
SWANA TECHNICAL POLICY T-2
SOLID WASTE REDUCTION
AND MATERIAL USE PRACTICES IN PRODUCT AND PACKAGING DESIGN

Policy

SWANA supports initiatives by manufacturers, businesses, institutions, governments [states, provinces, local governments], private sector service providers and individuals to reduce the amount of solid waste generated at the source [point of generation]. SWANA supports initiatives by industry to foster and implement material use practices, which should enhance and promote the longevity, reuse and recyclability of products and packaging to minimize the amount of solid waste generated through source reduction.

Position

Manufacturers, businesses, institutions, governments and individuals have both individual and collective roles in reducing the amount of solid waste generated at the source. SWANA takes the following positions on the roles of the respective parties:

Manufacturers and Businesses and Industry

SWANA supports initiatives by industry to implement materials use policies that result in product and packaging designs which strike an optimum balance among economic, environmental and quality considerations that result in one or more of the following:

- reduction in the weight or volume of consumer product packaging,
- reduction in the levels of toxic constituent concentrations in consumer products and packaging,
- improvement of the rate of recycling of consumer products and packaging,
- extension of the life-span of consumer products,
- actions and initiatives to buy materials containing recycled material,
- improvement of the compatibility of discarded materials with conversion processes such as biodegradation and/or combustion to minimize emissions to the environment, and

- improvement in consumer habits by advancing their education and understanding of the benefits of recycling.

Manufacturers and businesses are encouraged, through solid waste audits, to implement solid waste generation reduction initiatives which:

- address manufacturing processes to identify means to reduce the generation of off-spec products and other solid wastes, and implement the findings of those solid waste audits,
- reduce the amount of materials wasted in the manufacturing process,
- prepare actual final products, as well as off-spec and solid waste product materials more readily recyclable,
- plan and implement internal recycling programs to reduce the amount of solid waste introduced into the SW stream,
- utilize raw materials with less toxic constituents or no toxic constituents,
- use reusable instead of single-use items,
- purchase products which contain recyclable materials,
- purchase products which reduce the amount of solid waste generated, and
- adopt business practices which promote less paper use and discarded paper generation.

Provincial and State Governments

Provincial and state governments are encouraged to implement solid waste generation reduction initiatives which:

- provide technical assistance programs for manufacturers, businesses, institutions, local governments and individuals to assist them in planning and implementing solid waste reduction programs,
- assist businesses and manufacturers in the conduct of solid waste audits and plans to implement the findings of those audits,
- consider giving priority to the purchase and use of materials and products with recycled content and which are recyclable after use,
- sponsor pilot solid waste reduction programs to demonstrate the efficacy of such programs and to generate increased support for solid waste reduction programs,

- provide information through clearinghouses, or through relationships with existing clearinghouses, about solid waste reduction programs, methods and initiatives,
- provide grants and loans to stimulate solid waste reduction programs, and
- provide public education about solid waste reduction.

Local Governments

Local governments are encouraged to implement solid waste reduction initiatives which:

- implement purchasing habits that minimize the generation of solid waste, either initially or at the end of the products' life,
- assist businesses, manufacturers, institutions and individuals to assist them in planning and implementing solid waste reduction programs,
- establish alternative programs for the diversion and utilization of yard waste from all generators, such as special leave-on-lawn programs and backyard composting programs,
- consider giving priority to the purchase and use of materials and products with recycled content and which are recyclable after use,
- sponsor reuse programs,
- stimulate change of shopping practices to reduce the amount of solid waste generated, and
- provide public education programs.

Individuals

Individuals are encouraged to implement solid waste generation reduction initiatives that:

- implement leave-on-lawn grass cutting practices,
- support recycling programs,
- consider giving priority to the purchase and use of materials and products with recycled content and which are recyclable after use,
- establish backyard composting programs,
- implement purchasing habits which result in the generation of less solid wastes,
- donate usable items no longer needed rather than discard them,

- maintain and repair items to extend their useful life, and
- support education for children to instill the ethic of the need to reduce the amount and type of solid waste that is generated.