

Version 2- March 18, 2013- Examples from the Government of Alberta added

# Reduce

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## Definition

Source reduction, also called waste prevention, means consuming and throwing away less. Source reduction can be achieved by purchasing durable, long-lasting goods, as well as seeking products and packaging that represent a reduction in materials, energy consumption or toxicity.

## Why Reduction?

The most effective way to reduce waste is to not create it in the first place. Reduction saves natural resources and cuts waste management costs. By designing, manufacturing, purchasing, or using materials in ways that reduce the amount or the toxicity of trash created, less waste is generated and fewer natural resources are used.

Municipalities can do a great deal to reduce the use of resources in their own operations and the community. It can be as simple as just changing day-to-day practices such as cutting down on the amount of printing or printing on both sides of the paper to instituting a full-fledged procurement policy. Improving procurement practices is perhaps the most effective tool municipalities have to reduce waste. Through changing procurement practices municipalities can not only reduce the amount of material they consume in the first place (which saves money!), they can also send a strong message to industry to produce high quality products that don't have unnecessary packaging, are durable and recyclable at the end of their life.<sup>1</sup>

There are many examples of municipal initiatives and resources to support action some of which are included below in the following categories:

- [Procurement](#)
- [Bottled Water Sales Bans](#)
- [Single Use Plastic Bag Reduction Initiatives](#)
- [Yard Waste Reduction Initiatives](#)

Benefits of reduction activities include:

- Saving money
- Reduced disposal
- Reduced extraction of virgin materials.

Costs to municipalities will generally include the staff time necessary to implement or change programs and processes and promoting these changes to the wider community as examples that residents and local businesses can follow.

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<sup>1</sup> This is also an important step in implementing Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) which shifts the burden of managing waste from municipalities to the producers and consumers of goods. More information on EPR can be found on the “Recycle” page.

## Examples and Resources

### Procurement

Governments are significant purchasers in Canada. As such, their activities impact the local and national economy and can influence both the price and the availability of goods and services, including construction services. By considering environmental performance in the procurement process, municipal governments are in a position to influence the demand for environmentally preferable goods and services, while encouraging industry to respond to the escalating use of environmental standards in global markets. (Government of Canada, 2009)

| Municipality                              | Initiative   |
|---|--|
| <b>Provincial</b>                         |  |
| <b>City of Calgary</b>                    | <b>Procurement Policy</b><br>The City's Sustainable, Environmental and Ethical Procurement Policy (SEPP) provides guidelines to govern procurement activities. This means purchasing products and services at reasonable prices while considering key environmental and social benefits such as minimal packaging, or other sustainability aspects over the entire life-cycle of the product or service.<br><br>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information.   |
| <b>City of Edmonton</b>                   | <b>Purchasing Policy</b><br>The City's Sustainable Purchasing Policy encourages staff to purchase quality products, services and construction at competitive prices while considering key environmental and social benefits over the entire life-cycle of the product or service, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduced resource requirements</li><li>• Recyclability</li><li>• Minimal packaging</li><li>• Durability</li><li>• Total cost of ownership</li></ul><br>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information |
| <b>Municipality of Jasper</b>             | <b>Policy Manual</b><br>A Green Procurement Policy Manual directs Jasper's council and employees to demonstrate leadership in environmental stewardship by implementing environmental alternatives and practices and by purchasing environmentally responsible goods whenever practical.<br><br>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information  |
| <b>YOUR MUNICIPALITY HERE</b>             | <b>DOES YOUR MUNICIPALITY HAVE A PROCUREMENT POLICY OR INITIATIVE THAT COULD SERVE AS A MODEL FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW? IF SO, SEND THE INFORMATION TO RACHEL BOOCK-<a href="mailto:rbocock@auma.ca">rbocock@auma.ca</a></b>   |
| <b>National</b>                           |  |
| <b>City of Richmond, British Columbia</b> | <b>Purchasing Policy</b><br>The City of Richmond Environmental Purchasing Policy, part of the municipal Environmental Purchasing Guide, is designed to assist municipal staff in selecting products and services that promote a healthy environment, and to foster demand for  |

