



KING COUNTY

# GreenWorks

NEWSLETTER

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# HAZARDOUS to Your Health

**T**he Surgeon General hasn't slapped a warning label on the side of your building, but chances are your business could be generating hazardous waste.

Even if you're not using toxic chemicals in the course of your business, you may have cleaning supplies, paints or pesticides on site (see the checklist on page 6). Basically, once a product becomes a 'waste', it may be considered hazardous if it displays a warning label indicating contents that are flammable, caustic, dangerous, hazardous or poisonous.

Although hazardous waste represents only a small portion of the total business waste stream—just four-tenths of one percent—even relatively small amounts of toxic materials can seriously pollute the ecosystem.

Furthermore, special rules apply to the handling and disposal of anything considered a hazardous waste. Since hazardous waste can't typically be thrown in the garbage or poured down the drain, what's a business to do?

King County offers free assistance to help businesses identify and manage their hazardous wastes. In some cases, we'll even offer you an incentive. The Voucher Incentive Program is available exclusively to businesses that generate small quantities of hazardous waste. (See page 6 for an article about this program.)

If you have hazardous waste, here's how we recommend dealing with it. (See the list on page 2 for contact information on all of the resources mentioned below.)

### REDUCE

The most effective way to deal with products that are considered hazardous is to stop using the materials all together.

Reducing your use of these products or keeping them out of your door in the first place is called "pollution prevention."

Pollution prevention helps you comply with hazardous waste laws—and can save your business money. It's worth looking at your processes and products to see where you can reduce regulated materials. The price of chemicals and their disposal is steadily rising, so any reduction in chemical use should reduce your costs and the risk of exposure for your employees.

*story continues inside*

**Leftover pie: What King County businesses throw away. See our "pie" chart on pages 4–5.**

Call the Green Works hotline (206-296-8800) for information and free assistance on ways to reduce & recycle pieces of your pie.

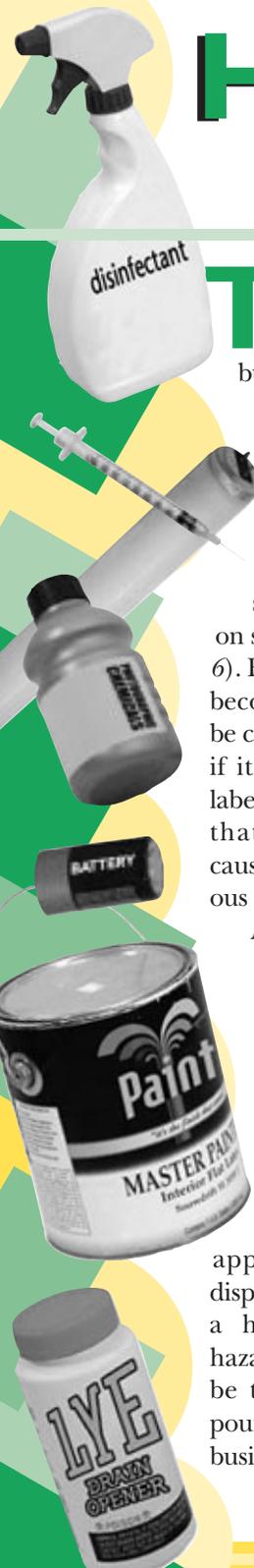
## Spring Into Action

Take a look back at last year's accumulation of unused supplies, unwanted furniture and hazardous wastes. Wondering how to "spring into action" to deal with it? Check out this edition of the Green Works newsletter for useful information, tips and resources.

This newsletter can also help you plan ahead. To minimize next year's "spring cleaning"—and reduce your waste disposal costs—you can:

- Set up an office supply reuse program;
- Reduce use of hazardous materials; and
- Use (or ask your landscaping service to use) composting and other resource-friendly strategies for your organic wastes.

Call our hotline (206-296-8800) for more information and free assistance on any of these topics.



# HAZARDOUS to Your Health



continued from front page

Here are a couple of examples:

- **Replace solvent cleaners with detergent cleaners.** If you are cleaning parts in a solvent-based parts washing tank, switch to detergent cleaner in a cabinet washer, allowing you to recapture your cleaning solutions and save hundreds of dollars a year.
- **Use alternatives to aerosol spray cleaners and degreasers.** Try a soapy rag instead. It's often more than enough to do the job.

