



Reducing Waste in Property Management

There are many opportunities for reducing waste in building maintenance, custodial care, and landscape management. Reducing waste can mean saving money on both garbage bills and buying supplies. The following are suggestions from professionals in property management and waste reduction.

Building Maintenance

- Service all building equipment as indicated in the warranties.
- Purchase durable, repairable, and energy-efficient equipment. It may cost more up front, but will save money in the long run.
- Keep buildings in good repair; avoid deferred maintenance. Repairs are usually less wasteful and expensive if handled right away.
- Use durable, recycled, and recyclable materials when doing maintenance and repairs. For a list of businesses that sell recycled content construction products search "Salvaged Content" in the SmartSteps Product and Service Directory.
- Obtain and recycle materials through the regional materials exchanges at: <http://www.bcemex.ca> and <http://www.bcimex.ca>
Material exchanges help businesses and institutions locate markets for materials they have traditionally discarded and to find materials suitable for reuse.
- Contact local processors who accept construction/renovation debris for recycling. For a list of processors visit the SmartSteps Product and Service Directory online at: www.metrovancouver.org
While there, download a copy of the "DLC Toolkit" from the SmartSteps program. This kit provides you with information and resources to deal with renovation and construction waste.
- Donate old furniture, office equipment, outdated forms, or paper that is only used on one side. These materials can be used by many nonprofits, schools, or other organizations. Contact United Way, local homeless shelters, or social service organization for potential recipients.
- Purchase reusable air filters or air filter frames. Completely reusable air filters require cleaning with hot water (no soap); reusable frames have a disposable filter insert. Some organizations have saved money by hiring a firm that replaces filter inserts on a regular basis.
- Purchase longer lasting bulbs. Incandescent lights and light sockets in exit signs can be converted to compact fluorescent or LED. Contact BC Hydro for possible rebates.
- Use sensors or timers to automatically turn equipment on and off. This can reduce wear on equipment, increase life and save energy.

- Maintain building with latex paint where possible, and paint on as-needed basis.
- Recycle old paint and other related materials appropriately. See your paint supplier for complete details.

Custodial

- Support and encourage recycling for building tenants and in common areas. Use cloth towel dispensers or 100% post-consumer recycled and unbleached paper towels. Recycle used paper towels. Consider electric hand dryers.
- If individual rolls of toilet paper are removed before they are completely empty, save them and donate to shelters.
- Source vendor products that are more durable, reusable, repairable, and recyclable. Also, ask suppliers to reduce unnecessary packaging.
- Request that deliveries be shipped in returnable and reusable containers. Ask vendors to take back packaging. In some cases they may be able to reuse it.
- Prior to recycling or disposing, find out if packaging materials could be reused by your company or another business.
- Purchase products with no packaging, less packaging, or reusable packaging.
- Reduce wood waste by requiring suppliers to collect crates, pallets, barrels, and spools for reuse. These items may also be used internally.
- Purchase cleaning supplies in bulk and concentrated form. These give you more product for less packaging and are usually less expensive.
- Use cleaners without toxic, corrosive, and flammable chemicals. Read labels. Look for products that do not require special handling and/or do not have warnings.
- Dispense cleaning solution in refillable containers like pump-spray bottles. Use products in non-aerosol containers where possible.

- Eliminate trash bag liners in waste cans where no wet trash is disposed of.

Landscape Management

- Compost yard trimmings on-site, and use them as a topsoil amendment.
- Chip tree trimmings and use as mulch.
- Plant drought-tolerant plants; they use less water and produce fewer trimmings.
- Avoid over fertilizing and over-watering, which leads to rapid plant growth and pollution from runoff.
- Practice “grasscycling” by leaving grass clippings on the lawn as you mow, and allow them to decompose naturally.
- Practice integrated pest management, which encourages biological pest controls and minimum applications of pesticides.

For More Help:

- Visit the SmartSteps program web pages at: www.metrovancouver.org
- Contact a Sustainable Business Advisor at: 604.451.6575
Business_services@metrovancouver.org
- For more information on recycling options and locations visit the Solid Waste & Recycling section of the Metro Vancouver web site or visit our Information Centre located at 4330 Kingsway in Burnaby. The Information Centre may also be contacted at: 604.432.6200
- Visit the Recycling Council of BC at: www.rcbc.bc.ca or contact their hotline at: 604.732.9253 or hotline@rcbc.bc.ca
- Visit the business section of the national Waste Reduction Week web site at: <http://www.wrwcanda.com/businesses.htm>

