

# Warehouse and Distribution Waste Management

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# Waste management and minimization

We all get busy at work and don't think about the waste that we and our businesses create. Waste management is an important part of your business operations. The less you can contribute to landfills the better, and you can also reduce expenses.

A great deal of goods are shipped to and from warehouses every day. Many of these goods are stored in these warehouses for extended periods of time after passing through distribution centers. Any time something is shipped from one business to another, some form of packaging is used and a lot of it ends up as waste. Breakage, spillage and spoilage also result in goods becoming waste – and most of it ends up in the landfill.

Warehouse and distribution waste occurs in many businesses, including warehouses, moving companies, shipping companies, packaging companies, courier companies and the shipping/receiving areas of most businesses.

## Waste includes:

- Corrugated cardboard
- Wooden pallets
- Wooden crates
- Paperboard boxes
- Shrink-wrap
- Plastic bags
- Polystyrene
- Kraft paper
- Plastic and metal strapping
- Damaged goods

# Ways to reduce and eliminate waste

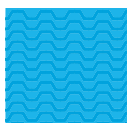
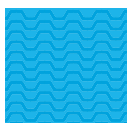
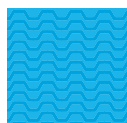
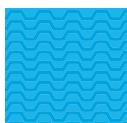
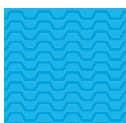
There are many areas in a warehouse or distribution operation where waste can be reduced or eliminated, such as storage, shipping and receiving and procurement.

## Storage and Inventory Control

- Use a first in, first out rule to avoid having to dispose of spoiled goods.
- Use a computerized inventory system.
- Keep forklifts and other equipment in good working order to prevent accidents.
- Ensure proper spill controls are in place when storing liquids.
- Ensure proper storage and segregation procedures are followed for hazardous materials by all employees.
- Train all employees in material handling procedures to avoid damage to goods when moving them around the warehouse.
- Ensure shelving is kept in good condition to prevent breakage.

## Shipping/Receiving

- Ensure shipping area is kept neat and clean to avoid contamination of packaging materials and damage to goods.
- Purchase shipping materials, such as corrugated boxes, with recycled content.
- Purchase used shipping materials, such as fillers, from neighbors.
- Use proper size containers for shipping to prevent over-packaging.
- Place courier labels directly on packaging instead of using plastic or paperboard courier envelopes as these cannot be recycled.



## Procurement

- Ask suppliers to use reusable packaging as much as possible.
- Ask suppliers to use shipping materials with a recycled content.
- If possible, set up an agreement with your suppliers to use a pallet rental company instead of purchasing one-way pallets.
- Ask suppliers to ship in bulk and to avoid individual packaging of items.
- Ask suppliers to take back packaging for reuse.

## Reduce

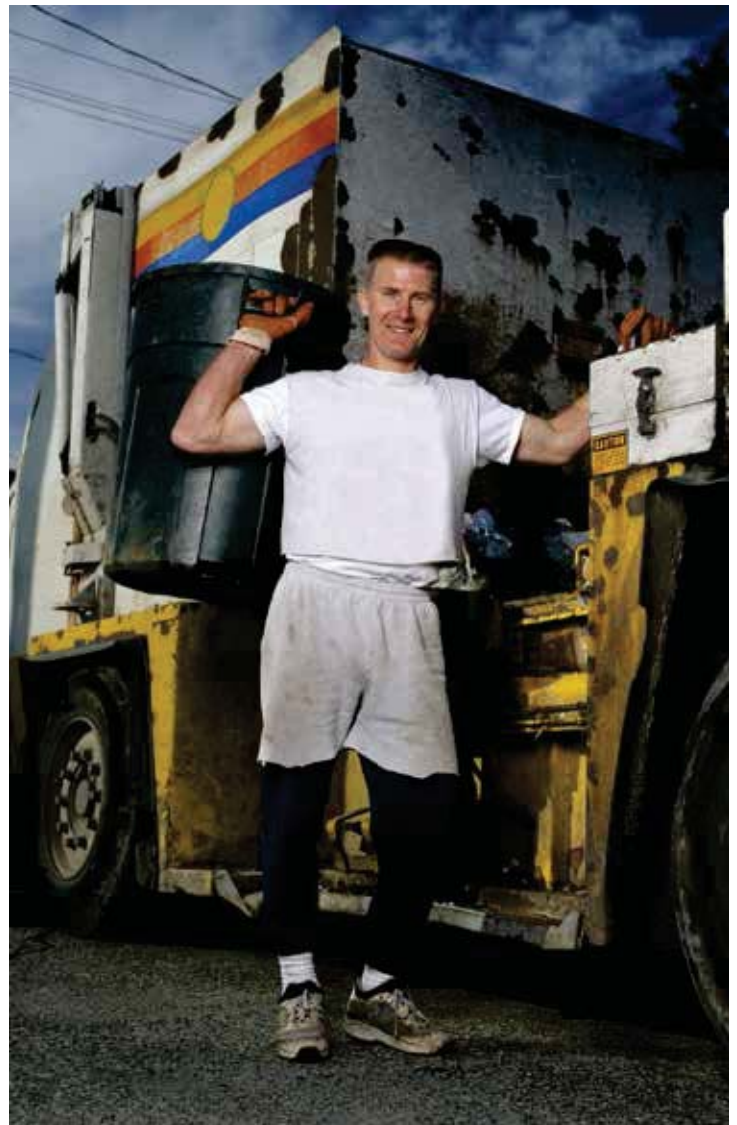
- Minimize the amount of tape, strapping, and shrink-wrap used to seal packages.
- Use reusable shipping crates in the place of one-way cartons.
- Avoid using excessive fillers by using the proper sized package for the good being shipped.
- Ship in bulk and avoid packaging items individually.
- Reduce breakage and spills through proper materials handling and storage procedures.

## Reuse

- Use the boxes your supplies arrive in to ship your products to customers.
- Use a pallet rental company instead of purchasing new pallets.
- Set up convenient collection bins for used packaging materials that can be reused.
- Ensure the bins remain free of contamination.
- Reuse paper by shredding it and using it as filler for packaging.
- Reuse polystyrene fillers.

## Recycle

- Set up convenient collection bins for materials that can be recycled.
- Ensure the bins remain free of contamination.
- Recycle used corrugated cardboard, paperboard boxes, shrink-wrap, and plastic and glass containers.
- Purchase packaging products with recycled content.
- Insist that suppliers use materials with a minimum recycled content.
- Recycle materials broken or spilled during material handling.



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