



Why Reduce Waste?

To see the value of waste reduction, we have to consider the impact of a product during its entire life cycle - from obtaining the raw resources, refining, manufacturing, marketing, distribution, use, reuse, recycling, and final disposal of waste. Waste reduction *can* have positive impacts at every one of these stages. Reducing waste in our community will:

1. Conserve the world's resources. If we consume less, produce products more efficiently (e.g. more recycled content), and throw away less, then we use less raw materials, water, and energy.
2. Lessen our impact on the environment. During a product's life, there is potential at each stage for habitat destruction, the production of greenhouse gases, and the pollution of air, water, and land. A smaller amount of products making the entire journey from "cradle to grave" will lessen the impacts on our environment.

3. Save money. The adoption of a "waste reduction culture" will bring about changes in the marketplace that will save consumers money. Municipalities will save on waste disposal and earn on recycling. By rescuing resources from landfills, business opportunities are created and grown.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2004, the CSRD recycled 357 tonnes of metal waste from the landfill and diverted 2700 m³ of chipped wood and yard waste. Another 580 tonnes was diverted through the regional recycling program. In 2006 there was a 35% increase in recycling activity over 2005 in Revelstoke!

Revelstoke Eco-Fact Sheet

Solid Waste Reduction

Revelstoke's Garbage

In the late 1990's the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) instituted measures (refuse transfer stations, improved recycling, and disposal fees) that reduced the amount of solid waste sent to landfill in Revelstoke by 50%.

While the trend is good, Revelstoke still produces a lot of waste. In 2004 the landfill disposed of 6050 tonnes of waste, or about 1.84 kg/person/day (672 kg/person/yr). This includes household, commercial, and industrial waste. The amount attributed to households is not measured directly, but based on studies elsewhere, could be as much as 40% of the total, or about 0.74 kg/person/day (270 kg/person/yr). **For a family of four, that would be 1080 kg/yr, or at least 3 entire garbage truck loads per family.** Imagine piling that up in your backyard, year after year and everyone else on your street doing the same. Lots of garbage!

What can we do to reduce waste? Most people are familiar with the 3 R's, Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. But not everyone



realizes that they are actually an ordered process, often referred to as the Waste Reduction Hierarchy (see below). While the 3rd R- recycling, often gets most of the attention, effective waste management must begin with the first R – reduce.

The Waste Reduction Hierarchy

Reduce - Waste reduction is the most important. Reducing the amount of waste produced in the first place, is by far the most efficient way of conserving resources and limiting the need to reuse and recycle. Think of it as reducing the amount of items coming into your home that have the potential to end up as waste.

Reuse - Reusing items gives longer life to the resources used to make them, while reducing the pollution and conserving the energy that would be needed to replace or recycle them.

Recycle - Recycling is the third priority. Recycling involves the physically changing waste items to be used in the manufacture of new products. Using recycled items rather than new raw materials preserves natural resources, saves energy, and reduces pollution. The key to recycling is the circular journey during which products are processed and manufactured into new recycled-content products, which are sold to consumers, who can then repeat the process.

Recover and Residual Management – Any items that cannot be reused or recycled become waste. In some instances waste can be taken one step further and incinerated or otherwise processed to recover the energy from the waste stream. Residual Management is the disposal of the waste remaining after the application of the other four steps. In most cases, including Revelstoke, residual management is by landfilling.

A Dozen Waste Busters

There are many ways to reduce the amount of waste we produce:

1. Recycle all items. Beverage containers go to the Bottle Depot and bins are located beside the City Public Works Compound and at the Revelstoke Landfill for other recyclables. Be sure to recycle all paper and boxboard as it can make up to 40% of your trash.
2. For free, yard waste, tree trimmings, etc, can be taken to the City of Revelstoke Jordan Septage Composting Compound, 1 km past the landfill, there are signs on the road to direct you. This site is open Monday to Saturday, 8 am to 4 pm.
3. Choose items with less packaging and buy bulk whenever possible. Bring your own reusable shopping bags.
4. Choose beverages in refillable (glass) containers first (your next choice should be aluminum and your last plastic).
5. Use a refillable coffee mug and water bottle (if you choose to reuse a plastic bottle, #2, #4, or #5 plastic is safest). If you don't like the local tap water, buy a filter rather than buying bottled water.
6. Creatively reuse items within your home and never throw anything away that can be used by someone else; make the effort to find it a new home.
7. Buy less. Choose the items that you do buy wisely. Buy the products that are least likely to end up as waste. Choose durable products that will have a longer life or can be repaired, even if you have to pay a little more. Think about how you will reuse or recycle the item before you even buy it. When buying gifts choose consumable products (e.g. food, soap or candles) and gifts of time (like massages or babysitting services), or "re-gift" nice items of your own that you no longer want. Buy products that have recycled content. Buy used articles from yard sales and thrift stores, rather than new. Rent equipment or borrow things rather than purchasing your own.
8. Compost, vermicompost, or do both so that you remove as many organics as possible from your waste stream. This one action can reduce your household waste up to 30%.
9. Save recyclable items (especially plastic) even if they can't be deposited in the local bins. Stockpile these items until the next Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) collection fair.
10. Spend the time and maybe some money to fix things that are broken, even if you are just going to give them away.
11. Check out the local freecycling group (www.groups.yahoo.com/group/freecycle_revelstoke/) or Barter Works (<http://myrevelstoke.com/BarterWorks/>). Here you can find your old things a new home.
12. Lobby to have additional items included in local recycling programs. Learn about Zero Waste and explore ways you can support the expansion of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) initiatives (see below).
13. Leave unwanted items on your front lawn with a "free for the taking" sign – you'll be surprised at how quickly they disappear.

Zero Waste – reduces consumption, maximizes recycling, minimizes residual waste, and ensures that products are made to be reused, repaired, recycled or composted. To learn more contact Target Zero Canada at 111 Peter St., Suite 503 Toronto, ON M5V 2H1 or visit www.targetzerocanada.org, www.zerowaste.org, or www.grrn.org/index.html.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) – The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines EPR as an environmental policy approach in which a producer's responsibility, physical and/or financial, for a product is extended to the post-consumer stage of a product's life cycle. To learn more about BC's Product Stewardship Programs call (250) 387-3205 or visit <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/ips>. Follow the links to find out more about EPR on a federal and international level.

For More Information

- <http://www.northcolumbia.org/> for more links and also check out the NCES binders on the reference shelf at the Revelstoke Public Library.
- <http://www.rcbc.bc.ca> the Recycling Council of BC website has information on waste reduction or phone their Recycling Hotline at 1-800-667-4321.
- for composting and vermicomposting information visit the Recycling Council of Ontario (<http://www.rco.on.ca>), Greater Victoria Compost Education (<http://www.compost.bc.ca/>), or the Composting Council of Canada (<http://www.compost.org/who.html>).
- <http://www.nsrp.bc.ca> find recycling advice in the North Shore Recycling Program's on-line *Recycle this?* index.
- <http://www.ciwm.ca.gov/WPW/Home/> for waste prevention ideas.
- For books on composting check the local library for *The Rodale Book of Composting* Martin, Gershuny & Minnich (1992), *The Secret Life of Compost* Beck (1997), and others.
- *Worms Eat My Garbage* by Mary Applehof (1997) is an excellent introduction to vermicomposting.

*This Eco-Fact Sheet
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