

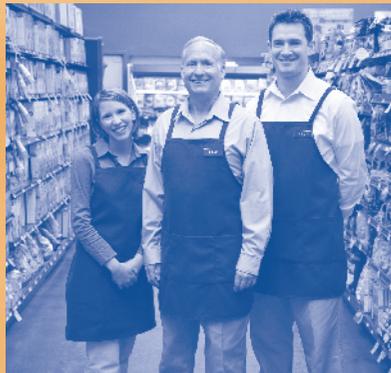


Montgomery County
Division of Solid Waste Services

Buying Recycled Products Guide



Summer 2007



Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle

The three R's of the recycling process are Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. The first R, reduce, describes the best way to eliminate waste, which is to not create it at all. We reduce waste by consuming and throwing away less. Sometimes we can reuse the packaging from the products we buy by finding another use for that material. For example; using a coffee can as a pencil holder is a way to reuse materials.

The last of the three R's is for recycling. We recycle when we sort recyclable materials from the trash, and manufacturers buy them to make into products again. The products we recycle are saved from being disposed and incinerated.

Recycling helps preserve our environment, but it can only work if products and packaging made from recycled materials are bought by consumers. When products made with recycled materials find their way to store shelves for sale again the recycling process begins anew. By buying recycled, you "close the loop."

Buying Recycled Products

A recycled-content product is an item made with materials that were recycled. These materials have been diverted from conventional disposal methods such as landfills or incinerators for another use. Most recycled-content products indicate the percentage of recyclable materials that they contain. Look for the largest percentage of post-consumer recycled content. Post consumer refers to the materials that were purchased by consumers and then recycled at home, work, or school.

It takes some planning and attention, but "buying recycled" is not difficult. It's easy and has many benefits. By purchasing recycled products you can:



Conserve natural resources, energy, wildlife, and disposal space.

Manufacturing recycled-content products requires fewer resources than manufacturing products without recycled content. As a result, less energy and water are used, less pollution is generated, and less wildlife habitat is disturbed. Additionally, since the diverted materials are made into new products and not disposed of, the need to find suitable disposal options is reduced.



Contribute to a more sustainable future.

Buying recycled products ensures that the materials collected will be used again to manufacture new products or materials.



Save money and create jobs.

The manufacturing process for recycled products creates far more jobs than disposing materials in landfills or incinerators, and recycling is among Montgomery County's preferred waste management methods. When you buy recycled products, it supports job creation and helps ensure a demand for the materials that Montgomery County recycles, thus improving the County's recycling program.

Types of Recycled Products

The recycled product manufacturing industry has grown rapidly due to an ever-growing supply of recyclable material and demand for recycled-content products. As demand has grown, the variety of these products has expanded, while the cost to consumers has declined.

You can find products made with recycled materials in your local grocery, hardware, and office supply stores. Just look for the "made with recycled-content" symbol ♻️. When it is on a package, you can be sure that the product is made with recycled materials. Some common items made from recycled materials include paper products, construction materials, and many others.

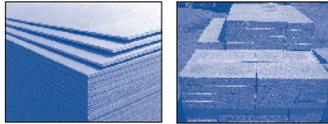
Paper Products

- ♻️ Newspapers
- ♻️ Cereal boxes
- ♻️ Paper towels & napkins
- ♻️ Egg cartons
- ♻️ Pencils
- ♻️ Books
- ♻️ Bathroom & facial tissue
- ♻️ Corrugated cardboard boxes
- ♻️ File folders
- ♻️ Brown paper bags & wrapping paper
- ♻️ Office and writing paper



Construction Materials

- ⊗ Fiberglass insulation
- ⊗ Molded packaging
- ⊗ Gypsum wallboard
- ⊗ Alternative lumber
- ⊗ House siding
- ⊗ Patio blocks
- ⊗ Floor tiles
- ⊗ Non-pressure pipe
- ⊗ Roofing materials
- ⊗ Nails
- ⊗ Cement and concrete
- ⊗ Asphalt



Other Products

- ⊗ Glass containers
- ⊗ Aluminum cans
- ⊗ Recycling and trash containers
- ⊗ Insulation for sleeping bags & ski jackets
- ⊗ Clothing
- ⊗ Car bumpers
- ⊗ Trash bags
- ⊗ Carpeting
- ⊗ Motor oil
- ⊗ Flower pots
- ⊗ Laundry detergent bottles
- ⊗ Aluminum pie pans
- ⊗ Retread tires
- ⊗ Appliances
- ⊗ Lawn furniture
- ⊗ Playground equipment



Importance of Buying Recycled

Buying recycled is good for the environment. When we buy products manufactured from recycled materials we become less dependant on virgin raw materials. Manufacturing materials with recycled-content not only conserves natural resources; it reduces air and water pollution, and often saves energy over virgin manufacturing processes.

