Waste Minimization Policy

University of Illinois Campus Administrative Manual (CAM Number)

**Purpose:** To minimize waste going to landfills, comply with legal requirements in ILCS (30 ILCS 500/45-20, 30 ILCS 500/45-25, 30 ILCS 500/45-26), and to meet Climate Commitments listed in the most up-to-date version of the Illinois Climate Action Plan (iCAP)

**Scope:** All units on the Urbana-Champaign campus, faculty, staff, students, and visitors

**Authority:** Office of the Chancellor and Executive Director of Facilities & Services

**Policy:** All employees are required to minimize campus waste going to a landfill. This includes improving the University’s food procurement, purchasing, waste management, and recycling programs—embodying a “whole system” approach to resource management that implicates purchasing, maximizes recycling, minimizes waste, reduces consumption and ensures that products are made to be reused, repaired, or recycled back into the system.

Specifically, all employees responsible for purchasing shall purchase paper and paper products that contain 30% or higher post-consumer recycled content, unless the products cannot be used to meet the specified requirements or purchasing them would constitute an undue practical or economic hardship. All employees responsible for purchasing shall also purchase local food in the order of 35% of total food items. Additionally, purchasers should aim to reduce single-use plastic usage wherever possible—opting first for reusable containers or secondarily compostable plastic alternatives wherever possible. These standards should be included during the planning of campus events so that they evolve to be more sustainable over time.

**Definitions**:

* *MSW (Municipal solid waste)*: everyday items that we use and then throw away, such as product packaging, food scraps, newspapers, and other household waste[[1]](#footnote-0)
* *Recycled content:* the portion of materials used in a product that has been diverted from landfills and recycled back into production process
* *Recycling bins:* containers in which items that are to be recycled must be placed
* *Virgin paper*: paper manufactured without the use of any recycled content
* *Local food*: products (1) grown in Illinois; or (2) processed and packaged in Illinois, using at least one ingredient grown in Illinois.
* *Compostable plastics*: plastics made from renewable, plant-based material that is able to break down in the temperature and microbial conditions of an industrial composting facility

**Processes/Procedures/Guidelines**:

Reducing Paper & Plastic Usage and Food Waste

Reducing usage of single-use paper and plastic is a key first step in decreasing the environmental impacts associated with these materials. Additionally, the back-end operations of University Dining and other campus units responsible for serving food are key instigators of mitigating food waste from the source. Colleges, departments and other organizational units will institute practices that optimize food, paper and plastic efficiency, unless doing so would constitute an undue economic or practical hardship. Actions to prevent paper, plastic and food waste include, but are not limited to:

Paper:

* Substituting electronic communications for printing
* Replacing paper forms with electronic and web-based tools provided they are accessible and properly protect personal privacy
* Purchasing or leasing copiers, printers, and fax machines that can be set to default to double-sided printing and B&W toner; setting the machines’ default to double-sided printing
* Reusing products such as file folders, storage boxes, and paper printed on one side
* Reducing the basis weight and trim sizes of printed pieces
* Designing processes and procedures that minimize printing and copying waste
* Minimizing unsolicited mail, both sent and received
* Minimizing overruns and maximizing sell-through for published materials
* Transitioning toward paperless course materials, particularly for lab courses

Plastic:

* Reducing the use of single-use plastic containers in campus facilities
* Increasing access to filtered water dispenser stations across campus and encouraging the use of reusable water bottles
* Enhancing plastics reduction educational and awareness programming
* Incentivize the use of reusable cups, containers, and/or bags to campus dining and retail locations through point of sale programs
* Reduce the number of giveaways of plastic items at campus events and/or support sustainably-sourced, reusable giveaways
* Offer exclusively durable, reusable foodservice ware
* Reduce usage of thin, non-recyclable plastic films, plastic bags, styrofoam and foodservice products wherever possible

Food:

* Encouraging guests to register for campus events ahead of time so that the proper amount of food can be purchased thereby minimizing waste
* Providing compost bins or offering other composting options for campus events
* Encouraging donation of excess foods from campus operations and events to attendees and other third party organizations
* Utilizing personnel-managed buffets to discourage visitors from overloading their plates
* Using smaller foodservice containers with continual refill as opposed to using larger foodservice containers

Environmental Procurement

Purchasing recycled-content paper and paper products; durable, compostable and/or recycled-content plastic; and locally-sourced food has far-reaching environmental benefits and will encourage suppliers to increase their capabilities in providing these products at competitive prices. Unless, as determined and documented by the purchasing unit, the products cannot be used to meet the specified requirements or if doing so would constitute undue economic or practical hardship, units will take the following actions:

