

**CONTACT:**

**PAPER TIPS WORTHY FOR HARD-CORE AND BUDDING ENVIRONMENTALISTS ALIKE**

Most households across the Commonwealth have a recycling bin handy to help us recycle our paper, cans, bottles and other items. Of those materials, paper is by far the largest contributor to the waste stream. Despite consumers' heightened awareness of the benefits of recycling in recent years, Massachusetts residents and businesses still throw away a whopping 1.5 million tons of paper annually.

Clearly, we can all do more to increase recycling in our homes. But what about where we work? If we're serious about reducing the volume of paper we use and increasing the amount to be recycled, businesses large and small must play an integral role.

**Work that Paper**

In addition to recycling, the best way the business community can help conserve resources, prevent pollution and save money is to reduce the amount of office waste they produce in the first place, particularly paper. Doing so reduces the amount of material that needs to be collected, transported and deposited into landfills or incinerated.

America's appetite for copy paper is voracious – nearly 3.7 million tons of copy paper are used annually in the United States alone. That's over 700 billion sheets, an average of 10,000 sheets for each office worker!

One way to sharply reduce paper use is to practice double-sided copying, called duplexing. Also, mailing fewer sheets to customers and vendors results in reduced postage costs. For example, a single-sided 10-page letter costs 63 cents to send by U.S. first class. That same letter, copied onto both sides of the paper, uses only five sheets and requires just 39 cents in postage. In addition, using less paper will free up the space needed to store reams of paper for more productive use.

Additional tips for reducing paper use include:

- Reusing paper that's already printed on one side for internal documents like drafts and short-lived items such as meeting agendas or temporary signs.

- Make better use of E-mail to share documents and ideas, and print only the e-mails you need. Instead of printing a Web page, bookmark it or save the page on your hard drive and pull it up when needed.
- Desktop fax, electronic references (CD-ROM databases), electronic data storage, electronic purchasing and direct deposit are all ways to use electronic media to reduce office paper waste.
- Practice efficient copying – use the size reduction feature offered on many copiers. Two pages of a book or periodical can often be copied onto one standard sheet.
- Use two-way or send-and-return envelopes. Your outgoing envelope gets reused for its return trip. Also, use reusable inter- and intra-office envelopes.

Reducing paper volume is important, but so is using paper that is environmentally friendly.

**No bleach.** Purchase paper with pulp that is brightened without the use of chlorine. Chlorine bleaching creates a toxic, bio-accumulative waste by-product called dioxin. By demanding alternatives to chlorine-bleached papers, you help create new markets and encourage paper mills to move away from polluting production practices. Better yet, use paper labeled “totally chlorine-free” (TCF) or “processed chlorine-free” (PCF). Both terms mean that the mill did not use chlorine compounds to brighten the paper. Talk to your paper vendor or printer about the price and availability of TCF and PCF papers.

**Alternative inks.** Request inks with non-petroleum bases, such as soybeans or linseed. Also, ask for inks that emit low amounts of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Non-petroleum-based inks are usually lower in VOCs.

**Recycled content.** Purchase and specify post-consumer recycled content papers. This helps expand the recycling market and divert waste from landfills and incinerators – and reduces the number trees used to make paper.

By practicing common sense and, above all, making a commitment to reducing office waste paper, businesses will improve both the environment and their bottom line.

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