

## Pollution Prevention

### What Is It?

In general terms, pollution prevention is any practice, plan or habit that reduces the generation of pollutants and wastes at the source. Pollution prevention focuses on ways to avoid producing air emissions, water discharges or land disposal of pollutants by not creating wastes in the first place.

### You can make a difference...

because everything you do has an impact on our air, water and soil. Over your lifetime you will consume resources and energy, and create waste and pollution, on a scale unmatched in human history. The little habits that make up your lifestyle have big consequences. Taking just one step to help prevent pollution is important.

### At Your Home

Make a personal commitment to examine your lifestyle and its impact on our earth's resources. You can help prevent pollution by taking steps to reduce the amount of wastes and pollution your household generates. You can also choose to purchase products that result in less pollution during their manufacture, use and disposal. Following are some suggestions:

- Look for recycled content in products or packaging.
- Purchase products with less packaging.
- Buy durable instead of disposable products.

- Carry a reusable marketing bag or return clean bags to the store for reuse or recycling.
- Combine trips, carpool or use public transportation.
- Purchase only as much household or lawn chemical as you need.
- Buy the least hazardous or harmful product. Make sure it will do the job before you buy it; then you won't have something you cannot use.
- Use up household products before they become old or outdated. Give usable leftover and unwanted products, like paint, to someone who can use them so they do not become waste materials.
- Recycle aluminum, steel (tin) cans, newspaper, cardboard, magazines, glass and plastic.
- Properly recycle or dispose of used oil and fluids from vehicles. Don't pour them down storm drains or into the soil. Don't spread them on gravel roads.
- Maintain your septic tank in good condition. Do not pour chemicals down the drain that could harm its operation.
- Choose ENERGY STAR® qualified appliances. They use less energy and water than standard models.
- Insulate your hot water heater to save energy, or install a timer or on/off switch on it.
- Consider low-flush or composting toilets. Install low-flow faucet aerators and showerheads.
- Fix leaking faucets and toilets.
- Run your dishwasher with a full load.

Use the air-dry option or leave the door open after the final rinse to dry the dishes.

- Wash full loads of laundry or use the appropriate load size selection. Air dry clothes when possible.
- Turn off lights and appliances when not in use.
- Use high efficiency compact fluorescent bulbs with low mercury content.
- Mulch or compost your yard waste and vegetable scraps.
- Apply herbicides and pesticides properly; more is not better. Try non-chemical methods first.
- Landscape your home to make it cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.
- Landscape with native or drought tolerant trees and plants that require little watering.
- Water lawns only when they start to appear slightly wilted, then apply one inch of water. Over-watering weakens the plant's root system, making the lawn vulnerable to disease and pests.
- Water plants and lawns early in the morning to reduce evaporation.
- Caulk windows and doors.

### At Your School

You have an impact on the environment while you are at school. To prevent pollution, you can:

- Recycle waste paper from classrooms.
- Start a recycling program for cardboard, aluminum cans and plastic bottles.
- Encourage school officials to use energy-efficient lights and exit signs and to replace old windows with better-insulated ones.
- Bike, walk or share rides to get to school, to go home or to go places with your friends.
- Study the amount of water your school uses each day; see if it can be reduced.
- Reduce food waste in the cafeteria. Take only what you can eat or ask for smaller portions.
- Encourage school officials to eliminate the use of mercury wherever possible and to switch to micro-scale and green chemistry techniques in science lab classes.

### At Your Workplace

You have an impact on the environment at your place of employment. To prevent pollution, take an interest in the following:

- Encourage recycling of office paper, aluminum cans, cardboard, fluorescent lamps and other wastes.
- Look at process waste materials for their "commodity" value; participate in an industrial waste exchange program.
- Eliminate leaks, drips and spills.

- Help conserve water.
- Conserve water through reduction and, if practical, reuse.
- Substitute non-toxic and recycled materials wherever possible.
- Improve the operating efficiency of equipment or production lines.
- Improve material receiving, storage and handling processes to reduce waste.
- Use total cost accounting for purchasing and inventory control of hazardous materials.
- Save electricity by using energy efficient lighting, heating and cooling units, computers and office equipment.
- Encourage carpooling for business trips and for commuting to work.
- Keep vehicle fleets properly maintained; reduce multiple trips to the same destination.
- Evaluate the use of raw materials and the impact of work activities on the environment. Consider developing and maintaining an environmental management system.

### On Your Farm

If you are engaged in agricultural operations, you have the opportunity to help prevent pollution in the following ways:

- Mix and apply pesticides and herbicides at the proper concentrations.
- Explore non-chemical methods of agricultural production and pest control.

- Use alternative fuels when possible.
- Maintain vehicles for maximum fuel efficiency.
- Do not open burn waste.
- Consider protecting sensitive environmental areas by planting timber crops or native grasses.
- Get involved in a pesticide container recycling program and other recycling programs.
- Manage animal wastes for its nutrient value.
- Apply nutrients and fertilizers with care. Do soil testing and remember that excess nutrients can leach to groundwater or surface waters.
- Fence waterways to protect them from livestock and leave a vegetative buffer to prevent erosion.
- Consider solar-powered water pumps and rotational grazing.

### In Your Community

Help your community keep good quality water, healthful air and productive soil through the following steps:

- Take an active interest in local issues related to pollution.
- Use the Community Right-to-Know law to learn if facilities in your town store hazardous chemicals or release toxic chemicals to the environment.
- Encourage local officials to prevent and plan for accidents involving hazardous chemicals.
- Spread the word that composting, mulching, recycling and proper disposal of hazardous household chemicals are important.

### Ask Yourself

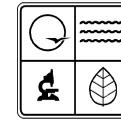
Take time to evaluate the impact of your way of life on the environment. For one week, or even one day, ask yourself...

Where did this item come from? What effect did it have on the environment during its manufacture?

Is it made from renewable natural resources or recycled materials? Does it have a long life, and is it non-toxic?

What will this item do to the environment when I use it and discard it? Can it be reused or recycled?

Can I do things differently so my impact on resources and energy is less?



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Department of  
Natural Resources

# Preventing



# Pollution

# Begins With You

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