

MINNESOTA WASTE WISE
FACT SHEET
OFFICE PAPER

FACTS & FIGURES

- Estimates show that, despite the availability of recycling programs for mixed paper, it still accounts for one-third to one-half of landfill waste.
- The average office worker uses more than 10,000 sheets of office paper each year. Cumulatively, that adds up to four million tons of copy paper each year.
- The average office worker in the U.S. generates an average of two pounds of paper and paper board products daily.
- A 12 foot high wall could be built from California to New York with the amount of office paper wasted in the U.S. each year.
- Over 40% of wood pulp is used to make paper.

RESOURCES

For more tips on office paper recycling, contact Minnesota Waste Wise at (651) 292-4650 for more information.

[Paper Calculator](#)

Calculate the Lifecycle Environmental Impacts associated with various levels of recycled content in paper

OFFICE PAPER WASTE PREVENTION – REDUCE, REUSE *THEN* RECYCLE

- Implement a comprehensive office paper waste reduction policy and program. Include this policy in employee handbooks and reinforce the policy with reminders in the company newsletter and at departmental meetings.
- Provide *ongoing* training to employees on the importance and methods of preventing office paper waste.
- Develop a policy to make double-sided copying a standard practice. If possible, have the IT department set “duplex” as a default on printers and copiers.
- Eliminate all desktop printers.
- As printers and copiers need to be replaced, reduce the amount of printers available to save on space, energy, and purchasing costs. If possible, replace all printers with multi-purpose copy machines.
- Go electronic whenever possible. Send invoices and meeting notes electronically. Request customers and vendors utilize electronic options, if possible.
- Provide computer access for all employees. For those employees who are not comfortable using a computer, provide one or two copies of newsletters and notices on bulletin boards, in break rooms and in other common areas.

Reuse one-sided copy or fax paper for scratch paper. Instead of purchasing paper notebooks, make them out of waste paper.

RECYCLING OFFICE PAPER WASTE

Paper makes up an average of 40% of our municipal solid waste, so recycling paper is an obvious way to save on solid waste-related fees such as state and county taxes and hauling fees. Paper can be brokered (sold) to recyclers in a variety of ways, from white office paper only to colored and white papers to a mixed paper collection. Additionally, there may be opportunities to earn money on your recyclable paper. It is important to establish a relationship with your removal service, whether it is your main waste hauler, a broker of recyclable waste, or a paper recycler. Understanding your options can help with encouraging participation in your paper recycling program, educating staff on proper collection procedures, and ensuring that your recycling program is the best one possible for your bottom line.

MINNESOTA
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