



Office of County Manager
Policy

Effective Date
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Policy Number

Signature:

Subject:

**Environmental Responsibility
Expectations for Employees**

1.0 Purpose

Durham County employees impact the environment through the production of waste and the use of energy and water in the conduct of their daily business. As public servants and global citizens, we have a responsibility to reduce that impact without sacrificing our ability to serve the citizens and institutions of Durham County.

Durham County has set forth goals for waste reduction and energy conservation in the Durham County Solid Waste Management Plan and the Durham Local Action Plan for Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions and for Durham. The purpose of this policy is to guide employee actions to meet the goals set forth in these Plans.

2.0 Policy

All County employees shall take every reasonable effort to reduce the amount and toxicity of waste they generate, reuse and recycle materials recoverable from their operations, and reduce the amount of natural resources they use including energy and water. Department directors shall monitor compliance with these *Expectations*.

3.0 Applicability

This policy applies to all Durham County employees.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 Environmentally Responsible – Product or material usage procedures which are acknowledged to have minimal impact on the environment. Such procedures should reduce environmental impact through the reduction in quantity and toxicity of waste products, energy use or water consumption.

4.2 Waste Reduction - The act of avoiding, eliminating and reducing the amount of solid and toxic waste at the source of generation, at the point of usage and at the time of its discard.

5.0 Procedures

5.1 Waste Reduction – Employees shall take all reasonable measures to reduce the amount of solid and toxic waste generated.

5.1.1 Reduce – All County employees shall reduce waste at the source. Actions include but are not limited to:

- a) During County functions, all efforts shall be made to use reusable tableware and compostable or recyclable products such as plates, bowls, napkins, forks, cups and containers. All efforts will be made to avoid petroleum-based polystyrene products.
- b) Employees are encouraged to use e-mail where available to avoid using paper, and to resist printing emails unnecessarily.
- c) All County departments shall require two-sided printing and copying on all documents whenever feasible. Employees are encouraged to format documents in a manner that will reduce the number of pages printed. New printers shall have duplex copying capabilities when feasible. Information Technology is responsible for setting duplexing as the default for each workstation for all capable printers. This includes printing from network connected or stand-alone personal computer printers that are capable of duplexing.
- d) All employees shall strive to reduce the amount of paper that they use by avoiding unnecessary printing or photocopying.
- e) Memos and policies, when they cannot be circulated by e-mail, shall be circulated with an employee routing slip rather than being photocopied for every employee, whenever possible.
- f) A central file for paper/hard copies shall be developed within all departments to eliminate multiple, duplicative files.
- g) Departments will take advantage of electronic document storage when possible to reduce the amount of paper copies created and retained.
- h) To the greatest extent possible, departments should phase out personal printers in favor of digital multi-purpose machines, while maintaining adequate privacy and backup capability.

5.1.2 Reuse – County employees shall reuse products and materials to the greatest extent possible. Actions include but are not limited to:

- a) Employees shall reuse manila folders, brown envelopes, binders and other types of office supplies whenever feasible.
- b) Employees shall use reusable interoffice envelopes to transmit mail in lieu of non-reusable envelopes, whenever feasible.

- c) Employees shall save reusable paper and outdated stationary (letterhead) and use the blank side for scratch paper or for printing rough drafts, whenever possible.
- d) Packaging materials such as polystyrene peanuts and bubble wrap shall either be stored in a central area for reuse or recycled at local mail packaging stores.

5.1.3 Recycle – All County employees shall recycle materials to the greatest extent possible. Actions include but are not limited to:

- a) Employees shall participate in the County's internal office paper, recyclable container, newspaper and cardboard recycling program. Trash cans containing target recyclables as defined in Durham Ordinance Section 58-1 (corrugated cardboard, aluminum cans, steel cans, newspapers, glass bottles and jars) as well as plastic bottles will not be emptied by janitorial staff.
- b) Employees shall follow the City's Department of Solid Waste Management recycling guidelines to avoid contaminating recycling containers with trash or improper materials.
www.durhamnc.gov/departments/solid/pdf/recycling_brochure.pdf
- c) Laser/toner cartridges shall be recycled.
- d) Event coordinators shall provide well-labeled recycling containers for beverage cans, bottles, and other recyclables at all functions and events held by County employees in County facilities. The coordinator(s) can borrow recycling containers from General Services (containers are located throughout Durham County facilities) provided that the containers are returned uncontaminated (with no non-recyclables inside) after the event. If additional containers are needed, Keep Durham Beautiful shall provide assistance (www.keepdurhambeautiful.org).
- e) All refuse and recycling containers shall be properly labeled for ease of use.