## RECYCLE

If you can't eliminate hazardous products, your next best option may be to recycle them.

Some products, like fluorescent lamps, can be recycled easily. And by recycling them, your hazardous waste handling requirements become less stringent. A local Seattle recycler, Ecolights Northwest, recycles fluorescent lights and batteries, as well as mercury thermostats and switches. More information is available at [www.ecolights.com](http://www.ecolights.com).

You might also find that your trash is someone else's treasure. Through IMEX, the Industrial Materials Exchange, businesses can list items they no longer need but which might be useful to another company. Accessible on-line or via a printed directory, exchange listings are directed into two categories: *Available* and *Wanted*. Not all the listings involve hazardous waste, but categories include acids, paints and coatings, oils and waxes, laboratory chemicals and solvents.

## TREATING YOUR HAZARDOUS WASTES

You or your hazardous waste vendor may be able to reduce the volume of your waste or make it less hazardous by treating it. Treating it can greatly reduce your costs for disposal. Laboratories are best suited for handling waste in this way.

Under certain conditions, the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) encourages on-site treatment of hazardous wastes. Ecology offers six "Focus Sheets" with

treatment-specific guidance covering the following strategies: carbon "adsorption;" elementary neutralization; evaporation; filtration; separation; and solidification. Copies are available from Ecology's Northwest Regional Office by calling 425-649-7000, or on their website at [www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/hwtr/reg\\_comp\\_guide/pages/treatment\\_page.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/hwtr/reg_comp_guide/pages/treatment_page.html).

## DISPOSAL

You can contract with a permitted hazardous waste management facility, also known as a treatment, storage, disposal or recycling facility (or TSDR). Since the business that generates the waste is legally responsible for the ultimate fate of that waste, it's important to select reputable companies.

King County's Hazardous Waste Directory (a.k.a. The Yellow Book) provides information on how to handle each waste type and also lists reputable waste vendors.

Although the Yellow Book is a great resource, individual waste vendors may become out of compliance with the state from time to time. It is the responsibility of each business to audit prospective waste vendors in Washington State by contacting the Records Division of the Department of Ecology at 360-407-6040, or P.O. Box 47658, Olympia, 98504-7658. You can request a copy of the vendor's most recent inspection report.

## SHINE

Once you've identified your hazardous wastes and started managing them, King County can help you shine! EnviroStars is a regional program that certifies qualifying businesses for their efforts to prevent pollution and reduce hazardous waste. Certified businesses receive recognition and marketing benefits in the form of awards, Internet promotion, mention in radio commercials, newspaper ads and other media. Contact

EnviroStars and learn more about how to let your customers know that you're an environmentally sound business. ☺

# Hazardous Waste Resources

## Pollution Prevention

### Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County

[www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste](http://www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste)  
206-263-3050

### Pollution Prevention Resource Center

[www.pprc.org](http://www.pprc.org)  
206-352-2050

### IMEX (Industrial Materials Exchange)

[www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/imex](http://www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/imex)  
206-296-4899

## Recycling & Treatment

### Business Waste Line

[www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/lhwmp/bwl.html](http://www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/lhwmp/bwl.html)  
206-296-3976

### Hazardous Waste Library

[www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/hwl](http://www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/hwl)  
206-263-3051

## Disposal

### How to Choose a Hazardous Waste Vendor

[www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/yb/ybchoose.html](http://www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/yb/ybchoose.html)

### Hazardous Waste Directory (a.k.a. The Yellow Book)

[www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/yb/ybwdlist.html](http://www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/yb/ybwdlist.html)

### Business Waste Line

[www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/lhwmp/bwl.html](http://www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/lhwmp/bwl.html)  
206-296-3976

## Incentives

### EnviroStars

[www.envirostars.org](http://www.envirostars.org)  
877-220-7827  
206-263-3080

### Voucher Incentive Program (VIP)

[www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/lhwmp/voucher.html](http://www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/lhwmp/voucher.html)  
206-263-3038

# pre-owned, Refurbished or Just Plain Used

**L**et's face it—furnishing an office is expensive. Sure, sometimes it's critical to buy job-specific technology off the shelf, but does that new desk really need to be factory-fresh? Read on for help finding better, less-expensive options.

