Reuse and Reduce

## Recycle

Recycling at home is not just for aluminum cans any more. Recycling now includes many of the following items:

- Food clippings and yard waste
- Paper and cardboard, including newspaper, office paper, mail, phone books and more
- Household batteries
- Paint and household chemicals
- Electronic products (see below).

The EPA and its WasteWise program have set a national goal of a 35 percent recycling rate for municipal solid wastes by 2008. Look for resources in your city to help meet this goal.

### *E-cycling*

In the past decade, our growing reliance on electronics has given rise to a new environmental



challenge: safe and resource-wise management of electronic waste. Electronics are a fast growing portion of America's trash—with 250 million computers estimated to have become obsolete in 2005. And

electronics are made with valuable materials. In 1998, over 112 million pounds of materials were recovered from electronics including steel, glass, plastic, and precious metals. Look for places in your area to e-cycle electronics such as computers, TVs, cell phones, VCRs and more. Visit [www.metrecycle.com](http://www.metrecycle.com) or [www.plugintorecycling.org](http://www.plugintorecycling.org) for more resources.

## Reuse

Taking your own coffee mug to work is an obvious way to reuse a product, avoiding a “throw-away” item such as a Styrofoam cup. Other ideas include:

- Buying rechargeable batteries and printer cartridges
- Using cloth napkins, sponges and dishcloths
- Avoiding single-use items
- Recycling plastic containers and egg cartons into craft, garden or art containers
- Mulching with existing yard and food waste (see “Greenscaping” below)
- Reusing gift and store bags for other purposes
- Considering whether or not you need a bag at all when purchasing items.



### *Greenscaping*

Home landscaping and yardwork generates literally tons of waste every year. In fact, yard waste is second only to paper in the municipal solid waste stream. Plus, pesticides and fertilizers used on lawns and gardens are major threats to water quality. Greenscaping involves some of the following practices:

- Reusing yard waste such as grass clippings to mulch and to reduce soil erosion
- Composting household waste — grass clippings, fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, shredded newspaper and more
- Using plants and beneficial insects as an alternative to insecticides.

## Reduce Consumption

Little-used items, such as power tools and party goods, are the ideal candidates for rental items — or for sharing with friends and family members. The same holds true for newspapers, magazines, camera equipment and other goods.

Reducing consumption may also include:

- 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, or ENERGY STAR® products
- Borrowing books, DVDs or CDs from the library
- Purchasing products with recycled content or that have packages or containers made from recycled materials
- Contacting the Mail Preference Service of the Direct Marketing Association to have your name removed from mailing lists, thereby reducing the amount of advertising mail delivered to your home or post box
- Asking yourself, “Do I really need it?” Often, the answer is “No”
- Checking your ecological footprint (the amount of productive land and water it takes to support your lifestyle) at [www.earthday.net/footprint/index.asp](http://www.earthday.net/footprint/index.asp)

