



Waste Free Lunch

Inside this issue:

- Can I Recycle This? 2
- Printer Cartridges 2
- Recycling at Work 3
- “The Office” 3

Stump the Grump

What are Wombles?

In the 1970's the BBC broadcasted an animated program about "Wombles", small furry creatures who built things out of garbage as a way to teach kids about recycling. But the show backfired. It's immense popularity lead to an explosion of litter in the parks as children tried to 'feed' the Wombles.



Having a waste free or waste less lunch is quite easy. Most everyone has an old lunch box or bag lying around collecting dust. If this isn't the case, lunchboxes can be found for cheap at a thrift store or even free from a relative or friend.

Fill the lunch box with reusable containers, silverware, a thermos or a cup, a cloth napkin and poof, you have significantly reduced the amount of waste generated by your meal. Best of all, these items can be washed and reused again and again.

A waste free lunch is easy but it may require a small up front cost for containers, napkins, etc. I did some research on the economic benefit of reusable containers by going to Wal-Mart and checking out prices. I looked at two different Ziploc brand items; disposable sandwich bags and reusable containers.



The price for 100 count Ziploc sandwich bags was \$3. The price for a 12 count Ziploc brand variety pack of reusable containers was \$4.

For lunch, I typically use 3 bags or containers each day, one for a main meal (i.e. sandwich) and 2 for snacks. Using 3 bags a day, a box of 100 sandwich bags would last me 33 days of lunches. By day 34 those wonderful little reusable containers pay off.

Reusable containers make it easy to carry soups, puddings, and the like. Also, purchasing items in bulk and then packing individual servings in reusable containers can help reduce grocery bills. Reusable containers decrease excessive packaging and items going to the landfill, as well.

If you don't want to buy reusable containers save yourself money by reusing food containers such as cottage cheese, sour cream or pickle jars. You've already paid for the container once so why not reuse it?



Using cloth napkins can reduce the 2,200 napkins annually used by Americans. Cloth napkins can be bought or made. To make them, look around the house for old shirts, washcloths, towels, or bandanas. Cloth napkins don't necessarily appeal to everyone - even yours truly - so if you use paper napkins, take only what you need. Or use caution when eating and not use any at all! By simply being aware of what you use you'll save yourself money and trees.

Thermoses are a great investment as well. If buying a thermos isn't in your budget then bring a mug or cup to work instead.

We can't always be waste free but trying is the first step. So when at the grocery store pick out items that can be recycled or reused instead of landfilled.

Can I Recycle This?

Paper, including everything from packaging to mail, makes up the largest percentage of the municipal solid waste stream at 33 percent. It's also one of the most recovered materials, as recycling opportunities are often readily available.

But what exactly can be included with paper and cardboard recycling? Below is a guide to make things easier.

Mixed Paper Recycling

Envelopes	Card Stock
Mail	Greeting Cards
Magazines	Posters
Shredded Paper	Newspaper
Soft Covered Books	Flyers
Office Paper	Brochures
Sticky Notes	Business Cards
Phone Books	Calendars
Coloring Paper	

Cardboard Recycling

Packing Boxes	Paper Bags
Manila Folders	Tissue Boxes
Dry Food Boxes	Paper Towel Rolls

Landfill (non-recyclable)

- Freezer or Refrigerator Boxes
- Soda Boxes
- Greasy Pizza Box
- Waxed Cartons
- Paper Ream Wrappers
- Bathroom Boxes, i.e. bar soap & feminine products

Why Can't I Recycle a Greasy Pizza Box?

When paper products, like cardboard, are recycled, they are mixed with water and turned into a slurry. Grease from pizza boxes causes oil to form at the top of the slurry, and paper fibers cannot separate from oils during the pulping process. Essentially, this contaminant causes the entire batch to be ruined. This is the reason that other food related items are non-recyclable (used paper plates, used napkins, used paper towels, etc).



The easiest remedy for this problem is to cut or tear out the soiled portions of your pizza boxes and trash them. For example, you can tear the top of the box off, recycle that and throw away the bottom part containing the grease. If the entire box is grease-free, the whole box can be recycled with a guilt-free conscience.

Why Can't I Recycle Freezer, Refrigerated, or Bathroom Boxes?

