In one day, the average Ohioan generates nearly ***10 pounds of garbage*** in the form of wrapping, bottles, cans, yard waste, food scraps, clothing and many other items. Though you may not realize it, the products you buy and throw away have significant impact on the environment. Over the years, consumers have been persuaded that disposable products and throwaway packaging are more attractive and convenient than reusable or durable goods. However, when purchasing reusable and recycled products, we prevent pollution, save energy, conserve resources, reduce pollutants and waste, and lessen exposure to harmful materials. The easiest, most direct way for you to make a difference in your home is to watch what you buy and throw away. Just remember to follow these basic principles:

- **REDUCE** the amount of trash discarded;
- **REUSE** containers and products; and
- **RECYCLE** as much as possible.

The following suggestions will help you get started.

Basement

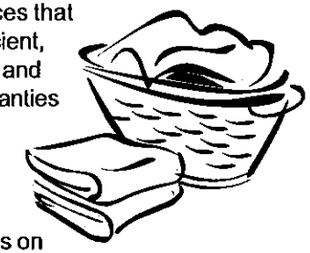
- When upgrading electronic equipment or cleaning out your attic, basement or garage, remember to donate used items to needy organizations. Donate old magazines to waiting rooms, libraries and civic organizations.

- Clean or replace furnace, air conditioner and heat-pump filters.
- Buy used items and equipment if they will do the job as well as new items. Used items cost less and conserve the energy and raw materials used in making new products.
- Save money by repairing worn clothes and shoes rather than buying new ones.
- Store clothing in cedar-lined chests or hanging wardrobes rather than using chemical moth balls.
- Reuse cardboard boxes and plastic bags for storage and save packaging materials such as foam peanuts.

Bath

- Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting. An insulating blanket around your water heater will save energy and pay for itself within a year.
- Rather than throwing away a disposable razor every few shaves, invest in a quality razor and change the blade, or use an electric razor.
- Avoid buying products that are double- or triple-wrapped, such as shampoo bottles inside an extra box.
- Unclog drains with a metal snake or plunger, rather than with toxic drain openers.
- If using cleaning chemicals, buy "green" cleaners. They are less toxic for you and the environment.
- Read labels prior to purchasing for product claims and specifications.

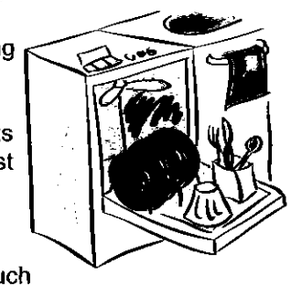
Laundry



- Select appliances that are energy-efficient, conserve water and have good warranties and service contracts.
- Use energy efficient settings on washing machines and clothes dryers.
- Invest in a wicker or rubber-like laundry basket that will last many years.
- Buy laundry soap in economy-size packages to save money and reduce packaging.
- Concentrated products also reduce waste and save you dollars.

Kitchen

- Purchase energy-efficient appliances, and use energy-saving settings on refrigerators and dishwashers.



- Reduce packaging waste and save money by selecting products that have the least amount of packaging.
- Buy dry goods such as grains, cereals, spices, flour and pasta in bulk or buy the largest size available. Large sizes use less packaging and cost less per unit.
- Store leftovers and lunches in sealable storage containers, and use lunch boxes or reusable sacks.
- Mix drinks in bulk, and use reusable drink containers instead of single-serving cans or bottles.
- If you buy microwaveable meals, save the plastic plates for picnics or serving small children.
- Use durable, reusable plastic tableware for outdoor eating instead of disposable cups, plates and silverware.
- Use cloth napkins and kitchen towels instead of disposable paper napkins and towels.
- When possible, bring a durable tote bag to the grocery for your purchases, or bring your grocery bags back to use again. Many groceries sell reusable bags for two dollars or less.
- Save plastic bags to reuse for produce and bulk items, and check to see if your grocery store has a recycling bin for plastic bags.
- Avoid buying cleaning products that are toxic. Many home remedies can be prepared that will save money and reduce the need for the costly disposal of household hazardous wastes.
- Rather than using chemical air fresheners, boil cloves and cinnamon in a pan on your stove, or light a candle.
- Keep your oven clean by wiping up spills right away with baking soda and water.

Home Office

- Before you invest in electronic equipment and other durable products, read consumer journals to find products with a history of high customer satisfaction and low breakdown rates.
- Look for products with "energy-efficient" labels, good warranties and service agreements.
- Follow the manufacturer's suggestions for proper maintenance.
- Reuse paper for scratch pads, messages and notetaking. Also, edit computer documents electronically before you print them out.
- Save paper by reducing "junk mail."
- Write to manufacturers and tell them you want environmentally friendly products with less packaging.

Garage

- More than 200 million tires are discarded each year in Ohio. Help reduce this amount and save money by buying high-mileage tires and maintaining proper air pressure. Remember to check your tire pressure monthly.
- Buy rechargeable batteries.

- If you change your own oil, be sure to recycle it. Don't pour it down the drain.
- Use latex or water-based paints and donate leftovers to theater groups or schools.
- Clothes and bedding that are too worn out to be repaired or given to charity can be cut and used for rags.
- Maintain the emission control equipment on your vehicle.

Yard

- Yard and food wastes make up about 25 percent of our household garbage. If you have space, compost these organic materials into fertilizer for your yard and garden.
- Donate bulky yard debris and leaves to community garden projects or see if your town has a composting or yard waste collection program.
- Use a mulching lawn mower, or buy a mulching attachment for your current mower. Grass clippings will work their way back into the soil as a natural fertilizer.
- Reduce non-point source water pollution by minimizing use of fertilizer and pesticide on lawns.
- Use a watering gauge when you water your lawn to prevent overwatering.

For More Information

Ohio Solid Waste Management District contacts are available at: **www.epa.ohio.gov/portals/34/document/general/swmd_chair_list.pdf.**

Earth 911 Web site
Information about recycling options for your household hazardous wastes. **www.earth911.org.**

ENERGY STAR is a U.S. government program helping us save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices. **www.energystar.gov/.**

The Center for a New American Dream helps Americans consume responsibly to protect the environment, enhance quality of life and promote social justice. **www.newdream.org/.**

Ohio EPA
P.O. Box 1049
Columbus, OH 43216-1049
(614) 644-3020
www.epa.ohio.gov

A Publication of Ohio EPA's
Public Interest Center

Ted Strickland, Governor
Chris Korleski, Director

Ohio EPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer
Printed on Recycled Paper

Ohio | Environmental Protection Agency

Home Pollution Prevention

April 2010