5.1.4 Disposal of chemicals and other hazardous materials – County employees shall minimize the impact of chemicals and other hazardous materials through judicious use and disposal. Actions include but are not limited to:

- a) All County departments shall review their operations to determine what procedures may be modified to minimize and/or eliminate the unnecessary use of any chemical products that are not deemed to be Environmentally Responsible.

- b) Employees shall use chemical products completely before disposal, when feasible.
- c) All Departments shall review at least annually their waste products to determine if they are properly acquiring, using and disposing of materials.
- d) An effort shall be made to reuse or recycle unused products whenever possible.
- e) All waste materials that cannot be reused or recycled shall be disposed of in an environmentally responsible manner. In particular, hazardous waste products such as oil based paint, solvents, batteries, bleaches, and other hazardous cleaning products shall be disposed of properly. Departments may arrange and pay for disposal with the Household Hazardous Waste contractor or another hazardous waste contractor.
www.durhamnc.gov/departments/solid/wr_hazardous.cfm. The State of North Carolina has a contract available for electronic waste recycling.

5.2 Energy Efficiency – Employees shall take all reasonable efforts to reduce the amount of energy used in county facilities and vehicles. Actions include but are not limited to:

- 5.2.1 Facility managers will make the necessary arrangements to achieve optimum efficiency in the use of electricity, natural gas, and any other energy resource to meet the heating, cooling, and electricity needs of the facility.
- 5.2.2 Energy Star and power-saving features for copiers, computers, monitors, printers, and other office equipment shall be enabled during the initial installation and shall remain enabled unless these features conflict with the manufacturer's recommended operation and maintenance of the equipment.
- 5.2.3 Employees shall turn off lights, coffee pots, and other electronic equipment and appliances in unused offices, conference rooms, and other spaces, whenever possible.
- 5.2.4 Employees shall turn off printers, monitors, speakers, and other computer peripherals when leaving for the day.
- 5.2.5 Portable electric heaters are not to be used in County facilities unless specifically required by occupants because of medical conditions or during failure of the building heating, ventilation or air conditioning systems. The Sustainability Manager will grant such exemptions on a case-by-case basis.

5.2.6 Mini-fridges, microwaves, and other cooking appliances are not to be used in employee offices when communal alternatives are reasonably available near the workspace. Toasters/toaster-ovens and hotplates are prohibited in individual offices.

5.3 Water Efficiency – Employees shall take all reasonable measures to reduce the amount of water used in County facilities. Actions include but are not limited to:

5.3.1 Facility managers will make the necessary arrangements to achieve optimum efficiency in the use of water to meet the plumbing, heating, and cooling needs of the facility.

5.3.2 Employees shall turn off sinks, showers, and other faucets when not in use.

5.3.3 Employees shall report water leaks as soon as possible to General Services.

5.3.4 Employees shall refrain from over watering plants and landscaping.

5.4 Training

5.4.1 All new employees will be made aware of these *Expectations* and the reasoning behind it during New Employee Training.

5.4.2 The Solid Waste Division and Sustainability Office will assist employees with these *Expectations* by conducting educational waste audits and making positive recommendations that would bring them in compliance with the spirit and intent of the *Expectations*.

6.0 Responsibility

All employees are responsible for following this policy to the greatest extent possible. Department Heads, with assistance from their Green Team representatives, will monitor their employees' compliance with this policy.

The County's Green Team shall evaluate and report annually to the County Manager the success in meeting the objectives of this Policy. The report shall include, whenever possible, any barriers encountered, recommendations for resolution and/or description of assistance needed to continuously improve staff's ability to meet this Policy's objectives for waste reduction, energy efficiency, and water conservation.