



Weekly Safety Briefings

Week #10 – March 7 – March 11, 2022

Reduce, Reuse, & Recycle

Introduction

As we know, doing our part by reducing, reusing, and recycling can reduce our environmental impact in terms of waste, but it can also save money, energy, and natural resources. This week, we will discuss each of these three strategies for decreasing our resource consumption and observe small changes we can make in our daily lives to contribute to our overall wellbeing.

Monday – Reducing Consumption

The most straightforward way to reduce our waste is by avoiding the creation of it. By reducing consumption, we can do our part to mitigate the demand for materials and resources. Some strategies for reducing consumption include the following.

- Maintain and repair items you may have previously discarded for a replacement.
- Shop thrift/consignment to avoid the manufacturing of new items. Items others may have no need for could be “new” to you!
- Pay attention to the packaging of your consumer goods—items with less packaging use less energy/resources and create less waste. Additionally, cost savings can be passed along to you as the consumer. Consider buying in bulk, forgoing individual plastic bags in the produce section, and choosing items with minimal packaging.

Tuesday – Reusing Resources

Another method for reducing our impact on our surroundings is reusing goods. By reusing items rather than discarding them, we can avoid waste generation and the consumption of resources. Ideas on how to reuse items include the following.

- Small changes can add up. Buying reusable items, such as food containers and utensils over plastic baggies and cutlery can eliminate the need to buy and discard these items regularly.
- Keep in mind that you do not have to be the one to reuse your own items! Donate unneeded items—clothes, books, electronics, toys, etc. so that someone else can enjoy them.

Wednesday – Recycling

Recycling effectively avoids waste being sent to landfills and incinerators and decreases natural resources and energy necessary to produce new consumer goods. Electronics are constantly becoming obsolete and being replaced, and they are huge consumers of rare natural resources.

- The EPA claims: “for every million cell phones we recycle, 35 thousand pounds of copper, 772 pounds of silver, 75 pounds of gold and 33 pounds of palladium can be recovered.”
- The EPA also states that recycling helps to reduce energy consumption, as “recycling one million laptops saves the energy equivalent to the electricity used by more than 3,500 US homes in a year.”

Thursday – Reduce, Reuse, & Recycle in the Workplace

We’ve discussed reducing, reusing, and recycling in general. How can we practice these in the workplace?

- Reduce – instead of printing documents, consider digital copies instead to save on paper and ink.
- Reuse – opt for reusable containers and utensils with you for meals you eat at work.
- Recycle – utilize the recycling bins around the office. Recycle paper, food containers, bottles, etc. that you use on a daily basis.



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Friday – Reducing our Impact

This week, we have discussed reducing, reusing, and recycling the things we consume and use each day in the workplace. What are some ways that you have implemented these into your daily life?