## BUYING USED

Used office furniture stores offer just about everything you need to outfit an office—lobby chairs, break room tables, cubicles, desks, credenzas, file cabinets and conference tables... some even stock various electronics and phones. And don't be fooled into thinking this gear looks like the equivalent of a rusted-out '56 Chevy. With a little hunting you can find equipment maintained in near perfect condition, or refurbished to like-new standards.

And in the past year or so there has actually been a glut of high-quality used office furnishings available in the Seattle area, due to a number of high-tech companies that have scaled back or gone out of business.

## REFURBISHING

Another option is to refurbish your existing office furniture. Refurbishing offers financial, aesthetic and environmental benefits.

According to the Office Furniture Recyclers Forum, prices for remanufactured furniture typically range from 30 to 50 percent less than new furniture—and the quality has steadily increased.

Quality "systems" furniture is a valuable asset, usually built to last. It includes cubicle dividers, desktops, shelving, filing and storage units integrated into attractive, space-efficient designs.

New fabrics and finishes applied to used systems furniture can enhance and update your office's look, at a substantial savings over new furnishings. Work surfaces can be re-laminated, panels resurfaced or reupholstered, and metal fixtures stripped and repainted.

We can save  
money & get  
some great stuff!

## WHERE TO LOOK

You can check your local Yellow Pages under *Office Furniture & Equipment—Repair & Refurbish* and *Office Furniture & Equipment—Used*. Or, for a quick list of sources, go to our website at [www.metrokc.gov/greenworks](http://www.metrokc.gov/greenworks). Click on *Reuse and*



*Recycling Database*, select *Furniture* and press *submit* to run the search.

On the other side of the coin, your company may be looking for a way to shed some office furniture. Don't risk your back dragging old steel desks down to the loading dock for recycling! There are better options, including:

- Offer your pre-owned stock to local used office furniture stores.
- Visit neighboring businesses to gauge their interest in purchasing your equipment.
- Check with local non-profits looking for a donation of quality used furniture and equipment.
- Sell your used furniture through the classified ads.
- Visit the Green Works website at [www.metrokc.gov/greenworks](http://www.metrokc.gov/greenworks), click on *Reuse and Recycling Database*, select *Furniture* and press *submit*. Here you will find businesses and nonprofits willing to accept your old office furnishings and supplies. Some restrictions apply, so call ahead for details.

Give used office furniture a second life. You'll be doing yourself—and the planet—a favor. ☺

# Leftovers... Again?

**D**iners don't always clean their plates. Grocery produce doesn't always sell before it goes bad. For these, and a number of other reasons, food waste accounts for a whopping 13.4 percent of the waste from non-residential sources. It's one of the largest components of business waste ending up in the landfill. (Check out the pie chart below.)

But there are better, cheaper ways for businesses to handle their "organic" leftovers.

## AVOID WASTE IN THE FIRST PLACE

Those in the restaurant and food industry should first explore simple, cost-effective ways to prevent waste. Besides educating employees on rotating produce stock to minimize loss, look for practical ways to use food more efficiently, such as eliminating plate garnishes that won't be consumed. For more information, call Green Works at 206-296-8800 to request a copy of "Recipes to Prevent Waste in Restaurants."

## DON'T THROW IT AWAY—GIVE IT AWAY

Consider donating your surplus to food banks and distribution centers. Demand for food donations is up, so your contribution is vital. Food is normally transported in temperature-controlled vehicles and donors are protected from liability by federal and state "Good Samaritan" laws.

To find out how, go to [www.metrokc.gov/greenworks](http://www.metrokc.gov/greenworks), click on the *Reuse and Recycling Database*, then check *Organics—Pre-consumer food waste* and press *submit*.

## COMPOST IT

Compost is a natural organic material produced when microorganisms break down organic materials such as food and yard waste. Some haulers collect food wastes separately for composting. If your business is in the southern part of King County, you can get pre-consumer food waste collection service from Waste Management-Rainier (206-243-4050) at lower costs than regular garbage collection fees. Unfortunately, similar service for other parts of King County has yet to be identified.

