

AS TEXANS, WE ARE ALL CONCERNED about maintaining the high quality of our environment and realize that alternatives chosen to handle our wastes have a direct impact on the health and beauty of our state. We are also concerned about the decreasing availability of landfill space and higher disposal fees. The activities of each of us make a difference. Working together, we can take a clean and beautiful Texas into the next century.



What we  
can do  
to reduce  
waste

Where  
do  
we  
start?

One option is to adopt the “Three R’s”: 1. Reduce, 2. Reuse, 3. Recycle. • Source reduction – REDUCING – focuses on the elimination of unnecessary or toxic materials. By reducing the amount of trash (and its toxicity) at the source, the energy and effort needed for proper disposal are saved.

• REUSING products and their packaging is one of the best ways to promote reduction because it conserves the energy already used in the production process. • And finally, by RECYCLING we will be preserving our scarce natural resources. But true recycling doesn’t end with collection. Remember to buy recycled products – this helps to create a bigger market.

Close the loop. Buy recycled.



## What can I recycle?

Glass



Remove caps and neck rings, then wash.

Plastic



Remove lids, rinse and flatten. Most commonly accepted plastics are #1 and #2 –



Cans



Rinse cans clean. For aluminum, crush. For steel cans, flatten.

Newspapers



Remove plastic bags and keep dry.

## Recycling Symbols

Buy products that use recycled materials in their manufacture or production. Consumer choice helps drive manufacturers to buy and use recycled materials. Look for these symbols on many products:



Solid arrows generally mean the product has been made from recycled materials.



Outlined arrows usually mean the product can be recycled.

## Questions & answers

### Can all glass be thrown together?

Check with local officials. Some recyclers require glass to be sorted by color. Ceramics such as cups, dishes and ovenware, plate or window glass, and lead-based glass should be avoided.

### Which plastics are recyclable?

The most common types of plastics currently being recycled are PET-Polyethylene terephthalate, a plastic used primarily to make soft drink bottles.

HDPE-High density polyethylene plastic, a plastic used for milk jugs and detergent bottles.

### Are all cans made of the same stuff?

No. If you are unsure which are aluminum and which are steel, test with a magnet. Aluminum will not stick. Separate the two types and make sure both are clean.

### How do I sort my paper?

Newspapers should be bundled with string or placed in paper (not plastic) bags and kept dry.

Yellowed, or newspapers over six months old, are generally not acceptable. Keep high grade white paper separate and remove any paper that has been fused with another material, such as envelopes with plastic windows or linings.

## Helpful hints

- All forms of trash disposal, including recycling, have environmental impacts. The best thing you can do is avoid buying too much at the start.
  - When possible, use grocery bags for trash disposal instead of buying new trash bags.

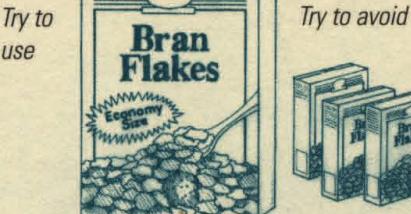
### Follow local recycling instructions to the letter!

If the wrong material or dirty materials are included in your recycling, it is considered "contaminated." Contaminants risk making your community pool of recyclable materials unusable.

# THE THREE R'S "WHAT DO I DO" HOME REFERENCE & GUIDE

## Reduce

- Buy products with less packaging.
- Buy concentrates and refill packages.
- Select the largest box on the shelf or buy in bulk.
- Buy only what you really need.
- Buy long-lasting products. They create less waste than disposables and save you money in the long run.  
Examples: cloth napkins, ceramic mugs, cloth diapers, premium tires and non-disposable razors



## Reuse

- Fix or repair items instead of tossing them.
- Use the reverse side of scrap paper for grocery lists or children's art projects.



*Store items  
in reused  
containers*

- Reuse containers - boxes, tins and jars can find many uses in your home, workshop or garage.
- Give your unwanted clothing and appliances a new life by donating them to charities.
- Donate magazines to hospitals and nursing homes.

## Recycle

- Locate places that accept used oil and other automotive wastes.
- Keep newspapers dry and out of the sun.
- Remove lids on items to be recycled.
- Purchase items in recyclable containers.
- Check with local recycling facilities to find out what is collected and how it should be sorted.





The Three R's can be put to work in all sorts of circumstances. The first place to start is at home. You will achieve amazing results in a very short time. There will be less waste produced, and you may notice a difference in expenditures. After you have gained a little experience, share your successes with friends and neighbors. They too can enjoy the benefits by following your example.

- Don't forget to include the Three R's in your workplace. Ask for "recharged" copier cartridges; encourage co-workers to bring reusable mugs; and recycle office paper. The same principles can be applied to our public buildings, government offices and schools. Ask officials to investigate source reduction alternatives and to buy recycled supplies in bulk. Work with the Parent /Teacher Organization to put the Three R's in place for your children.
- Together, we can make a difference!

## Did you know?

- Texans dump enough trash every two weeks to fill the Astrodome.
- The annual 19.2 million tons of Texas municipal solid waste would fill two lanes of Interstate 10 from Beaumont to El Paso 10 feet high.
- Recycling just one aluminum can saves as much electricity as it takes to run your television set for four hours.
- Recycling aluminum saves about 95% of the energy needed to make aluminum "from scratch."
- One pound of discarded glass can be recycled into one pound of new glass.
- Glass can be recycled forever with no loss of quality.
- Chickadees are natural recyclers. They like to make small nests with bits of discarded string.

### Where to get help:

**Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission**

**1.512.908.1000**

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

**1.800.424.9346**

**Clean Texas 2000**

**1.800.64.TEXAS**

**Regional Recycling Resource Center**

**1.800.560.3733**

**Clean Houston, Inc.**

**1.713.621.7020**



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