

Reduce, Reuse, *then* Recycle

The easiest, most direct way for you to make a difference is to watch what you buy and throw away. By following these basic principles:

- **Reduce** the amount and toxicity of trash you discard.
- **Reuse** containers and products; repair what is broken; and give unneeded items to those who can use them.
- **Recycle** as much as possible and buy products with recycled content.

There are lots of ways that you can put the 3 R's into practice in your work day. Many of them are not difficult to do, won't take up a lot of time and won't cost more – in fact, they may even save you money!

Remember that less waste can translate into more jobs, a stronger economy, energy conservation, less pollution, extended lives for existing landfills, a reduced need for new landfills, and the preservation of our natural resources.



Styrofoam is non recyclable and non biodegradable. That coffee cup you throw away this morning will be sitting in a land fill 500 years from now.

Get Caught !

**KANSAS
DON'T SPOIL IT!**



Bureau of Waste Management
Kansas Department of Health and Environment

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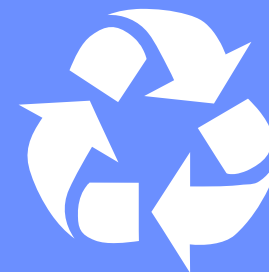
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Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

A guide to waste reduction
and recycling in the
workplace.



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Every year, each Kansan produces more than 3/4 of a ton of trash - that's 3.2 million tons total. 38% of this waste is paper and a significant amount of it is produced in the workplace.

In fact, the average office worker consumes 10,000 sheets of paper each year. Twenty-five billion Styrofoam cups end up in landfills every year, many of which come from office break rooms and cafeterias. We think of products as being disposable, but whether this material is burned, moved, or buried, it must go somewhere to be managed by someone.

We can have a major impact on the amount of garbage produced in Kansas by becoming aware of how much we throw out and by changing some of our habits about buying and using things. We can produce less waste by practicing the three R's - *reduce, reuse, and recycle*.

By minimizing the amount of waste we create, we can: create jobs and strengthen the economy; extend the lives of existing landfills; reduce the need for new landfills; prevent emission of air and water pollutants, including greenhouse gases; save energy by reducing the need to extract and process raw materials to manufacture new products; and conserve natural resources.



Next time your office buys a copier, get one that makes two-sided copies. This can reduce paper consumption by 1/3.

Reduce

Waste prevention, or "source reduction," means consuming and throwing away less. Source reduction actually prevents the generation of waste in the first place, so it is the most preferred method of waste management and goes a long way toward protecting the environment. It includes:



- purchasing durable, long-lasting goods;
- seeking products and packaging that are as free of toxics as possible;
- buying products that use less packaging.

Reuse

Reusing items - by repairing them, donating them or selling them - also reduces waste. Reusing products, when possible, is even better than recycling because the item does not need to be reprocessed before it can be used again. It includes:



- Using durable coffee mugs.
- Reusing boxes.
- Purchasing refillable pens and pencils.

Recycle

Recycling turns materials that would otherwise become waste into valuable resources. In addition, it generates a host of environmental, financial, and social benefits. Materials like glass, metal, plastics, and paper are collected, separated and sent to facilities that can process them into new materials or products. Common materials that can be recycled at work include:



- Paper
- Cardboard
- Aluminum cans

Consider the Facts...

- Recycling 1 ton of paper saves 17 trees, 2 barrels of oil, 4,100 kilowatts of energy (enough power for the average home for 6 months), 3.2 cubic yards of landfill space, and 60 lbs of air pollution.
- 100 Energy Star computers & monitors can save \$10,000 in energy costs in 5 years.
- The sorting and processing of recyclables alone sustains 10 times more jobs than land filling or incineration.
- About 80% of what Americans throw away is recyclable, yet our recycling rate is just 28%.
- Recycling just one aluminum can saves enough energy to operate a TV for 3 hours.
- The U.S. is 5% of the world's population but uses 25% of its natural resources.



A No Waste Lunch for Work
Use a thermos for beverages, washable containers for sandwiches and snacks, and a cloth napkin. Pack it all in a reusable bag or lunchbox.

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