



# QUICK SEARCH: RECYCLING

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## **INTRODUCING THE 3 R'S OF WASTE MANAGEMENT**

The 3 R's of protecting our environment is an easy and very effective way that all of us can protect our environment.

1. Reducing the waste you create is best
2. Reusing all the items you possibly can is second best
- 3. Recycling is always the last resort.**

**Remember only YOU can make recycling work!**

### **THE 3 R'S**

#### **Reduce**

Reducing waste does not mean you have to necessarily reduce your purchases.

**It does mean that you need to consider the environment when purchasing.**

1. Make a list of what you need before you go shopping
2. Consider the environmental impact of each product, how much energy was spent to produce it and how you plan on disposing of it once used, before you buy it.
3. Buy in bulk – it is cheaper and eliminates small containers and excess packaging which accounts for fifty percent of domestic trash. Think about all the things you can buy in bulk.

Remember, every time you make a purchase you cast your vote to protect/or not to protect the environment. So shop responsibly.

#### **Reuse**

Before throwing anything away, think about how each item can be reused. Learning to reuse is easy and after a little practice will become second nature. Reuse shopping bags or buy canvas bags and use them when you shop. Reuse plastic containers to store food. Always write or print on both sides of the paper. Use silverware and dishes instead of buying disposable plastic utensils and plates. Buy durable high quality goods for a longer life outside the landfill. Although durable goods may cost a little more at first, they will save you money and help save the environment in the long run.

**Remember: Think before you toss!**

#### **Recycle**

Recycling means collecting, processing, marketing and ultimately using materials that were once discarded. For example, newspapers can be recycled into insulation, packing material, wrapping paper and more newspaper. Glass can be used over and over again to make bottles and containers with virtually no reduction in quality!

Many different materials can be recycled. Among these are aluminum cans, glass bottles and jars, plastics, tin cans, steel cans, brass, copper, car batteries, computer paper, office paper, corrugated cardboard, motor oil, scrap iron and steel, and tyres.

It is important to recycle because many of these 'everyday' materials take hundreds of years to degrade in the landfills even though we may only use them once or for

very short periods of time. Not only does throwing recyclable material away mean that space is wasted in landfills, but it means that we have created an Open-Loop System, where raw materials are used and never replenished, thus straining precious resources. By recycling we help to close this loop thus conserving vital raw materials and landfill space. Furthermore, using recycled materials in manufacturing drastically cuts energy usage and water demand and also significantly reduces the amount of pollutant gas emitted during production. (Printed handout from EMA library [www.1800cleanup.org/frames/pages/general](http://www.1800cleanup.org/frames/pages/general))

**INCORPORATING THE 3 R'S INTO EVERYDAY LIVING** (EMA Handout: Pointe a Pierre Wild Fowl Trust: *My country my responsibility*)

### Reduce –

Don't buy more than you really need. It costs you more and just ends up as garbage that the world can do without.

Avoid over-packaged products. They produce unnecessary garbage.

Completely use up the products you have BEFORE you buy more and don't throw away unused portions of older items.

### Reuse

Be practical and be creative in finding further uses for things instead of just discarding them.

When possible, used recycled paper.

Reuse your old supermarket bags  
Plastic shopping bags can be reused for shopping or as garbage bags instead of buying special bags for that purpose.

Plastic shopping bags can also be used to store articles.

Reuse wrapping paper, string, rubber bands and bag/twist ties

Books and magazines can be donated to hospitals, senior citizens homes, religious and social service organizations.

Repair or refinish items that no longer work properly makes more environmental sense than just throwing them away

Avoid buying "throw-aways" that can't be recycled.

Install low-flow shower heads and faucets. These can save a family of four 280 gallons of water per month.

Donate clothing, furniture and appliances to charity.

Almost all glass, plastic or metal containers can be reused for storage in the kitchen or garage.

Many items can be donated to schools and day-care centers for use in handicraft lessons.

When possible place beverage vessels in returnable or recyclable containers.

### **If you want to reduce AND reuse at the same time:**

Take a two liter soft drink bottle and fill it with water. Add a few stones to weigh it down and place this into the tank of your toilet.

You would have **reused** a soft drink bottle and **reduced** two liters of water EVERY time you flush!

## RECYCLE

Buy products made of recycled materials.

Make a compost pile for fertilizers for your garden. A compost pile reduces the amount of garbage you put for collection. All kinds of kitchen waste can be added to the compost bin: vegetable tops, salad extras, tea leaves, egg shells, and fruit peelings just to name a few.

Take bottles back to the supermarket or recycling depots.

Organize a neighborhood Reuse and Recycle program.

Use glass ware or paper instead of plastic or Styrofoam cups and plates.

Separate aluminum, steel and tin cans from other metals. If you aren't sure whether a can is aluminum or steel, check with a magnet. A magnet will stick to steel and tin but will not stick to aluminum.

Wipe or lightly rinse all cans and make sure they are dry before recycling them.

Sort by color: - brown, green and clear.

Break down corrugated cardboard boxes.

Separate office paper into white, colored and glossy stacks. Be careful to remove sticky tabs and paper clips.

