

Going Green in Londonderry

Prevention – Raising the Bar Beyond Recycling

Recycling is a habit for most of us – getting those bottles, cans and cardboard curbside is part of our routine. And reusing that jar or the blank side of paper for notes is, well, downright Yankee! In fact, what true Yankee wouldn't think it wise to use less when possible? Want to do more? To be better environmental citizens we need to move beyond reuse/recycling, to *prevention*.

This concept was introduced in 1990 by the U.S. EPA with the deceptively simple statement "Pollution should be prevented or reduced at the source whenever feasible."

If pollution isn't generated, it doesn't threaten our air, water or land and we don't impact current or future generations. Pollution prevention was originally aimed at businesses that sought nontoxic substitutes and process changes to eliminate waste, but private citizens can also practice it, from lawn care to selecting cleaning products to our everyday habits.

Strategies for pollution prevention at home

Instead of using a host of chemicals to manage **garden pests and weeds**, stop and think, "Is the pest really a pest?" 90% of all insects are beneficial. Is the infestation minor enough to be ignored? If not, can the pest be denied access, food, harborage or water? Look for green solutions like planting marigolds to ward off insects, or using a soap solution in place of a toxic (and more costly) pesticide spray.

Every time we **choose to walk or bike** instead of driving, or take the stairs instead of an elevator, it reduces pollution and conserves gas and oil (not to mention the benefits of exercise!). By bundling your driving errands, and shutting off unused lights and TVs, you save energy while avoiding the associated emissions from our vehicles and power plants.

Consider pollution prevention in **product purchases** as well. Does the product contain toxic materials? If so, is there a nontoxic alternative? Prevention requires some thought, but is certainly warranted in our efforts to ensure a healthy environment for our children and grandchildren.

Pundits are wondering if recessionary times have reined in an age of hyper-consumerism. As we spend less, many are taking more pride in repair and do it yourself activities, all contributing to a more sustainable lifestyle and planet.

For further assistance in pollution prevention products, techniques or alternatives, visit the DES webpage for a wealth of information. Or email the Pollution Prevention Program to answer life's environmental conundrums: nhppp@des.nh.gov.

~ Courtesy of Londonderry's Solid Waste and Environment Committee and NH Department of Environmental Services ~