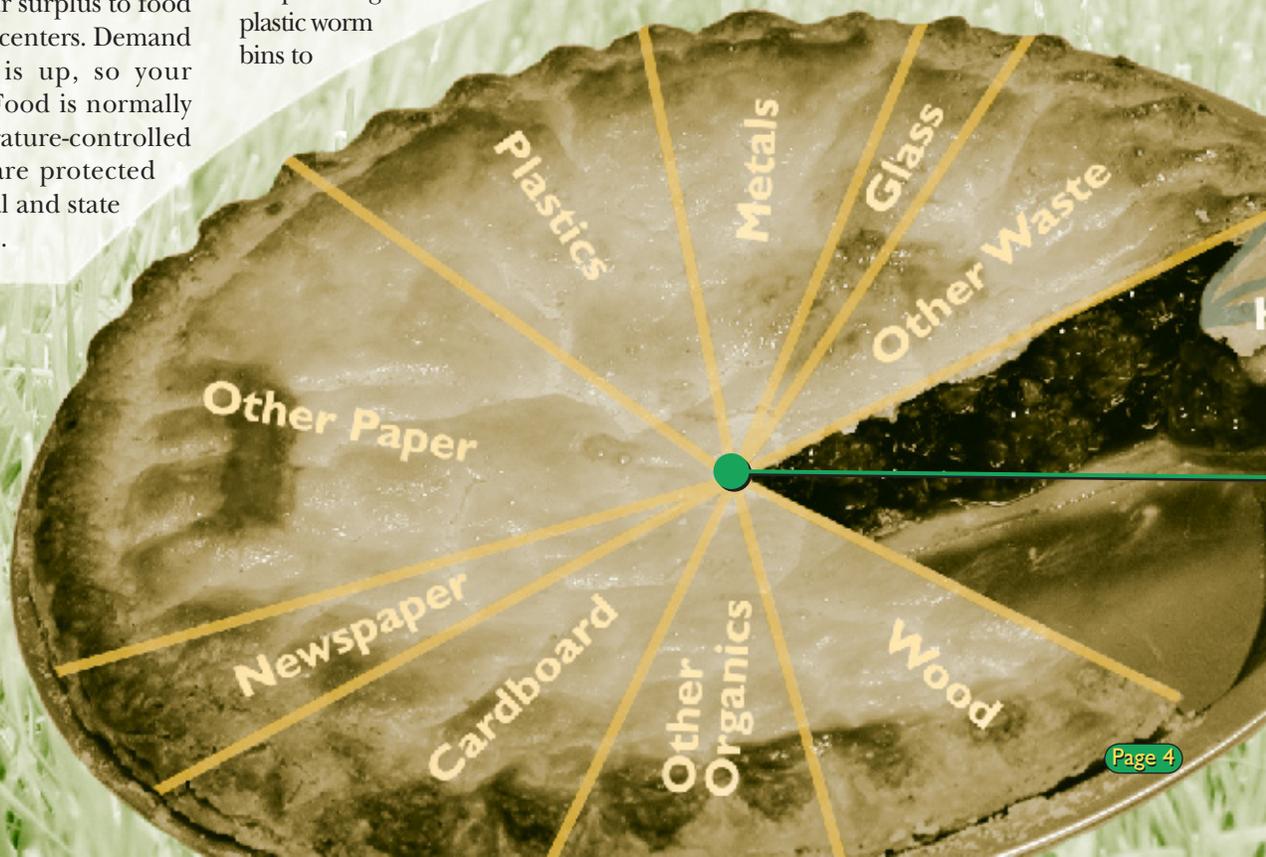
Hands-on options for recycling food wastes include a worm bin or an in-vessel composting system. These systems enable you to recycle your food waste on-site, thus eliminating disposal costs while also providing your own soil amendment.

Systems range from very simple 15-gallon plastic worm bins to

high-tech systems that can handle up to 20,000 pounds of a wide range of food waste per day. In a short time, these food scraps are turned into high-quality compost. For more information on worm bins and in-vessel composting systems, please call King County Green Works at 206-296-8800, or visit Seattle Tilth website to find sources for red worms, [www.seattletilth.org](http://www.seattletilth.org).

Food wastes comprise a large amount of the waste in our landfills—and can take up a sizeable portion of your dumpster as well. It's worth the time and money to look for other ways to deal with compostable waste. The environment (and some well-fed worms!) will benefit, too.