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|                                | <p>products that promote environmental sustainability. City staff members are asked to include environmental considerations in their assessment of every product or service. (FCM)</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information</p>  |
| <b>Town of Caledon Ontario</b> | <p><b>Purchasing Bylaw</b></p> <p>The Town ‘s Purchasing Bylaw features a municipal Environmental Purchasing Policy that requires municipal staff to include environmental characteristics, where feasible, in all contracts and tender specifications for goods and services. Suppliers may be required to prove compliance with environmental legislation, and to provide an environmental policy statement or complete an environmental practices questionnaire. This policy was modelled on a similar policy adopted by the City of Richmond, B.C. (FCM)</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information.</p> |

| <b>Other Organizations</b>                | <b>Resource</b>   |
|---|---|
| <b>Provincial</b>                         |   |
| <b>Government of Alberta</b>              | <p><b>Greening government</b></p> <p>Albertans expect their government to lead the way in reducing the environmental impact of its business practices. This is why the Government of Alberta adopted the Greening Government Strategy, which outlines a coordinated, strategic to environmental action.</p> <p><b>Greening through procurement</b></p> <p>The following green requirements were incorporated into government-wide standing offers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All copy paper was required to be Sustainable Forest Initiative (<a href="#">SFI®</a>) or Forest Stewardship Council (<a href="#">FSC®</a>) certified and contain a minimum of 30 per cent post-consumer content.</li> <li>• 34 per cent of the total funds used to purchase office supplies by Government of Alberta departments were for green products.</li> <li>• Pre-printed stationary with 100 per cent postconsumer content was ordered for regular letterhead and business cards, and No. 9 and 10 envelopes.</li> </ul> <p>Green items are identified in office supply vendor catalogues as items that meet at least one of the following criteria: are certified through a third party eco label; are made from material which is less harmful to the environment; or are made from re-used or water base materials in order to conserve natural resources.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information</p> |
| <b>Recycling Council of Alberta (RCA)</b> | <p><b>Green Procurement Policy Template</b></p> <p>The RCA developed the template to make it easier for organizations to develop their own green procurement policy. The RCA is hoping that this template will serve as a catalyst for organizations who want to have a green procurement policy, but aren’t sure where to start. Just fill in the blanks, or use the information provided to develop your own customized policy.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information</p>  |

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|---|--|
| <b>National</b>   |  |
| <b>Government of Canada</b>   | <p><b>Policy on Green Procurement</b></p> <p>As part of its ongoing commitment to improve the environment and the quality of life of Canadians, the <a href="#">Policy on Green Procurement</a> seeks to reduce the environmental impacts of government operations and promote environmental stewardship by integrating environmental performance considerations in the procurement process.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information</p>  |
| <b>Ecologo Program</b>  | <p><b>Certification</b></p> <p>Founded in 1988 by the Government of Canada but now recognized world-wide, EcoLogo™ is North America's largest, most respected environmental standard and certification mark. EcoLogo provides customers – public, corporate and consumer – with assurance that the products and services bearing the logo meet stringent standards of environmental leadership.</p> <p>The EcoLogo Program is a Type I eco-label, as defined by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). This means that the Program compares products/services with others in the same category, develops rigorous and scientifically relevant criteria that reflect the entire lifecycle of the product, and awards the EcoLogo to those that are verified by an independent third party as complying with the criteria.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information</p> |
| <b>International</b>  |  |
| <b>National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO)- United States</b> | <p><b>Green Purchasing Guide</b></p> <p>NAPSO provides an online Green Purchasing Guide intended to be a straight forward, easy-to-use document that provides purchasers with a basic understanding of the concept and benefits of green purchasing, offers recommended steps and proven strategies to enable the implementation of a green purchasing program, and supplies links to other resources offering detailed information on specific elements of the process.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information</p>  |

