

Office Waste

Office waste is any waste generated within an office. This consists mainly of paper waste and some packaging waste, which can be recycled. The benefits of introducing a recycling programme include saving on waste disposal costs, boosting staff morale, and demonstrating the organisation's commitment to the environment, as well as enhancing the public image of the organisation. There are two types of paper which can be recycled. The first is low-grade paper such as newspapers, magazines and the second is high-grade material, such as computer printouts. The following are some ideas that will help in introducing a recycling programme with waste reduction, reuse and recycling tips that can be easily implemented and integrated into the day-to-day running of the office.



How to Reduce Office Waste

1. Only print the amount needed.
2. Limit the distribution of copies to only those that really need it.
3. E-mail can be sent to save on paper.
4. Store data and reports on floppy disks, compact disks, memory sticks etc. to save on paper copies.
5. Single spacing can be used as a format when printing reports.
6. Photocopy and print double sided. This can be set as a default setting on printers and photocopier machines.
7. Draft documents should be reviewed on screen before printing. Use the spell check.
8. Before printing multiple copies, print a single copy. Check this copy for errors.
9. Internal documents can be printed on paper that has been used on one side.
10. Scrap paper can be used to make note pads to take telephone messages.
11. Printing and photocopying should be carried out only when it is absolutely necessary.
12. Have a centralised office filing system reducing the need for multiple paper files.
13. Office equipment should only be bought as needed. This is to cut down on excess materials being wasted.
14. Employees should regularly sort out their desk and return unwanted office supplies to the stationery cupboard.
15. Newspapers can be shared at work.
16. Cancel unwanted subscriptions to avoid paper accumulating.
17. Office announcements can be posted in a centralised place to reduce the paper trail.
18. All employees should be encouraged to use less paper, and to recycle.
19. Regularly service office equipment, particularly photocopier machines and printers, to prolong their lifespan.

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How to Reuse Office Waste

1. Use both sides of paper. If used only once, use a second time for internal correspondence or for draft reports.
2. Scrap paper can be used to take messages.
3. Unused disks can be collected, erased and checked for viruses before redistributing for reuse.
4. For paper that has been used on one side, integrate this paper for use by putting in boxes by photocopier machines and printers thus encouraging staff to reuse the paper.
5. For internal correspondence or inter office correspondence, envelopes should be reused.
6. For outgoing deliveries, boxes that originate from incoming deliveries can be reused.
7. Shredded paper and newspapers can be reused for packaging.
8. Envelopes can be reused if they are opened carefully. Fresh labels can be placed on the envelopes.
9. Corrugated boxes can be reused internally.
10. Incoming packaging material can be reused for outgoing shipments.



How to Recycle Office Waste

1. A recycling programme can be set up within the office to promote recycling.
2. A waste management team can be appointed who regularly update staff on progress made.
3. If in a large building try implementing a recycling programme that is common throughout the building to avoid confusion.
4. Contact the building management to see what local recycling services are available.
5. Liaise with the cleaners to make sure they understand and are familiar with the recycling system.
6. A waste contractor should be hired to collect the waste.
7. Recycle bins should be placed in various locations around the office to encourage paper recycling. These bins should be clearly labelled as to what should be placed in them.
8. Recycle bins should be provided for the different paper types e.g. newspapers collected separately from magazines, coloured paper separated from plain white paper etc.
9. As few as possible waste bins should be provided in the office. This is to promote and make recycling easier and to make wasting harder.
10. All paper should be recycled. This includes envelopes, invoices, faxes, junk mail, magazines, newspapers, telephone books, greeting cards, calendars etc.
11. Corrugated cardboard is a low-grade material and should be collected for recycling.
12. Old newspapers can be pulped and used as fuel for domestic fires.