



## Grocery Stores

AN ICI WASTE REDUCTION STRATEGY HANDOUT

### Overwaitea Food Group an industry leader!

The Overwaitea Food Group – honoured with the 1994 Canadian Environmental Achievement Award in the Corporate Environmental Leadership category – is an industry leader in solid waste management. It has the distinction of being the first retail group in B.C. to appoint a full-time Director of Environmental Concerns, who is supported by a Recycling Coordinator. Overwaitea is also the first retailer in Canada to employ full-time recycling clerks responsible for in-store recycling programs and to initiate a large-scale, in-store



composting program. And in-store recycling programs are so successful, Overwaitea has one of the highest cardboard recovery rates of any retail business in Canada!

Expanded bulk food sections provide opportunities for reduced packaging. Paper and plastic grocery, produce, bakery and bulk-food bags are recycled and reprocessed into grocery and garbage bags. Overwaitea also reuses shipping totes and the plastic wrap on grocery pallets; refurbishes and reuses cash register ribbons where possible; and recovers silver from its photo labs.

As a result of its aggressive approach to recycling, the food group has

researched and developed specialized systems and equipment that are being promoted throughout the chain.

With its sister company – Beautiful British Columbia Magazine – the Overwaitea Food Group has also established a non-profit organization to help protect the province's wildlife and natural beauty.

For more information call 604-888-2079 (ext 2200).

### Enjoy the benefits of wasting away!

Here's how your grocery store can save money, boost its "green" image, protect the environment, and support provincial and local legislation.

1. Establish a Waste Reduction Committee, with representatives from all operational areas (e.g. administrative offices, individual departments, janitorial services).
2. Research waste reduction success stories in the grocery sector.
3. Conduct a waste audit in each operational area to determine the types and amounts of waste generated. Contact the Regional District for a *Waste Audit Kit*.
4. Set waste reduction goals, develop a Waste Reduction Plan, and introduce policies and procedures that support the plan (e.g. purchasing policies that require less packaging). Contact the Regional District for a *Waste Reduction Planning Kit*.
5. Identify "champions" and establish waste reduction programs in each operational area. Concentrate first on areas that produce the most waste.
6. Provide suitable recycling containers for each area (e.g. easily-accessible bins in office areas) and arrange for regular pick-up.
7. Educate employees (including janitorial staff) and patrons about procedures. Include recycling information in your orientation for new employees. Promote your goals and achievements by presenting recycling information in the newspaper, on posters, on the web site, through e-mail, in an employee handbook, etc.
8. Recognize staff who participate in the waste reduction program.
9. Monitor, evaluate and refine your program regularly. Enlist the help of department and janitorial staff to identify areas where more aggressive education or promotion is required.
10. **Enjoy the benefits!**



### Waste Reduction Benefits

**Financial Benefits** include waste management and treatment costs, reduced overhead and administrative or health and safety costs, increased productivity and/or improved product quality, and/or reduced expenses in raw materials.

**Regulatory Benefits** may include fewer compliance requirements, decreased risk of violating regulations, and reduced time and frustration associated with reporting, permit applications, etc.

**Public Image and Marketing Benefits** can be realized by promoting your environmentally-conscious practices, which could lead to free media exposure and increased sales.

**Liability Benefits** can be gained particularly if hazardous waste generation is reduced or eliminated.

**Ecological Benefits** include extending the lives of non-renewable resources, decreasing the volume of waste for disposal, and reducing the future potential of damaging or polluting the environment.



# Packaging Whoas!

Packaging materials, particularly corrugated cardboard, make up a large portion of any grocery store's waste. These hints will help you reduce and recycle paper-related packaging waste.

- Ask manufacturers/suppliers to provide products with less packaging or packaging that can be reused or recycled;
- Refrain from stocking over-packaged products. Purchase products with minimal packaging, recycled content in the packaging, or reusable or recyclable packaging;
- Install or expand a "bulk" section for non-perishable food items;
- Encourage staff to provide bags only when requested;
- Provide appropriate and adequately-sized recycling containers or share with a neighbouring business;
- Ensure adequate separation and storage space;
- Segregate all materials to reduce contamination;
- Educate janitorial staff about proper separation procedures;
- Encourage customers to pick up cardboard boxes when moving; and
- Install a cardboard compactor if volumes warrant it.

## The Paper Chase!

While 75 percent of organizations recycle paper to some extent, it still accounts for the biggest portion of business waste. Therefore, the most important things you can do to divert waste are to reduce, reuse, or recycle all paper products.

### Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling Paper Waste

- Optimize office and operational processes to eliminate paper waste;
- Educate staff about proper use of printers and photocopiers and about photocopying on both sides of paper;
- Eliminate unnecessary forms;
- Revise mailing lists to avoid unnecessary mailings;
- Encourage staff to bring "litterless" lunches;
- Provide suitable equipment (e.g. desk-side containers, large bins for areas of high paper generation);
- Contact the publishers of magazines/newspapers carried by the store to see if they will accept or buy back outdated issues for recycling; and
- Print smaller flyers on recycled paper.



## Departmental Strategies

### Bakery Department

- Bake only what's needed (e.g. don't overbake to make the shelves look full);
- Purchase all materials in either bulk or reusable/recyclable containers (e.g. 50 kg. kraft bags can be recycled with cardboard);
- Reduce individual packaging by using bins for rolls, muffins, etc.;
- Donate unsold but edible goods to shelters, missions, etc.; and
- Compost unusable goods.

### Deli Department

- Sell meat ends at a reduced price to divert from the garbage;
- Reduce the amount of meat that's pre-sliced;
- Order only what's expected to sell;
- Redirect meat scraps to manufacturers of animal feed and tallow; and
- Donate unsold meats and cheeses to shelters, missions, etc.

### Meat Department

- Purchase pre-trimmed and boneless meats;
- Reduce overpackaging and eliminate "blood" sponges;
- Display less meat to avoid spoilage;
- Redirect meat scraps to manufacturers of animal feed and tallow; and
- Donate unsold but edible meats to shelters, missions, etc.

### Produce Department

- Order only what is needed;
- Separate soiled and waxed cardboard from clean cardboard to decrease the risk of contamination;
- Keep less produce out for display and more in cool storage;
- Trim less from incoming produce;
- Donate unsold but edible produce; and
- Compost unusable produce.

## Contact Information:

B.C. Green Economy Initiative	<a href="http://www.gov.bc.ca/ges/">www.gov.bc.ca/ges/</a>
B.C. Materials Exchange	1-800-667-4321
B.C. Recycling Hotline	1-800-667-4321
Recycling Council of B.C.	(604) 683-6009 <a href="http://www.rcbc.bc.ca">www.rcbc.bc.ca</a>
Regional District of North Okanagan	(250) 545-5368 <a href="mailto:solidsolutions@nord.bc.ca">solidsolutions@nord.bc.ca</a>