Recycling has encouraged the growth of an industry and created jobs. The Institute for Local Self-Reliance in Washington, DC estimates that nine jobs are created for every 15,000 tons of solid waste recycled into a new product. By contrast, only two jobs are created for every 15,000 tons of materials that are incinerated, and just one job for every 15,000 tons of materials sent to landfills. When you buy recycled, you support the County's recycling program, help to create jobs, and improve the region's economy. Remember, recycling does not work if we don't "close the loop".

Buying recycled is not only easy, but most recycled products have the same quality, reliability, and dependability as their non-recycled counterparts. While at one time there was a difference between the quality of recycled and virgin products, the technology of manufacturing recycled goods has improved so that now they are essentially the same. In fact, in many cases, most people are not able to tell that a product contains recycled materials.



Buying Recycled and Waste Reduction Go Hand In Hand

Natural resources are limited and often difficult to extract from the land. When products are made from recycled materials, manufacturers conserve every tree, every gallon of oil, and every pound of minerals to its maximum potential. If we use something just once and throw it away, we are wasting those resources. By buying products made with recycled materials we prevent the waste and pollution associated with manufacturing a product from "virgin" materials. Buying recycled products "closes the recycling loop" and ensures the success of Montgomery County's recycling program while reducing wa



How to Know if Products are Made from Recycled Materials and Where to Find Them

When items are made from recycled materials, they usually say so right on the label. To buy products made with recycled-content, look for this symbol ♻️. When you see this symbol on a package, then you know that product was made from recycled materials. Look for the highest percentage of post-consumer recycled-content you can find. ("Post-consumer" is the material you purchase and then recycle).

The supply of recycled products is steadily increasing and many of the stores where you already shop carry items containing recycled materials. Recycled products are available from many sources including grocery, office supply, department, and hardware stores, so it is not necessary to shop at a specialty store to find them. If you have trouble finding recycled products at a particular retailer, ask to speak with the store manager. By speaking with the manager, you will be able to find out what recycled products the store carries and it will show that customers value recycled-content products so they will continue to keep these in their inventory.

For more information about buying recycled, please visit the Montgomery County Division of Solid Waste Services at:
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/recycling
or call (240) 777-6400.

Recycled Products Q & A

Why should I buy recycled products?

When you buy products with recycled-content, your purchases help to create a demand for the materials collected in recycling programs. Buying products that contain recycled materials also helps conserve natural resources, protect the environment, save money, and reduces the need to develop additional disposal capacity.

Are recycled products as good as virgin products (those made without recycled content)?

There are superior and inferior products in all categories, and recycled products are no exception. Overall, recycled products enjoy the same quality, reliability, and dependability as virgin products. Like anything else, you just need to try a few different products until you find what you like.

Is recycled paper as good as non-recycled paper?

Recycled paper is virtually identical to its virgin equivalent. Recycled paper looks no different and can be found with the same whiteness and brightness as virgin paper. It also offers the same level of compatibility and high quality imaging on copiers, and laser and ink jet printers.

Do recycled products cost more?

No, many recycled products are priced competitively with their non-recycled counterparts. However, product prices are influenced by a variety of factors so there may be cases when recycled products cost more, but recycled products are not inherently more expensive. Demand has lowered prices, so if you continue to purchase products made with recycled materials, prices will continue to decrease.

Are recycled products hard to find?

Many recycled products—from groceries to office supplies to toys and gifts—can be found where you are already shop. Major national chains including K-Mart, Wal-Mart, Target, Home Depot, Whole Foods and others sell hundreds of products made from or packaged in recycled-content material. Many smaller chains and independent retailers such as My Organic Market, also carry recycled products, so these can be found virtually anywhere products are sold.

What's the difference between pre-consumer vs. post-consumer recycled content?

These two terms are used to indicate the source of recycled material that goes into recycled-content products. Pre-consumer material is generated by industry during the production process. Most industries already recover and use a large percentage of pre-consumer waste because it tends to be cleaner, easier to use and higher in value. Post-consumer waste is generated by you, the customer, and separated from the waste stream. Post-consumer materials would generally end up being disposed of if they are not recycled. So when you purchase recycled products, try to buy products with the highest percentage of post-consumer recycled-content material.

Contact Information

For more information, please contact:



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This information is available in an alternate format by calling Alan Pultyniewicz at 240-777-6400.



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