Motor oil should be collected in no larger than five gallon containers and be free of contaminants.

Prepare newspapers by folding them into brown paper bags or bundle with string into one foot stacks.

Prepare glass by rinsing and removing metal or plastic rims and lids.

## Home Composting

At the bottom of the heap or bin, put a layer of dried grass or shredded paper. Then add other compostable materials.

Shredding the material into half inch pieces will speed up the process.

Do not layer materials but ensure they are mixed.

If the pile is very dry, water it lightly.

The pile should start "cooking" in about a week or two. The cooking phase is the best time to add food scraps.

If the compost has an unpleasant smell, add more dried twigs and leaves.

Turning the pile is not necessary, but it hastens the process in addition to ensuring that the whole pile is digested and not just the center.

**To test whether compost is finished, plant seedlings in it; if they die off early then the material needs maturing longer.**

The Caribbean region is home to thousands of commercial vessels, fishing boats, local fishermen, charter vessels and privately owned recreational yachts. As a result the region pays the price heavily in pollution.

The seas are the lifeblood for many. We go sea-bathing, harvest food and enjoy its tranquility. A clean ocean is terribly important to us as a people.

Pollutants from recreational and commercial vessels threaten the livelihood of our coastal communities particularly those relying on tourism and fisheries for revenue.

**Dirty beaches, polluted waters and waning fisheries jeopardize our way of life including our ability to attract visitors.**

Activities aboard vessels that transit our seas generate waste just like activities in our homes and cars. Vessel waste ranges from garbage and food to oil and chemicals. To operate efficiently a vessel whether large or small, commercial or recreational must collect and remove wastes from its hold.

If a port or marina facility does not offer bins or containers to receive such waste, then the disposal option of many mariners is to discharge their oil, chemicals and garbage into the water.

**“Marpol 73/78 or MARPOL**

MARPOL protects the world's oceans by regulating the dumping of five types of vessel-generated wastes:

- Annex I: oil
- Annex II: liquid chemicals
- Annex III: hazardous substances in packaged form
- Annex IV: sewage
- Annex V: garbage

Annexes I and V are of particular significance to the health of our Caribbean way of life. Annex I governs the discharge of oil, while Annex V puts an end to the centuries-old practice of dumping all garbage overboard. Annex V regulates at-sea disposal of garbage, including plastics, food, paper, metal, glass and packing materials.<sup>1</sup>

**ADDITIONAL WAYS TO IMPROVE WASTE MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE**

Developing a waste management infrastructure – on regional and local levels – provides new business opportunities in our communities and could offer jobs to local individuals.

Additional ways to improve the infrastructure include source reduction and recycling of ship and land generated waste. Commercial maritime interests, port authorities and vessel operators must advance source reduction and recycling as a waste management option on board recreational and commercial vessels' while on land,

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<sup>1</sup> It's Our Caribbean brochure: Implemented by the International Maritime Organization for the WCISW Project (the wider Caribbean initiative on ship generated wastes)

solid waste managers, regional development organizations and private sector do the same.

### **TAKE ACTION<sup>2</sup>**

**Apart from the tips provided on living and implementing the 3 R's into every day life here are a few other actions that you can take to help:**

1. Never litter and help out by picking up litter left by others
2. Never leave garbage by the beach, river, stream, forest trail, or on the street. Take it back home and dispose of it properly.
3. Conserve water. Don't waste it.
4. When shopping always ask about the environmental impact of the products you are buying.
5. Read labels to see how to dispose?
6. Support organizations that work to protect the environment.
7. If you are not already a member of a local environmental/conservation group, join up and participate activity.
8. Write letters to your newspapers and make your views on environmental issues known.
9. Write letters about environmental issues to your Government.

### **We all pay for the current waste situation in one way or another:**

- ❖ Waste sitting in our landfills often release toxics into our groundwater, and incinerators burning waste leak pollutants into the air.
- ❖ Our natural resources are being used up in the rush to meet market demand for more "convenient" products
- ❖ There are a lot of hidden costs, such as the increased costs of products and goods that are associated with fancy packaging and disposables that are not recyclable and must be replaced.
- ❖ Our taxes increase as the cost of disposing waste increases for our local governments. (EMA Handout Centre for Environmental education – *You can make a difference*)

### **By reducing solid waste we protect both our health and our wallets...**

#### **References**

Centre for Environmental Education – You Can Make A Difference  
It's Our Caribbean brochure: Implemented by the International Maritime Organization for the WCISW Project (the wider Caribbean initiative on ship generated wastes  
Point a Pierre Wild fowl trust document: My country, my responsibility  
[www.1800cleanup.org/frames/pages/general](http://www.1800cleanup.org/frames/pages/general)

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<sup>2</sup> Point a Pierre Wild fowl trust: My country, my responsibility

For more information go to our website at [www.ema.co.tt](http://www.ema.co.tt) or visit the EMA offices: #8 Elizabeth Street St. Clair, Port of Spain or call us at 628-8042, fax us at 628-1922 or email us at [ema@ema.co.tt](mailto:ema@ema.co.tt)