If soda cans were packaged in normal, recyclable cardboard, guess what would happen when the cans sweat or the box got wet? Kerplunk! The cans would come crashing through the bottom of the box. How about if a shipment of bar soap got rained on? The pavement below would

quickly become very clean. Regular cardboard breaks down when wet, which is how recyclers at paper mills create a slurry to breakdown and recycle cardboard. For this reason, cardboard boxes for frozen, refrigerated, or bathroom items are either coated or treated with a chemical that prevents it from breaking down when wet – precisely what recyclers need it to do. For this reason, frozen, refrigerated and bathroom boxes are contaminants to our paper buyers, and are not accepted for recycling.

Why Isn't the Wrapping Around a Ream of Paper Recyclable?

Just like soda, frozen and refrigerated food boxes, paper reams must be covered in a material that will keep the paper product dry. The waxy or chemical coating on the wrapper doesn't allow moisture to penetrate through, keeping the paper inside intact.



How Do I Recycle Hardcover Books?

Simply remove the hardcover from the pages. Landfill the hard cover and recycle the rest. To be even 'greener' tear the pages out of the book to further reduce the amount of glue residual on page edges.



**Complements of Today's Facility Manager*

What can be done with ink and toner cartridges:

- * Ask the distributor if they'll take them back when dropping off new or if they have a mail in program.
- * Places like Staples or Office Max will give a discount toward the purchase of new cartridges when recycling the old.
- * Donate them to a local school, church, or other organization. They can collect revenue from them.
- * Bring them to an Area Collection Station or the Recycling Center and ask the attendant to put them in the Electronic Recycling bin.



Printer Cartridges

How facilities dispose of printer cartridges and other office supplies has an impact on the environment, for better or worse. Reusing and recycling printer cartridges can help reduce waste that goes to landfills. Cartridge World, a specialty retailer of ink and toner printer cartridges, notes the following statistics concerning the impact of these items.

The Facts

- * It takes about a gallon of oil to make a new laser cartridge.
- * Nearly eight cartridges are thrown away per second in the United States.

- * In North America, over 350 million cartridges per year are discarded in landfills, and that number increases by 12% annually.
- * Every remanufactured laser cartridge saves nearly 2.5 pounds of metal and plastic waste from being deposited in landfills.
- * A laser cartridge thrown into a landfill can take up to 450 years to decompose. Some components made of industrial grade plastics will take over 1,000 years to decompose.
- * 70% of used printer cartridges throughout the world are currently being thrown out.

Recycling at Work

The average office worker in the U.S. uses 10,000 sheets of copy paper each year. That's 4 million tons of copy paper used annually. Office workers in the U.S. generate approximately 2 pounds of paper and paperboard products every day.

While great strides have been made in the recovery of several grades of paper, including cardboard and newsprint, one area with the opportunity for improvement is the high quality fiber found in offices. In workplaces across America, nearly 15.7 million tons of printing-writing papers were recovered in 2006, up from more than 10 million tons in 1995. Still, less than half of all office papers are recycled.

Many businesses today have or are starting a 'Sustainable', 'Environmental', or 'Green' team to ensure that their business is taking strides to become more environmentally conscious.

Here in Dunn County, we have an Environment Leadership Team. The group tested recycled paper versus virgin paper in all print and copy ma-

chines. This led to the County purchasing only recycled paper. The group also improved recycling in all County buildings, and are currently working on adding recycling bins to all public and common areas. By switching the default on computers to print double sided, we have reduced the amount of paper needed to be purchased.

I have included a few excerpts from AF & PA's Office Recycling Guide to help you and/or your office to have a better recycling program.

Target materials for recycling

Identify all materials that are potentially recyclable. Evaluate how much could be recycled, and how recyclables might best be separated for collection. Target those materials that are most abundant in the recycling stream and would be the easiest to separate for recovery.

Get management support

Gain the support of your company's top management for a recycling program. Before going to management, arm yourself with information and data that

shows program value or identifies a need to improve an existing recycling program.

Engage and coach employees

Employees make a recycling program happen. They are a recycling program's most valuable assets. Educate employees, talk up the recycling program, and get the word out. Communicate positively, clearly, and often.

Measure and share results

Track results to show the merits of recycling and motivate employees. When management and employees see progress, momentum for the recycling program will take off. Achieving recycling goals, lowering costs, realizing environmental benefits, or improving participation are all opportunities to show off program successes.

For the entire Office Recycling Guide visit www.paperrecycles.org.

Remember we can all make a difference.



Oh, we don't recycle



We dont? Then why have I been seperating the trash into whites and colors?

Hopefully you don't have a boss (or co-worker) that's as naive as Michael Scott from the TV show 'The Office'.

~♥~ Happy Valentines Day ~♥~