1. Purchase and source paper and paper products that contain 30% or higher post-consumer recycled content
2. Purchase and source plastic and plastic products that is durable/reusable, compostable or containing over 50% recycled content.
3. Give preference in purchasing decisions to paper and paper products with post-consumer recycled content verified by an independent, third-party organization, such as the FSC or an equivalent certification system
4. Give preference in purchasing decisions to plastic and plastic products with bio-based or post-consumer recycled content verified by an independent, third-party organization, such as BPI or an equivalent certification system.
5. Give preference in purchasing decisions to paper and plastic products that also contain other recovered materials or rapidly renewable products (e.g. pre-consumer recycled content, agricultural residues, bamboo, etc.) after maximizing post-consumer recycled content
6. Maintain current purchasing decisions to paper and paper products produced by sustainable forestry practices verified by an independent, third-party organization, such as the FSC or an equivalent certification system, after maximizing post-consumer recycled content, while engaging with contract vendors to see if this is feasible within the context of BEP certified vendors
7. Give preference in purchasing decisions to food and food products that are locally-sourced, with at least 35% of dining hall operations supplied by local food sources.

Using Recycling & Composting Bins

The university diverted about 30% of its waste from landfills in FY20 but the goal is to reach 45% before 2024.

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Bin types:

* Bins for Paper
  + Acceptable:
    - Office Paper: All Types, Newspaper, Magazines, Journals, Envelopes: All Types, Junk Mail, Ream Wrappers, Books, Phone Books, Manila and File Folders
  + Unacceptable:
    - Cardboard, Tissues, Fax Paper, Candy Wrappers, Metal Report Covers, Paper Towels, Photographs, Blue Prints
* Bins for Bottles and Cans
  + Acceptable:
    - Plastic Bottles (Plastics #1 & #2), Aluminum
  + Unacceptable:
    - Other Plastics, Steel, Tin, Glass
* Deskside Personal Bins
  + Use a deskside paper bin to collect materials for personal transfer to a full-size paper bin
* Multi-stream coupled waste receptacles
  + Bins made of 100% recycled plastic
  + 3 bins for paper, acceptable plastic and cans, and waste
  + Meant for high-traffic areas where convenience and visibility is key
* Compost Tumblers
  + Acceptable
    - Coffee grounds & filters, Fruit/vegetable scraps, Shredded paper, Napkins & paper towels, Eggshells, Teabags (no staples!)
  + Unacceptable:
    - Meat, Bones, Dairy, Plastic, Trash, Glass, Styrofoam, Liquids

Information on Recycling: <http://www.fs.illinois.edu/services/waste-management-and-recycling>

Information on Composting: <https://icap.sustainability.illinois.edu/project/compost-national-soybean-research-center-nsrc>

**Resources**:

Illinois Procurement Code Sec. 45-20 Recycled Supplies [(30 ILCS 500/45-20)](http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/documents/003005000K45-20.htm)

Illinois Procurement Code Sec. 45-25 Recyclable Supplies ([30 ILCS 500/45-25](http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/documents/003005000K45-25.htm))

Illinois Procurement Code Sec. 45-26 Environmentally Preferable Procurement ([30 ILCS](http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/documents/003005000K45-26.htm)

[500/45-26](http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/documents/003005000K45-26.htm))

Facilities & Services (UIUC): <http://www.fs.illinois.edu/>

ICAP Portal: <https://icap.sustainability.illinois.edu/>

Zero Waste Team (iCAP Portal): <https://icap.sustainability.illinois.edu/project/zero-waste-icap-team>

Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment: <http://sustainability.illinois.edu/>

University of Illinois Ethics and Compliance Office: <https://www.ethics.uillinois.edu/>

**Exceptions:**

* Examples of where products cannot be used to meet the specified requirements or where doing so would constitute undue economic or practical hardship include, but are not limited to, cases where appropriate recycled paper is not available (e.g., non-standard colors or thickness); or
* The cost of recycled content paper is excessive compared to non-recycled content products. If the premium for recycled content is 10% or less, this is presumed not to be a hardship.

**Contact**: Waste Management Coordinator at (217) 244-SAVE or [recycling@illinois.edu](mailto:recycling@illinois.edu)

1. “Municipal Solid Waste.” *EPA*, Environmental Protection Agency, 29 Mar. 2016, archive.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/municipal/web/html/. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)