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Top Tips for Improving Your Resource Efficiency - Waste Prevention and Re-use

Waste Prevention and Re-use

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Waste takes many forms, and is not only found in skips and bins. You should aim to prevent waste, reduce or re-use, as a priority. The true cost of waste includes the value of materials when purchased, which could be 5 to 20 times its disposal costs, and the costs for disposing of the item at its end of use. Considering why thing are being discarded can help to prevent waste. Below are some simple tips you can take to help you reduce waste.

- Conducting a waste review of your premises will help you to find out how much waste you produce. To identify priority areas, set systems in place to monitor your waste and identify how much it is costing you.
- There is a clear link between purchasing and waste prevention. Before any product is purchased as yourself :
    - Do if you really need to buy that item? Are you buying more than you need? Is stock being managed effectively – are you throwing away unused items?
    - How much packaging is being used or discarded – can you work with your suppliers to reduce packaging?
    - Can items be re-used rather than thrown away?
    - Can you reduce waste and its associated costs by purchasing items that are harder wearing or will last longer?
    - Can you ‘close the loop’ but purchasing items that are made from recycled content, such as paper or plastic products?
    - Consider your supply chain. Where possible buy locally to reduce transport emissions,. Work with suppliers to rationalise deliveries. Can you re-use or return packaging for re-use? Are there opportunities to combine product deliveries with collections? Are repair, re-use or refurbishment services available for equipment and or office furniture?
- Avoid using disposable items like plastic cups, utensils and individual catering items like sugar packets and paper plates.
- Prevent food waste by confirming the number of people attending meetings and events and not over-ordering catering. Consider installing hand dryers in toilets.

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- Buy remanufactured toner cartridges and return used cartridges to a company that will remanufacture them again.
- Paper is the most common waste for office. The average office worker can use up to 45 sheets of paper a day, but this can be reduced to as little as 16 sheets a day by engaging staff and increasing their awareness. Some simple tips include:
    - Using both sides of paper to reduce use by up to 50%. Set printers to default on double-sided printing.
    - Think before you print – is it necessary? If so, print 4 pages to an A4 sheet. Reminders by printers, photocopiers and at the bottom of emails can encourage staff to print less.
    - Reduce the number of printers. Desk top printers are expensive to run and make it too easy for staff to print unnecessarily.
    - Monitor printing by giving each staff a personal access code. Post a league table so individuals are aware of how much paper they are using.
- Avoid printing too much marketing and publicity materials and update your databases and distribution lists regularly. Use electronic communications where possible.

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