

Recycle and Rebuy: Close the loop

Recycling

- ♦ Provide employees with clearly marked, uniform recycling bins that are easily identifiable.
- ♦ Place bins in a convenient location. Try to maintain consistency by placing recycling bins in the same place in every office, such as next to the trashcan.
- ♦ Post recycling guidelines on or near all recycling bins. This may be accomplished by utilizing county provided bin labels and posters.
- ♦ There should be enough bins throughout the office to accommodate the volume of recyclables generated and to ensure convenience for program participants.
- ♦ Additional bins should be placed in areas of high generation, such as copy rooms, staff kitchens, and meeting rooms.
- ♦ Work with custodial staff to create a collection schedule that is suitable for the office.
- ♦ Establish regular communication between office and custodial staff to receive feedback, address issues, such as contamination, and generate ideas about improving the program.
- ♦ Provide employee education to explain the program. Collection procedures should be as user friendly as possible to improve participation and to allow for the most effective separation of recyclables.

In Tompkins County, the following materials are recyclable:

Cardboard/Mixed Paper

- ♦ White Paper
- ♦ Corrugated Cardboard
- ♦ Newspaper
- ♦ Magazines
- ♦ Self-Adhesive Notes
- ♦ Colored Paper
- ♦ Manila folders
- ♦ Junk Mail
- ♦ Phonebooks

Containers

- ♦ Plastic bottles with #1 through #7 on the bottom
- ♦ All clear and colored glass (except blue) food and beverage bottles and jars
- ♦ Paper milk, soymilk, and juice cartons and drink boxes
- ♦ Metal cans and aluminum foil
- ♦ #5 wide-mouth containers such as yogurt and butter tubs

Additional Materials:

- ♦ Computers and electronics, fluorescent lighting, and other hazardous waste
- ♦ Textiles and sneakers
- ♦ Books

For more information about recycling, contact Tompkins County Solid Waste at 273-6632.



Rebuy, or Green Purchasing

Purchasing products with recycled content is just as important as recycling itself. When businesses purchase products with recycled content it creates demand for recyclable material, which closes the recycling loop. A corporate policy for green purchasing can result in source reduction and recyclability of discards through purchasing power leverage. The following tips are designed to help your business adopt an environmentally preferable purchasing policy and establish green purchasing practices.

- ♦ Purchase products with recycled content. If possible, find products with post-consumer materials, which have been generated by consumers and diverted from a landfill.
- ♦ Buy supplies in bulk that have minimal packaging.
- ♦ Look for products with packaging that is reusable, recyclable, or made with recycled content.
- ♦ Purchase durable goods that have parts that can be replaced or repaired.
- ♦ Always consider durability as a cost criterion for equipment and janitorial supplies.
- ♦ Consider renting or leasing equipment.
- ♦ Purchase used or refurbished appliances.
- ♦ Buy products that have multiple purposes or functions.
- ♦ Choose products that were produced locally.
- ♦ Buy products with less toxic ink and dye. Also look for unbleached paper, paper alternatives, and soy-based inks.
- ♦ When redesigning an office, purchase less toxic products, such as solid wood instead of particle board (which emits formaldehyde), and carpet tacks instead of toxic floor covering adhesives.
- ♦ Purchase cleaning products with nontoxic content in large, reusable containers.
- ♦ Look for bulk dispensing systems for cleaning products to reduce packaging and costs.
- ♦ Ask suppliers to keep you informed about new and existing products that are environmentally friendly and minimally packaged.
- ♦ Avoid buying Styrofoam packaging when possible; instead, purchase paper packaging products.
- ♦ Develop a green product questionnaire for prospective vendors.
- ♦ Require vendors to pick up packaging the day after delivery.
- ♦ Look for products made by companies with a positive environmental record.

Finger Lakes Buy Green

TCSWMD, in cooperation with Sustainable Tompkins, has launched an innovative web-resource to assist you in buying green. This website provides a sampling of locally available products with green attributes.

Visit <http://www.fingerlakesbuygreen.org/> for more information

