



Recycling In Recreation Facilities

By Mike Bryson, March 2007

You may recognize the symbol as the "recycle" symbol. Most people are quite comfortable with the concept of recycling. Taking the blue boxes to the curb or driving to the recycling depot to drop off your newspapers, cardboard, plastic and tin. If you're like me, you've amassed an embarrassing fortune simply by returning empty beer cans and bottles.



The problem is, the symbol above doesn't just represent Recycle. It also represents two other, possibly more important, directives. **REDUCE** and **REUSE**. By focusing more attention on reduction and reuse of materials, a facility can not only save money, but also illustrate that they are a responsible operation and consumer.

You can reduce your consumption in many ways. First, instead of making dozens of copies of this amazing article, make 2 or 3 and post in high traffic areas for staff to read. Perhaps find another article to copy on the back of this one to use both sides of the paper. The best solution would be to scan this article and email it to everyone in your contacts list. Review what you currently consume and see if there are ways to scale back. Do your washrooms really need air fresheners or will adjusting how you clean them reduce aromas? Are sticky notes necessary or can you find a suitable alternative? Does parent and child skate really need all 36 of the 400W lights on over the ice or will they be just as well served with 12? Do your hot tub jets need to be on from open to close or can you set up a user-controlled push button timer? Are your janitorial deliveries made every month? Are you able to order enough to last 2 or even 3 months? You'll reduce the number of deliveries (green house gas reductions and costs) and possibly the cost of the product itself by buying bulk. Consider starting in-house composting at your facility.

Reusing items can be a little trickier. When I was in grade one I remember having to bring empty egg cartons (reusing them) to class so we could do an art project. I was excited. Finally the artistic and creative side of my soul would be expressed. I laboured on that art piece for minutes, and was quite impressed at how a simple egg carton, in the hands of a 6 year old, could become such a majestic piece of art. Never before had such an amazing re-creation of a caterpillar, complete with pipe cleaner feelers and a scrap of red felt for a mouth, been so life like. Beaming with pride I took the piece home to my mommy. She was the practical one, saying "I think Cal the Caterpillar will be happier at the garbage dump with all his friends." She then laid Cal on top of the garbage and tied up the bag.

Simple Ways to Reuse

Using durable coffee mugs. Refilling bottles. Donating old magazines or surplus equipment. Reusing boxes. Turning empty jars into containers for leftover food. Purchasing refillable pens and pencils. Participating in a paint collection and reuse program. Send stuff to auction.

As you have read this article, over 700 tons of material has gone into landfills across Canada. Don't worry – if you didn't read the article the amount would have been the same. As we grow more aware, the amount of waste that goes to landfills will decrease. Many municipalities have adopted a Pay as you Throw system for charging excessive waste. The benefits to adopting the 3 R's (reduce, reuse, recycle) will become more apparent as more people take part.