



Preserving Resources,
Preventing Waste

The New Jersey WasteWise Bulletin

Newsletter of the New Jersey WasteWise Business Network – Summer 2025
WasteWise ... improving your bottom line and the environment
through waste reduction, recycling and recycled product procurement.

Sustainable Procurement Makes Economic and Environmental Sense

Sustainable procurement, also known as "green procurement," is a business practice that considers the environmental, social and economic impacts of purchasing and sourcing decisions. Procurement practices that embrace sustainability principles will optimize business operations, increase profitability and result in environmental benefits for businesses and society.

Getting Started:

- Secure senior management approval and support to set sustainability goals
- Assess procurement practices and develop sustainability criteria for suppliers, conveying expectations and prioritizing committed partners
- Monitor supplier performance, integrate sustainability clauses into contracts and educate procurement teams on sustainability practices and goals
- Consider the lifecycle environmental impact of products and track/report sustainability performance across the supply chain.

Purchasing Strategies for Waste Reduction:

- Purchase products without packaging, with minimal packaging, or in reusable packaging
- Ask vendors to take back packaging
- Purchase copiers and printers that make two-sided copies
- Conduct pre-purchase reviews to consider alternatives to disposable and single-use products

Recycled Product Procurement:

The purchase of post-consumer recycled products is crucial to the success of recycling since it helps create stable end markets. Recycled products are high quality, readily available, diverse and affordable. Recycled product procurement is a smart purchasing practice and an integral component of any sustainable procurement program.

Common Recycled Products

Copy paper, paper files, sanitary tissue products, desktop accessories, trash and recycling receptacles, plastic bags, insulation, carpet, ceiling panels, benches, mulch, pallets, mats and signs.

Resources:

[Institute for Supply Management – NJ, Inc. Green Seal](#)
[Rutgers University Procurement Services – Sustainable Purchasing](#)

EPR...What Is it?

The term "EPR" is often mentioned at recycling events, but what exactly does it mean? Extended producer responsibility (aka EPR) is a mandatory type of product stewardship system required by law. It includes, at a minimum, the requirement that the manufacturer's responsibility for its product extends to post-consumer management of that product and its packaging. EPR policy shifts financial and management responsibility, with government oversight, upstream to the manufacturer and away from the public sector. It also provides incentives to manufacturers to incorporate environmental considerations into the design of their products and packaging. For more information, visit productstewardship.us.

U.S. Recyclable Paper Traveled the World in '24

Recyclable paper generated in the United States is not only recycled at domestic paper mills, but also at international recycling markets all over the world. The U.S. exported 13.3 million tons of recyclable paper in 2024 with India being the top export market for this material. In fact, India accepted 2.3 million tons, or 17%, of all U.S. exported recyclable paper grades. Mexico was the next largest importer, taking in 2.0 million tons, followed by Thailand (2.0 million tons), Malaysia (1.9 million tons), Vietnam (1.4 million tons), Canada (991,000 tons), South Korea (548,000 tons), Taiwan (410,000 tons) and China (403,000 tons).

By paper grade, old corrugated cardboard (OCC) made up the largest percentage of exports at 68%. Mixed paper made up 15%, high-grade deinked paper made up 10%, newsprint made up 3%, and bleached pulp paperboard scrap and mechanical pulp paper scrap made up the remaining 4%.

Reducing Recycling Contamination at Work

Recycling contamination occurs when items that are not accepted for recycling are mixed with recyclable materials. This negatively impacts the marketability of the recyclable materials collected. Businesses can help reduce recycling contamination by:

- Educating employees and customers about recycling program rules.
- Providing clearly labeled containers for recyclable materials and trash.
- Posting easy-to-understand signage about the recycling program.
- Periodically inspecting recycling containers and trash for cross-contamination.
- Training new employees about on-the-job recycling responsibilities.
- Coordinating with haulers to ensure the recyclable materials generated at their businesses meet the quality control standards of markets.
- Continually reinforcing the Recycle Right NJ message at their establishments.

Did You Know...

- More than 276,000 pieces of litter were removed from New Jersey's environment during the two 2024 Beach Sweeps litter cleanup events organized by the Clean Ocean Action organization.
- The Wat Pa Maha Chedio Kaew temple in Thailand is made of 1.5 million recycled glass bottles! The bottles are used throughout the temple, which is located approximately 370 miles northeast of Bangkok. Check it out at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikCj-xvcHDk>.
- Recycling is a critical part of the modern aluminum business. Making recycled aluminum only takes about 5% of the energy needed to make new aluminum. Recyclable aluminum cans are currently valued at \$1,940.00 per ton.
- Over 47,000 reusable shopping bags have been collected through the Union County reusable shopping bag collection program since August of 2023 with the vast amount donated to Community FoodBank of NJ for their food distribution programs.
- The NJDEP's WorkClean Diesel Modernization Program has provided grants for the purchase of 43 electric garbage trucks in 20 municipalities. Visit <https://dep.nj.gov/stopthesoot/equipment-modernization-program/> for details.
- Included among Time magazine's 2024 inventions of the year is the Mill Food Recycler, a kitchen appliance that uses a dual-grinding system to turn food scraps into dry grounds overnight. The device features charcoal filters, so no smell escapes. The grounds can be used to fertilize your garden. For more information, visit [Mill Food Recycler](#).
- Nine European countries - Germany, Austria, Slovenia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, Switzerland and Latvia - achieved recycling rates of 50% or higher in 2022.



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<http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/wastewise/brbn03.htm>