

Waste Reduction Tips

Waste Management & Recycling Program

Each Maine resident generates over a half ton of trash every year. What can we do about it? While participating in local recycling programs is a good way to divert waste from disposal, the most environmentally and economically sound solution is to create less waste in the first place. The choices that you make today affect the environment tomorrow. Simple decisions that you make everyday can conserve natural resources and reduce the need for additional disposal capacity. Listed below are some easy and effective ways for you to prevent and reduce waste.

Don't Pay More for Less - Choose Items With Minimal or No Packaging

Packaging makes up 1/3 of the average household's garbage and accounts for approximately 10% of the price you pay for food.

- Avoid buying products that have excessive, multi-layer packaging.
- Buy products in bulk or in the largest size available. This way you will minimize the amount of packaging per unit of product *and save money!*
- Buy products in packages that are recyclable in your local program (i.e. glass, metal, rigid plastic, aluminum).
- Buy concentrates - why pay more for a big package when you can just add water yourself?
- Buy recycled! By choosing products and packaging made from recycled materials, you are supporting recycling markets.

Reuse Packaging and Other Items

- Use glass jars for storing foods, such as flour, nuts, and dried fruit, or for other items such as screws, nails, buttons, etc.
- Reuse paper and plastic bags; better yet, invest in canvas shopping bags.
- Wash and reuse plastic dinnerware for parties, picnics, and potlucks.
- Use plastic margarine and yogurt containers for freezing foods or storing leftovers in the fridge.
- Wash and reuse aluminum pie plates.
- Give magazines to friends, office waiting rooms, hospitals, school home economics classes, etc.
- Save polystyrene packing peanuts and use them again; better yet, ask mail order companies to ship in paper, not polystyrene.

Buy Durable, Long-lasting Products

- Think about the purchases you make. Durable, long-lasting products are often better quality products that require fewer repairs and create less waste than disposables. They may cost more at first, but they save money in the long run.
- Invest in cloth napkins for everyday use and use reusable wiping cloths and towels rather than paper towels for home cleaning projects.
- Avoid buying disposable dishes. For picnics and parties, invest in reusable, *durable* plastic plates and cups that can be washed and used again.
- Buy refillables and reusables. Instead of using disposable razors, lighters, pens, and cameras, invest in a good razor with replaceable blades, a refillable lighter, pens with refills and a camera that lets you change the film.
- Use cloth rather than disposable diapers. Even if you can't wash diapers at home, diaper services are generally less expensive than buying disposable diapers.
- Buy rechargeable batteries

Maintain and Repair

Maintain and repair items such as tools, appliances, shoes, and clothing to ensure long productive life. If you are unsure how to do your own repairs, repair manuals are available in bookstores and libraries, or repair services can be found in the Yellow Pages.

Borrow or Rent

Borrow or rent items you use infrequently, such as audiovisual equipment, tools, appliances, and baby or office furniture.

Donate What You No Longer Need

Pass along clothes, books, appliances, furniture and other items to friends, neighbors, libraries, schools, nursing homes, or other charities.

Backyard Composting

Approximately 20% of Maine's municipal waste is composed of organic kitchen and yard waste!

Compost your kitchen scraps, grass clippings, leaves, weeds, and woody wastes to grow healthier plants.

Backyard composting turns organic waste into a valuable soil amendment. Prefabricated compost bins are available in most home & garden, department, and hardware stores or you can build your own.

Reuse Materials to Make the Things You Need

- Remove nails and other hardware from used lumber. It can then be made into birdhouses, mailboxes or other small carpentry projects, or it can be used as firewood if it is unpainted and not pressure treated.

Use broken concrete and brick to make retaining walls, walkways and patios, or use for fill.

For more information, please contact:

State Planning Office, Waste Management and Recycling Program, State House Station 38, Augusta, Maine 04333-0038, www.recyclemaine.com

Stop your Junk Mail!

Tired of receiving countless credit card offers, catalogs and coupons? **Stopping them could be as easy as sending a letter to each of the companies listed at the end of this article and dropping them in the mail.**

Reducing your junk mail will not only make your life less cluttered, it can reduce your household waste stream by 70-100lbs or more annually. Americans receive more than 4 million tons- or 60 billion pieces - of direct mail every year. Almost half of that (44%) is never opened or read - it goes right in the trash. As a result, direct mail makes up a significant portion of the municipal solid waste stream. It is often personalized and is highly visible, causing consumer frustration and environmental concern.

Here are a few suggestions on ways to decrease your junk mail:

Catalogs, broadcast advertisements

Many businesses and organizations subscribe to the Direct Marketing Association to advertise through direct mail. The Direct Marketing Association will remove your name from its list after receiving the information recommended at the end of this article.(address provided later in the article) It may take three months or more for your request to take effect, but you'll remain in the "delete" file for five years. If you want to remain on some mailing lists, such as a particular catalog company, notify organizations individually.

You can also go to www.catalogchoice.org to stop unwanted catalogs.

Credit card offers

If you have good credit, many companies provide potential lenders with your name and address and your credit and payment history to bank and credit card companies. To stop receiving pre-approved credit card and insurance offers, call 1-888-5-OPTOUT. When given options, press 3 to have your name removed permanently. (If you press 1, your name will be removed for just two years.)

Coupons, ads and product samples mailings

To stop receiving items addressed to "occupant" and "resident," complete the recommended information at the end of this article and address it to ADVO, Inc., First Data Solutions and Val-Pak Coupons. (Addresses provided later in article.) If possible, send a copy of the mailing label along with the letter.

List brokers

Mailing list companies purchase and collect information from government records, phone books, membership rosters and other sources to then sell for marketing purposes. Call these numbers to have your name removed from mailing lists of some of the major data compilers.

- Acxiom

- Experian Consumer Services

1-877-774-2094
• Donnelly Marketing
1-888-633-4402
1-888-633-4403

• Equifax
1-800-873-7655

1-800-407-1088
• Trans Union
1-888-567-8688

Call your credit card companies

Find out how to request that they don't sell, trade or lend your name to other mailing lists.

Avoid participating in sweepstakes and contests

Your name will most likely get added to a mailing list unless you can specifically request that the sweepstake or contest group not add it. When completing warranties, product registrations or questionnaires, don't include personal information. Companies do not need that information for your warranty.

Be proactive

When giving your name and address to a business or organization, request that they not rent, sell or exchange it with anyone else. Return unopened first-class junk mail after writing "refused" on it.

Recycle

Make sure you recycle any junk mail you *do* get.

Provided by: **Maine State Planning Office** **www.recyclemaine.com**

(These are the names and addresses of the companies previously mentioned in this article:)

ADVO, INC.
LIST SERVICES
239 WEST SERVICE ROAD
HARTFORD, CT 06120

HARTE-HANKS
LIST REMOVAL SERVICES
6701 DAYMEADOW DR. SUITE D
GLEN BURNIE, MD 21060-6401

DIRECT MARKETING ASSOCIATION
MAIL PREFERENCE SERVICE
P.O. BOX 9008
FARMINGDALE, NY 11735

VAL-PAK COUPONS
DIRECT MARKETING
P.O. BOX 13428
ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33733

You can complete this form, cut along the dotted line and mail it to the addresses given.

Please remove my name and address from all list directories that you compile, rent, sell or trade. Below is my name and various ways my name may appear on mailing lists. Please register all variations of my name for removal from your lists.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Variations of my name _____
Variations of my address _____
Signature _____ Date _____