

# WASTE MANAGEMENT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

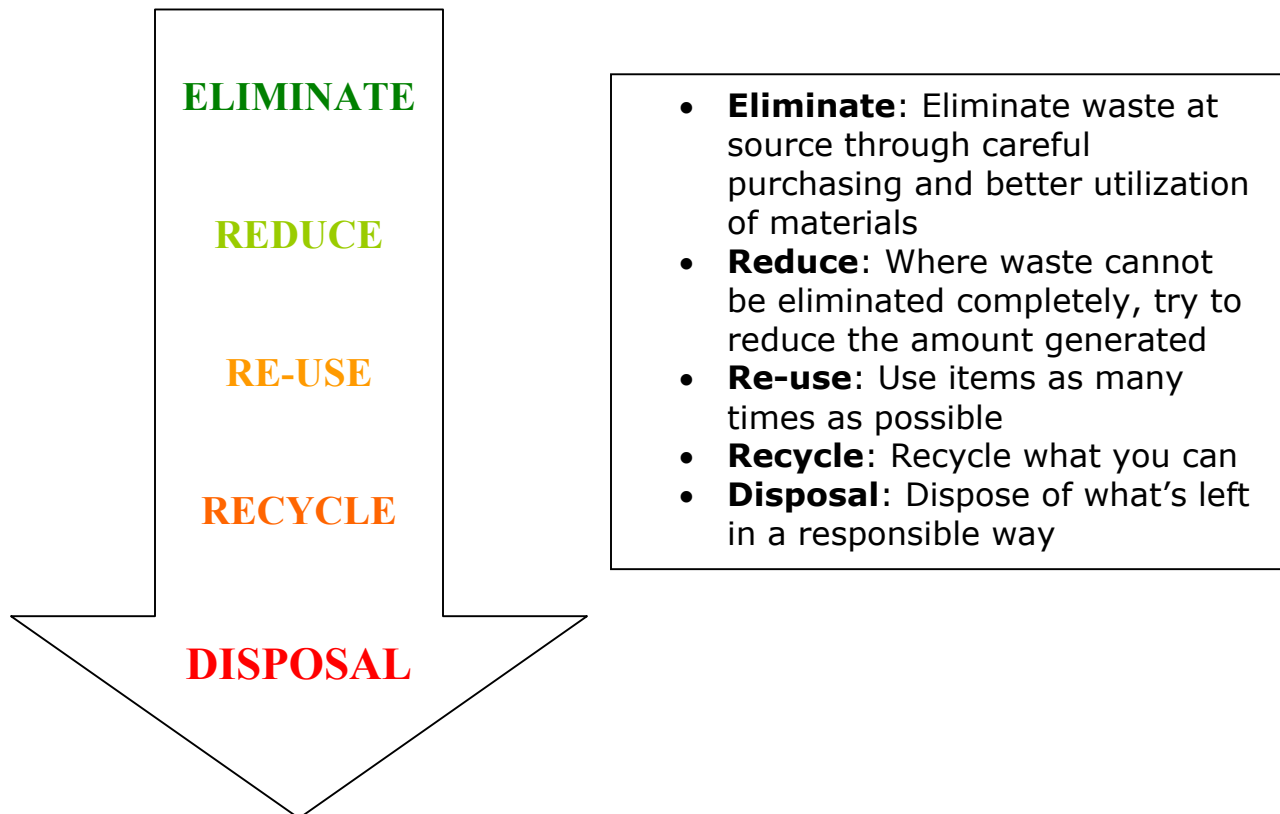
## Why manage waste?

South Africa generates around 566 million tonnes of solid waste each year of which approximately 22 million tonnes are produced by industry. All this waste has to go somewhere, and the environment is being put under increasing pressure. Our modern, throwaway society has contributed greatly to the waste problem.

Waste disposal in South Africa is becoming an increasing problem for companies – landfill space is running out and stricter environmental controls are making waste disposal much more expensive.

## Waste hierarchy

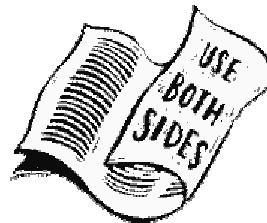
The waste hierarchy illustrates how priority should be given to the way we deal with waste. Use the 'Eliminate - Reduce - Re-use - Recycle - Dispose' rule for all of your office wastes - and remember that the higher up the waste hierarchy you reduce your waste, the greater your cost savings will be and the smaller the impact on the environment.



## PRACTICAL ACTIONS

### Examples of ways to REDUCE waste in the office

- Print and photocopy on both sides of paper, this reduces consumption by 50%. Print only the number of copies necessary. Limit the distribution of correspondence and reports to only those who really need hard copies or route one hard copy to several readers
- Use e-mail or bulletin boards for sending and receiving information. Don't print e-mails unless absolutely necessary
- Cancel junk mail and unwanted publications
- Avoid overproduction of marketing and publicity material by reviewing distribution lists and regularly updating databases
- Use china mugs rather than paper/plastic vending cups. Avoid purchasing disposable catering products such as sugar sachets
- Eliminate unnecessary layers of packaging on your goods. Choose minimally packaged products or ask your suppliers to supply products in less packaging. Ask your suppliers to take excess packaging away with them when they deliver



### Reduce the cost of disposal

In addition to reducing the amount of waste that is being thrown away, reduce the cost of disposing of the remainder by ensuring your current waste collection arrangements suit your needs:

- Check that you need all of the bins currently supplied by the Municipality. If some are not fully utilised, ask them to remove them, or reduce the frequency of collection. Remember to renegotiate your costs.
- Flatten or compact cardboard and other bulky wastes to make the most efficient use of disposal facilities.