## Bottled Water Sales Bans

According to peer reviewed research, 96 – 162 million barrels of oil are consumed annually to produce, transport and dispose of bottled water (Polaris Institute, 2009) At the same time, tap water meets stringent safety guidelines and is a fraction of the cost of bottled water. Municipalities can stop selling bottled water at their facilities and make tap water more accessible.

| Municipality                  | Initiative  |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>National</b>               |   |
| <b>City of London Ontario</b> | <p><b>Sales in city facilities</b></p> <p>In 2008 the City passed a resolution that “single- use bottled water will no longer be sold in the City Hall cafeteria, from City- owned or city administered concessions and vending machines in public facilities...”. This resolution also included provisions for a public awareness campaign and an assessment of tap water availability in these locations.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information.</p> |

| <b>Other Organizations</b>                   | <b>Resource</b>  |
|--|--|
| <b>National</b>                              |  |
| <b>Federation of Canadian Municipalities</b> | <p><b>Resolution</b></p> <p>In 2009 the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) passed a resolution encouraging municipalities to “phase out the sale and purchase of bottled water at their own facilities where appropriate and where potable water is available.”</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information.</p> |

## Single Use Plastic Bags Reduction Initiatives

Between 500 billion and one trillion plastic bags are used worldwide each year. The manufacture of plastic bags introduces tonnes of carbon emissions into the atmosphere annually, whereas a sturdy, reusable bag will last for years, and only needs to be used five times to have a lower environmental impact.

| <b>Municipality</b>                                   | <b>Initiative</b>   |
|---|---|
| <b>Provincial</b>                                     |   |
| <b>Bow Valley Waste Management Commission (BVWMC)</b> | <p><b>Reduce the Use</b></p> <p>The BVWMC (Town of Banff, Town of Canmore and Municipal District of Bighorn) leads a Reduce the Use campaign to encourage residents and businesses to use plastic bags responsibly. The Commission has partnered with local businesses who are reducing plastic bags in their operations and provides information to the public on the costs of limited use plastic bags and the benefits of reusable bags.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information.</p> |
| <b>Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo</b>          | <p><b>Prohibition</b></p> <p>On September 1st 2010, the RMWB's bylaw prohibiting the use of single use plastic bags came into effect. The purpose is to eliminate the distribution of single use shopping bags in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo to help reach the goal of reducing the waste stream going to the landfill by 50 percent by 2012.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information.</p>  |

## Further resources

| <b>Organization</b>          | <b>Resource</b>   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Provincial</b>            |   |
| <b>Government of Alberta</b> | <p><b>Voluntary Reductions</b></p> <p>Alberta and four of Canada's major retail associations reached an agreement in the spring of 2010 for the retail industry to voluntarily implement a strategy to - by 2013 - reduce by half the approximately 900 million plastic bags used in 2008. The strategy will be implemented at industry's own cost and includes education initiatives to promote the use of reusable shopping bags.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information.</p> |

## **Yard Waste Reduction Initiatives**

When most people think of xeriscaping (also known as eco-scaping or nature-scaping), they think of water conservation. However landscaping that uses native plants to mimic the natural vegetation not only requires less water, it also reduces the need for cutting and pruning which contributes to yard waste.