For more information on any of the above topics, or for free technical assistance, call the Green Works hotline at 206-296-8800. ☺



# Better Landscaping... is Better Business

**I**n business, sometimes everything's coming up roses, but occasionally it's just grass and weeds. Whether your business is a storefront with a planting strip, or a corporate campus with extensive grounds, you have landscaping to manage.

Most businesses hire professional landscapers to maintain their grounds. But poor landscaping practices can lead to big environmental problems. Ask the proper questions when hiring a landscape firm.

- Do they grasscycle (mulch mow) by leaving clippings on your lawn? Yard waste is one of the largest components in the business waste stream, accounting for 4.7 percent of King County non-residential totals. Leaving clippings improves lawn health and reduces the use of fertilizer and water.

- Do they test the soil? A core sample can reveal the organic content of your soil and provide clues to needed nutrients.
- Do they prepare the soil properly with soil amendments like compost and other soil amendments? Two to four inches of compost, tilled down to between six and twelve inches, will keep your plants healthy and vigorous.
- Do they mulch your planting beds? Leaves, wood chips, bark or compost help control weeds, prevent erosion, keep the soil moist and gradually distribute natural fertilizer.
- Do they use natural organic or slow release fertilizers? Soluble or "quick release" fertilizers tend to overfeed plants, with the excess running off into streams and lakes. Slow release products don't run off as easily, and last throughout the growing season.

- Do they design gardens for the environment? Plants should be suitable for the Northwest—drought-tolerant, pest-resistant, and proper for the specific site, whether it's sunny, shady or sloped.
- Do they provide efficient irrigation solutions? Drip irrigation systems and soaker hoses for planting beds—and timers that water lawns at optimal times to reduce evaporation—can significantly reduce water consumption.
- Do they offer alternative approaches to herbicides and pesticides? There are a number of ways to reduce weeds and garden pests without chemicals. Look for a landscaper that can recommend an "organic" or environmentally sensitive approach.

So stop and smell the roses. Whether you use a professional landscape service or manage your own green space, ask the right questions. The right answers and actions can reduce yard waste, improve soil health, conserve water, cut down on hazardous chemicals—and save money.

For more information about why each of these questions is important—and how to assess the answers you receive—call the King County Hazardous Waste Management Program at 206-263-3050 to request a copy of "How To Choose A Landscape Company". Visit [www.metrokc.gov/soils](http://www.metrokc.gov/soils) for information about the benefits of composting. 🌱

## Pieces of the Pie

### King County Non-Residential Garbage:

Food Waste	13.4%
Yard Waste	4.7%
Hazardous Waste	.4%
Wood	10.8%
Other Organics (textiles, tires, etc.)	9.4%
Cardboard	9.0%
Newspaper	3.5%
Other Paper	17.0%
Plastics	11.2%
Metals	7.1%
Glass	2.7%
Other Waste (ashes, furniture, appliances, etc.)	11.0%

**Rake  
in the  
benefits**

# Hazardous Waste Checklist

You may not think that your business generates hazardous waste. But a glance through the list below will reveal just how many commonly used materials are hazardous. Learn more about proper handling of each of these hazardous wastes—and many more—at

[www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/smallbiz](http://www.metrokc.gov/hazwaste/smallbiz)

- Acids
- Adhesives
- Antifreeze
- Asbestos
- Batteries
- Biomedical wastes
- Bleach, cleaners, detergents and disinfectants
- Compressed gas containers
- Fluorescent lighting
- Formaldehyde
- Freon (refrigeration)
- Fuel and gasoline, used oil
- Inks and dyes
- Laboratory chemicals
- Paint
- Photographic chemicals
- Solvents
- Thermostats with mercury



Your business is probably generating hazardous waste



## Hazardous Wastes

# Get Rid of them Properly, and Get Reimbursed!

**It's staring you in the face.** Your business generates small quantities of hazardous waste, but not too much—less than 220 pounds per month. You know it's not safe to dump it, but you figure it will be expensive to handle, assuming you knew how. So it sits there while you fret, worry and wait.

The waste may still be staring you in the face, but so is the answer. It's the Voucher Incentive Program offered by the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program's (LHWMP).

Here's how it works. To qualify, your business must be located in King County. As mentioned above, you can't produce more than 220 pounds of haz-waste per month, or per batch. You request a site visit from an LHWMP field representative. It's a non-regulatory visit—LHWMP doesn't issue fines or citations. You agree to implement recommended

improvements in your waste handling. Voila—you're eligible for reimbursement of up to 50% of the hazardous materials management costs—to a maximum of \$500 per business site.