## Re-use

Think about anything in your workplace that you are sending for disposal but which could be used again, or for some other purpose. This could be either within your organisation or it could be of value (and perhaps even be sold) to another organisation.

### Examples of ways to RE-USE waste in the office

- Re-use scrap paper for printing in draft, to make notes for internal circulation or shred for use as packaging or animal bedding.
- Think about reusing old packages e.g. envelopes, boxes and infill material (such as polystyrene beads and bubblewrap) for outgoing shipments
- Return packaging to suppliers for re-use e.g. pallets
- Hold an annual 'stationery amnesty'. A surprising amount of material can be recovered by asking staff to hand in all their unused equipment for re-use.
- Renovate furniture rather than buying new replacements, this can save up to 50% of the costs of new products. Make use of local resource centres and charities that re-use computers, furniture and other materials from businesses.
- Join the Integrated Waste Exchange (IWE) which is free to all South African businesses. The IWE works on the principle that one company's waste is a resource for another company, helping to keep useful materials in circulation. For more details see [www.capetown.gov.za/iwe/](http://www.capetown.gov.za/iwe/)



## Recycling

Although recycling has clear benefits over landfilling of waste and using virgin materials it creates its own environmental impacts through the transportation of materials and energy consumed during the recycling process. Recycling should be considered only after elimination, reduction and re-use options have been addressed. Re-using materials will cut both the purchase and disposal costs whereas recycling will reduce only disposal costs.

### Examples of ways to RECYCLE waste in the office

- Set up a recycling scheme for your waste. Common office materials which can be collected for recycling include: paper, cardboard, cans, plastics, glass, printer/toner cartridges, fluorescent tubes and mobile phones
- Contact your Municipality or waste minimisation club for details of recycling companies in your area. The frequency of collection and cost of recycling will depend on the amount of material that you generate N.B You may be able to receive revenue on aluminium cans through a specialist contractor
- Ensure that cleaning staff is in support of the recycling scheme and that emptying the recycling bins is part of their contracted work.
- Promote the scheme to staff by putting up posters around the offices and on bins explaining the types of material that can be recycled.
- Provide staff with on-going feedback about the scheme, including figures on the amount of materials collected



## Buying recycled

It is important not only to collect materials for recycling, but also to close the recycling loop by purchasing materials with a recycled content, e.g. paper and stationery products, toilet paper and refuse sacks. The use of these materials will help to stimulate the market for recycled products and support the recycling process.



Before you buy any product ask yourself the following questions:

- Is it made from recycled materials?
- Is it made from marked and easily recycled materials, such as paper, glass or wood?
- Are its component materials easy to separate for recycling?
- Is its packaging easily recyclable?

## Responsible waste handling and disposal

Responsible disposal of waste is vital to the environment. Everyone in the waste disposal chain – from the people that produce waste, to the people who carry it away and the people who finally dispose of it have a duty of care to dispose of the waste correctly.

### Put it in the right place

If there are separate bins or skips for different types of waste, make sure the right waste goes into the right container. In particular, do not mix any form of hazardous waste with general waste since the general waste will be contaminated and might need to be treated as 'hazardous waste' too. This contaminated waste costs far more to dispose of.



## **Store it safely and securely**

Make sure that all waste is stored safely and securely. Ensure that liquid waste will not be spilled or leak from its container. Protect solid wastes from the wind and rain so that waste material does not get blown away, and soluble substances are not washed out to cause pollution. Also, make sure that the waste will not be disturbed by animals (a particular problem with food wastes).

## **Only pass it to the right person**

Don't allow 'just anyone' to take the waste away from your site. Carriers must be authorised, so the waste must be given to the right person. If you are dispatching 'hazardous' waste, make sure you are passing it someone authorized to take hazardous waste. If you are unsure, check with your Municipality.

## **Further information/contacts**

- [www.wastenot.co.za](http://www.wastenot.co.za) – general waste information
- Local landfill site: Wellington landfill, Interpace Street, Wellington (near Industrial Park). Tel: 021 873 2530
- Materials Recycling Facility (MRF): Distillery Street, Hugenot, Paarl. Tel: 021 807 4715/ 021 807 4751
- Operating hours for landfill site and MRF
  - Monday – Thursday, Saturdays & Public Holidays: 8am - 4pm; Friday: 8am – 3.30pm; Sundays & Religious Holidays: Closed
- Recycling bank locations
  - Bottle banks – Bergriver Boulevard (near Brug str.), Main Road (near Zomerlust Spar), Paarl Rugby Clubhouse, Boy Low Sportsgrounds
  - Cans – can be brought to MRF
  - Steel – L.O.Rall, Paarl Scrap Metal - Oosterland Street
  - Paper – Mr Paper – Vosmaar Street