



Solid
Waste
Management
Coordinating
Board

Reducing Junk Mail

Prepared for 2009 Community POWER Grantees. Visit RethinkRecycling.com for more information on this and other waste related topics. This information has been approved by county staff and may be reproduced using the credit line below. Be sure to have your county staff contact review any changes made to this document before publishing.

This information has been provided by the Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board through a Community POWER (Partners on Waste Education and Reduction) Grant. Visit RethinkRecycling.com your go-to-guide for waste and recycling in the Twin Cities.

Introduction

Reduce Junk Mail!

Every American man, woman, and child receives over 30 pounds of junk mail per year. Even if junk doesn't annoy you, consider the amount of...

- Trees, water, and inks used to produce the junk mail
- Fossil fuels used to carry the junk mail to you, and carry away your garbage/recycling
- Problems associated with disposing of 4.3 million tons of unwanted mail
- Energy used to recycle it.

Informational Article

Unwanted Mail

Many people would love to stop receiving unwanted mail and clear out old school and office papers from their homes, but it can be a daunting task. Keeping up with all the papers that pass through the house may feel like a full time job! Reduce and manage all the paper in your house with the following tips and tricks:

Contact:

- The Direct Marketing Association's website at <http://www.dmachoice.org>.



- Opt Out to eliminate credit card offers:
www.optoutprescreen.com.
- More great ideas at RethinkRecycling.com or www.reduce.org.

Take Steps To Reduce the Amount of Junk Mail You Receive

You will need to do most of the steps listed below separately for *each person* in your household, and it may take several months before all your efforts will begin to significantly reduce your junk mail, but it will be worth it.

Mail Preference Service - Significantly reduce advertising mail by registering with the Direct Marketing Association's "Mail Preference Service." This service costs \$1 and registers you with many of the biggest direct mail marketers in the country. Visit: www.dmchoice.org to complete your registration on-line or print a mail-in copy. Send one for each person in your household.

Credit Card Offers – Opt-Out! The nation's major consumer credit bureaus established ways to help you get off lists for pre-approved credit card solicitations. "Opt-out" for two years or permanently. To get off permanently, you need to return a letter sent to you after you make the phone call. Call 1-888-567-8688, or visit www.optoutprescreen.com

Mail List Brokers - These two companies provide national lists for non-financial data.

- Experian - 1-800-228-4571 ext. 4633. After listening to a long message, leave your name, street address, city, state, zip, area code and phone.
- The Polk Company - 1-800-464-7655 Ask for the "opt-out" line and follow directions.

Weekly Coupon/Advertising Mailings - You can get off the mailing lists for common weekly/monthly coupon mailings.

- Call ADVO, Inc. at 1-888-241-6760 to stop getting "ShopWi\$e".
- Call Val-Pak (Cox Target Media) at 1-800-550-5025 and follow the instructions.
- Call the Star Tribune advertising line at (612) 673-7777 and ask to stop receiving their weekly "Twin Cities Values & Bargains" newspaper (Minneapolis and Western suburbs, primarily).



Contact Individual Companies/Organizations

Not all groups use the national mailing lists. If companies or charities have your name and address, you may continue to receive mail from them. However, you do have the right to be left alone, once you request it.

Contact the company directly (by mail or telephone) and asked to be placed in their "do not mail" file.

Sample language to use (you could create labels or notes with this message to send in until the mail stops): *"Please remove my name from your marketing database. Do not sell, give away, rent, or trade my name and address to others. Thank you, [give full name and address]."*

Contact all your utilities and other service providers (e.g. Qwest) and request they do not share your personal information with others.

Proactively request, every time you write down or tell someone your name/address, not to share it with others.

How to Manage What You Already Have - Sort, Shred, Recycle

While trying to reduce the amount of junk mail, it is still important to recycle the unwanted mail you do receive. The following types of paper mail are recyclable:

- Mail, office and school papers
- Magazines and catalogs
- Newspapers and inserts
- Phone books
- Shredded paper in closed paper bags

Sort the mail – assign categories and a storage place for each type of mail. Find containers for each type of document and then clearly label the container.

Shred - confidential documents, and keep your shredder in the place where you read your mail, process bills, or stash old homework.

Recycle – shredded paper can be safely recycled by placing it in a paper bag, stapling it shut, and labeling the bag "shredded paper." On your recycling day, place the bag curbside with the rest of your recyclable materials. To make recycling your shredded paper even easier, replace the plastic bag or trash bin underneath your shredder with a paper bag. Organizing your papers and safely disposing of confidential documents can be made manageable with a plan – make yours and clean out!



Visit RethinkRecycling.com to find junk mail reduction tips and more information on waste reduction.

Statistics & Facts

Is unwanted mail a problem in the United States? Let's do the math.

Shipped: 5.56 million tons

Recycled: 1.23 million tons

Garbage: 4.33 million tons

Nearly 32 pounds of paper and plastic going into the garbage annually for every woman, man and child in America! That's a pretty sizeable "junked mail" problem!

Nearly 3 billion credit card solicitations are sent to consumers every year!

Resources

RethinkRecycling.com - Residents and businesses can learn how to create less waste, recycle more and properly dispose of hazardous items. RethinkRecycling.com is sponsored by the metro region's Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board (SWMCB), comprised of the six member counties, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

www.reduce.org - Offers many ways to reduce junk mail, plus junk mail clip art.

Reduce the hail of unwanted mail! – Print piece available from the MPCA. Contact resource center staff at clearinghouse@pca.state.mn.us or by phone 651-215-0232.

www.privacyrights.org - Offers even more ways to opt out of sweepstakes, supermarket loyalty cards, catalogs, etc.