| Municipality                | Initiative   |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Provincial</b>           |  |
| <b>City of Brooks</b>       | <b>Xeriscaping Demo Bed</b><br>The City's Environmental Advisory Committee and Parks Services Department recently partnered with a junior high environmental class to design and plant a flower bed in a city park with natural, water wise plants. The Xeriscaping Demo Bed is in a highly visible area and residents are encouraged to look at the bed to understand how easy xeriscaping can be. In future years, the partners have plans to "take over" even more flower beds throughout the City.<br><br>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information.             |
| <b>City of Calgary</b>      | <b>Grasscycling</b><br>The City encourages its residents to leaving clippings on the lawn after mowing. Grass clippings will quickly decompose, returning valuable nutrients to the soil.<br><br>Grasscycling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improves lawn quality</li><li>• Saves the time and energy it takes to bag, rake and dispose of your clippings</li><li>• Reduces the amount of fertilizer and water needed</li><li>• Benefits the environment by reducing organic waste in the landfill</li></ul><br>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information |
| <b>City of Edmonton</b>     | <b>Eco-Landscaping</b><br>The City of Edmonton's website includes an extensive section on eco-landscaping promoting ecofriendly ways to reduce yard maintenance, water use, and greenhouse gas emissions through reducing lawn area, watering wisely, selecting the right plant varieties and grass cycling.<br><br>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information  |
| <b>City of Lethbridge</b>   | <b>Principles of Xeriscaping</b><br>As part of its Resource Management Initiative the City has produced a guide <i>Xeriscape: The Seven Principles of Landscape Water Conservation</i> , which provides information on waste reducing strategies such as mulching.<br><br>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information.   |
| <b>City of Medicine Hat</b> | <b>Xeriscape Demonstration Garden</b><br>The <a href="#">Xeriscape Demonstration Garden</a> is a collaborative initiative between the City of Medicine Hat and Medicine Hat College, to educate local and regional homeowners about alternatives to traditional landscaping while promoting practices that conserve water and protect the environment. The city also provides an online brochure, <a href="#">7 Steps to Xeriscaping</a><br><br>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information  |

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|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Strathcona County</b> | <p><b>Ecoscaping</b></p> <p>Every spring, Strathcona County holds ecoscaping workshops. These workshops, along with online information and brochures highlighting “how to” tips and local ecoscaping champions, have increased the number of residents adopting this landscaping technique over the last several years.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information.</p>   |
| <b>Town of Cochrane</b>  | <p><b>Naturescaping</b></p> <p>Both new and established residents are encouraged to reduce their lawn area with naturescaping or xeriscaping. A naturescaping demonstration site was established at a water pumping station in a residential neighbourhood, to enable residents to explore the possibilities up close.</p> <p>Under the Land Use Bylaw, the minimum naturescaping requirement for residential areas is 25%. Many home owners are 100% naturescaped or xeriscaped. Commercial properties must be 100% naturescaped.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information</p> |
| <b>Town of Okotoks</b>   | <p><b>Ecoscaping (Xeriscaping) Program</b></p> <p>The Town of Okotoks has long supported ecoscaping within its community through the creation of an Ecoscaping Educational Pamphlet, its own fescue seed grass mix and a Horticulture Hotline that residents can call to get information regarding lawn and plant care that is prairie ecosystem compatible.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information</p>   |

| <b>Other Organization</b>                          | <b>Resource</b>  |
|--|--|
| <b>Provincial</b>                                  |  |
| <b>Native Plant Producers Society of Alberta</b>   | <p><b>Native Plants</b></p> <p>Established in 2009 to promote and facilitate the commercial use of native plants across Alberta. Projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An Online Native Plant Marketplace</li> <li>- Workshops entitled, “Balancing Aesthetics with Ecology: Sustainable Landscaping”</li> </ul> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information</p>     |
| <b>Oldman Watershed Council's (OWC) Urban Team</b> | <p><b>Prairie Urban Garden Project</b></p> <p>The goal of the Prairie Urban Garden project is to demonstrate the beauty and benefits of having a xeriscaped garden in southern Alberta. The organization provides information on why and how to xeriscape and organizes an annual Prairie Urban Garden tour to showcase xeriscaped yards.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for more information</p> |

## **Works Cited**

FCM. (n.d.). *Municipal Sustainable Bylaw Collection*. Retrieved Sept. 2011, from Green Municipal Fund: [http://gmf.fcm.ca/Capacity\\_Building/Municipal-sustainable-bylaw-collection/Multi-sectoral-initiatives.asp](http://gmf.fcm.ca/Capacity_Building/Municipal-sustainable-bylaw-collection/Multi-sectoral-initiatives.asp)

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