

Worksheet #8 – Your Garbage

Use this worksheet to learn about how you can help manage your garbage.

Why should you be concerned?

- The millions of tonnes of garbage produced in our communities every year quickly fill up existing landfill sites.
- It is increasingly difficult to find new landfill sites as no one wants to live near one.
- If a municipality's landfill site is full and a new nearby location cannot be obtained, residents must pay more to have their waste transported elsewhere.
- Recycling saves natural resources, energy and water by using already manufactured items instead of more natural resources.
- Durable products may initially be more expensive but they are generally a better investment in the long run and they stay out of landfill sites longer.
- Leachate from landfill sites may contaminate groundwater.
- Open burning of garbage in barrels, woodstoves, fireplaces, outdoor furnaces or open pits releases a large number of pollutants. Burning of garbage at home, cottage and farm is one of the largest known sources of dioxins and furans in Ontario.
- Some people throw medications into the garbage or flush them down the toilet or the sink. These practices may have a harmful effect on the environment, since chemical components in the drugs may be added to the soil or water

and may eventually find their way into our drinking water.

What you can do.

1. Consider how you can generate less garbage. If you are a seasonal resident, please remember that good recycling practices should continue even while you are on vacation.
2. Recycle effectively. Contact your local municipality to learn what items can be recycled in your community and how you should prepare them for recycling (i.e. rinse, bundle, and sort).
3. Inform yourself of initiatives and companies that are redesigning products, packaging, and manufacturing processes to reduce waste. Support them through your purchasing power.
4. Compost food and yard wastes.
5. Use refillable and reusable containers and products as much as possible and purchase durable products that won't need short-term replacement.
6. Watch for Hazardous Waste Disposal Days in your community. Encourage your local municipality to have them and support recycling programs. Many items such as paint, batteries, printer ink cartridges can be returned to the place of purchase for proper disposal or recycling.
7. Return your unused and expired medications to your pharmacist for disposal for you or alternatively, help you find information about where to dispose of them.

Your Garbage: How do you rate?

Topic	Best 4	Good 3	Fair 2	Poor 1	Your Rating
MINIMIZING THE WASTE THAT COMES 'IN'					
1 Purchases	<p>Instead of buying, borrow, rent or share any items possible,</p> <p>OR purchase used items.</p>	<p>Purchase or use only what you need and avoid accumulating unused products.</p>	<p>Purchase more than is necessary,</p> <p>AND recycle as much as possible, including donating items.</p>	<p>Purchase more than is necessary,</p> <p>OR throw unwanted items into regular household garage.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Tip</p> <p>Items that bear the EcoLogo symbol are manufactured in a way that minimizes the use of hazardous by-products.</p> 	<p>Preference given to items that are durable, reusable, and/or recyclable and can be recycled locally.</p> <p>AND take-out or disposable food/beverage containers are seldom used.</p>	<p>Preference given to items that are durable, reusable, and/or recyclable and can be recycled locally.</p>	<p>Disposable or single serving items purchased even when alternatives available</p> <p>AND minimal effort made to recycle or reuse.</p>	<p>Frequently purchase disposable, or single serving items,</p> <p>OR no effort to recycle or reuse.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Tip</p> <p>Use your purchasing power to help minimize waste and protect water quality.</p>	<p>Choose items that have no packaging,</p> <p>AND always re-use carry-out grocery bags or tote bag.</p>	<p>Choose items that have minimal packaging,</p> <p>OR always re-use carry-out grocery bags or tote bag.</p>	<p>Choose items with packaging that is recyclable in your municipality.</p>	<p>No consideration given to product packaging,</p> <p>OR plastic carry-out bags are accepted and then discarded.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Topic	Best 4	Good 3	Fair 2	Poor 1	Your Rating
MINIMIZING THE WASTE THAT GOES 'OUT'					
2 Re-using and recycling	Reduce the number of items you use.	Reuse as many items as possible.	Recycle as many items as possible.	Garbage is taken to local landfill.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Both sides of a sheet of paper are used, AND all paper is recycled.	Both sides of a sheet of paper are used, OR all paper is recycled.	Most paper is recycled and all paper purchased contains some recycled content.	Paper is not recycled.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Check with local municipality to learn what items are recyclable and how they should be prepared for recycling, AND comply with all applicable recycling practices in your community. AND all hazardous materials are disposed of properly.		Most recyclable items are recycled.	Little or no attempt made to participate in local recycling programs, *OR waste is burned / a burn barrel is used. *OR hazardous wastes are put into regular garbage.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Food scraps and yard wastes are properly composted regularly, on site.		Food scraps and yard wastes are composted occasionally OR a garborator or garbage disposal is used.	Food scraps or yard wastes are thrown in regular household garbage	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tip
To reduce packaging, buy larger volumes (more product for less packaging) bulk or concentrated products.

*These conditions may violate provincial legislation or municipal by-laws.

Resource List

Your Garbage

For more information....

Waste Reduction

Ontario Ministry of Environment (MOE)
416-323-4321
1-800-565-4923
www.ene.gov.on.ca

- Be a Garbage Transformer. Brochure. For children aged 9-11. PIBS 1013b.
- Closing the Loop: The 3Rs of Waste Management. Booklet. ISBN 0-7729-6931-0. PIBS 1012b.
- Ontario's Waste Reduction Action Plan: Background. Information sheet. PIBS 1600b.
- The Road to a Conserver Society. Booklet. PIBS 1630b.
- The Waste Reduction Office. Information sheet. PIBS 1717e.
- Your Seven Day Waste Reduction Diary. Booklet. PIBS 2189e.
- A Down-to-Earth Guide to Composting and Vermicomposting in Environmental Living: Protecting the Environment...in Your Lawn and Garden. Vol.2. ISBN 0-7778-1070-0, PIBS 2316e
- Environmental Living: Protecting the Environment...in Your Home. Vol. 1. ISBN 0-7778-1069-7, PIBS 2315e

Recycling Facilities

- Local municipality (see *Blue Pages*)

Waste Burning

- Local municipality about regulations (see *Blue Pages*)
- www.burnbarrel.org
- New York State Department of Health
www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/environ/trash.htm
- Canadian Centre for Pollution Prevention
www.c2p2online.com
- Great Lakes Trash and Open Burning Website
www.openburning.org

Ecological Labeling

Environmental Choice Program
c/o TerraChoice Environmental Marketing
1280 Old Innes Road, Suite 801
Ottawa, Ontario K1B 5M7
Call toll-free: 1-800-478-0399
fax: 613-247-2228
www.environmentalchoice.com

Action Plan Worksheet # 8- Your Garbage

Any ratings of 1 or 2 indicate areas where your management of garbage needs some changes to reduce the potential for environmental damage. Use the information from the worksheet and the resource section to help analyze your potential problems and decide what you can do to solve or control them. Remember, this is YOUR Action Plan. It must suit you and your property.

Topic Number	Workshop Theme	My Rating	Short-term Action	Long-term Action
1-a	Purchases	2	Research which items are recycled locally. Purchase reusable travel mugs, shopping bags, water bottle, etc.	Reduce waste produced by your household. Make informed decisions when purchasing packaged items and ensure materials are recycled.