



**Minnesota  
Pollution  
Control  
Agency**

# Developing a Waste Reduction Plan

Hazardous Waste Division Fact Sheet #2.64

*Federal hazardous waste regulations require large quantity generators and treatment, storage, and disposal facilities to certify that they have a waste reduction program in place. Small quantity generators are not required to have a program in place, but have to certify that they have "made a good faith effort to minimize (reduce)" their waste generation. One way to follow through on your effort to reduce waste creation is to design and implement a waste reduction plan.*

*Successful programs of any kind are the result of careful planning, and waste reduction program is no exception. Once the decision is made to reduce waste generation, you should prepare a well-thought-out, written plan. This fact sheet describes some basic elements that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency recommends be included in a written waste reduction plan.*

## Putting Together a Waste Reduction Plan

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) suggests including the following elements in a written waste reduction plan:

1. Policy Statement
2. Goals
3. Framework for Setting Up & Evaluating the Program
4. Provisions for Communication

### Policy Statement

In a waste reduction policy statement, a business establishes waste reduction as a company-wide concern, and formally commits itself to reducing waste output. It is very important that the program have support from top management.

The development and contents of a policy statement will vary from company to company, and may depend upon the size and nature of the business.

Whatever the size of the company, all affected departments need to be involved if the waste reduction efforts are to be successful, including top management and production personnel.

Some reasons for implementing a waste reduction program, which might be included in the policy statement, include:

- reduce waste disposal cost
- reduce production costs
- reduce or eliminate future disposal liability
- reduce regulatory burdens
- demonstrate a concern for the environment
- demonstrate a concern for the health and safety of employees and of the public
- improve public relations

### Policy Statement Examples

"XYZ Company" (a medium-sized company) is committed to protecting the environment, and the health and safety of its employees and of the public. In light of this commitment, we have set a policy establishing a company-wide waste reduction program.

Be actively reducing our waste output and preventing pollution at the source, the company will reap additional benefits such as decreased waste disposal and

production costs, increased productivity, and reduced regulatory burdens and liability concerns.

"ABC Company" (a small company) will reduce its hazardous waste output in order to save money and make it easier to comply with hazardous waste regulations.

**Goals**

Establish company goals which are consistent with your policy statement. These goals should provide a clear guide for the implementation of your company's waste reduction program. Incorporate these goals into departmental workplans.

Useful goals are:

**UNDERSTANDABLE**

**REASONABLE**

**MEASURABLE** over time

**ACCEPTABLE** to those who will work to achieve them

**SUITABLE** for overall corporate goals and mission.

Review the goals as you monitor the results of the waste reduction program. As your company's circumstances change (such as technology, raw materials and supplies, environmental regulations, financial status), goals should also change.

<b>EXAMPLES OF USEFUL GOALS</b>
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"Waste volume will be reduced 5% by 11/20/XX."
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"All employees will receive training related to waste reduction within one month of being hired and semi-annually thereafter."
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"The generator status of our company will change from large quantity to small quantity within the next 5 years."
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**Framework for Setting Up and Evaluating the Program**

This framework is a plan of action which identifies the person or persons who will be responsible for implementing the waste reduction program, how options will be chosen to reach the programs goals, and how progress on the program will be monitored.

The following questions can be helpful:

1. What characteristics must an option have in order to be considered by your company? For example:
  - what kind of an initial investment does the option require?
  - what kind of a payback period are you looking for?
  - how convenient must the option be?
  - what effects will the option have on product quality or productivity?
  - will the option promote employee safety?
  - will the option be environmentally sound?

Many waste reduction activities are inexpensive, have a short payback period, are easy to implement, and have little or no effect on product quality or productivity. Investigate these activities first.

2. What will your schedule of implementation be, and what will be the targeted outcomes? For instance, suppose you have identified three options you would like to implement as part of a waste reduction program. You have prepared the following implementation schedule:

Option #	Description	Target Date	Outcomes
1	Segregate nonhazardous wastes from hazardous wastes	1/26/XX	Ship once/mo., not twice
2	segregate paint-cleaning wastes by color for reuse as a cleaning solvent	6/30/XX	Collect for 1 mo. to recycle
3	Recycle & reuse paint-cleaning wastes by distillation	7/30/XX	buy/dispose of 10% less solvent

3. How will your company monitor, evaluate, and document the progress of the waste reduction program?

Once a schedule is prepared, it is important to regularly keep track of the progress of the program. This will help to identify and correct any problems that might come up along the way. At regular intervals (for instance, monthly, or quarterly), ask:

- Are implementation deadlines being met?
- Are targeted outcomes being achieved?
- Should any goals or approaches be modified?
- Are accurate records being maintained?

Regular monitoring and evaluation can also be useful for documenting the waste reduction program.

### **Communication**

We encourage you to share information about waste reduction with ALL employees, from top management to production line workers. Provision for this communication should be included in a written waste reduction plan. Maybe you intend to update employees regularly through a newsletter. Or perhaps you plan to provide incentives to employees to encourage them to participate in the waste reduction program, or to provide employee training on waste reduction practices. Whatever action you'll take to keep employees informed or your waste reduction activities or involve them in the program should be mentioned in your waste reduction plan.

When implementing any waste reduction activity, please make sure your company is complying with all local, state, and federal waste-related regulations.

### **For more information on waste reduction techniques, please call:**

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
(612) 296-6300  
(800) 657-3864 toll free in MN
- Minnesota Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP)  
(612) 627-4646  
(800) 247-0015 toll free in MN

Ask for waste reduction information.

We appreciate your comments on this and other MPCA waste reduction publications.