In the past five years, over 1,200 King County businesses classified as SQGs (Small Quantity Generators) have received more than \$400,000 in reimbursements. Shouldn't you get in on this worthwhile program, one that protects the environment and your pocketbook?

LHWMP participants include: King County Solid Waste Division; King County Water and Land Resources Division; cities in King County; the City of Seattle; and the Public Health Department of Seattle and King County.

For more information about the Voucher Incentive Program, call Patrick Hoermann at 206-263-3038 or e-mail him at [patrick.hoermann@metrokc.gov](mailto:patrick.hoermann@metrokc.gov).

## Dumped on at the Office

A humorous look at the misadventures of a wasteful office worker



The moral of the story—Woodrow had the right intentions, but didn't know that there are safer, better methods for handling hazardous wastes. See resources on page 2 for help.

## Setting up an office reuse system...

# Supplies & Demand

**It's a common occurrence at the office.** Someone borrows your stapler, your ruler or your scissors, and you can't track them down. Or you need some file folders, but the cupboard is bare. What do you do? You ask the office manager to order more supplies.

There is a better—and cheaper—way. Set up an office reuse system. It's easier than you may think. Take it from the King County Solid Waste Division—they implemented a successful reuse program at their King Street Center office that provides a model of efficiency for businesses everywhere. Here is how it works for them.

### Find your "champion"

A successful reuse station needs an advocate, someone who believes in the concepts of waste reduction and reuse and will make the effort to implement a program. The office manager is a natural choice, but anyone that has the time and inclination to coordinate the program can make it work. This program "champion" should become your company expert on reuse principles and information. His or her efforts should be recognized as the company saves time, money and resources.

### Define acceptable materials

Most reuse stations include three-ring binders, file folders, hanging folders and their tabs, envelopes, scratch pads, desk organizers, mouse pads, lamps, note cards, staplers, Styrofoam packing peanuts or bubble wrap, rubber bands and calculators.

### Get out the word

Display one attractive, printed sign labeling the reuse station. Locate additional signs in other parts of the office to point folks in the right direction.

Send out an inaugural e-mail or posting in your internal newsletter. Let people know the basic ground rules of the station. Occasional follow-up emails are helpful to remind staff when certain materials are running low, or when there is an abundant

supply of a particular item. Let co-workers know they can call the program coordinator with questions.

### Maintain the station

Someone needs to regularly tidy the area. Do some quality control to make sure the materials available are of good quality. If your reuse center turns into a junk heap and usable supplies are difficult to find, people won't come back.

### Measure use

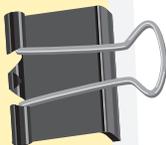
Hang a clipboard in your reuse station for people to mark down what types of materials they're using from the site. Every so often, collect these sheets and make a tally. Let your co-workers know how many binders, etc. were re-used and approximately how much money it saved the company.

### Be Creative

There's a lot of room to be innovative and make the office supply reuse concept meet the needs of your office. For example, businesses with more than one location might consider a system of intra-office "supply swaps." Supplies not needed in one location are shipped out to a location that needs them. Or you may also want to offer intra-office mail service, allowing easy pick up and delivery of reusable materials. ☺



Reducing  
Waste Reduction  
& Reuse



# So what is Green Works?

**King County Green Works** is a waste prevention and recycling assistance program for businesses. It is sponsored by the King County Solid Waste Division along with partnering suburban cities. If your business needs help reducing waste, locating recycled content products or finding recycling vendors for office waste, contact our business assistance team. We can also provide information and referrals on energy and water conservation.

**King County Green Works Newsletter** is a quarterly publication written and produced by the King County Solid Waste Division. Inclusion of a business, product or service in this newsletter does not constitute an official endorsement or sponsorship by the Solid Waste Division or King County. Please send us your questions, story ideas or other suggestions and comments.

#### Receive King County Green Works Newsletter by email

Cut down on waste and receive the newsletter via email. We'll send it to you in Portable Document Format (PDF) that's read with Adobe's Acrobat Reader; a free software download available on the Internet. Just send your email address, name, and company name to our email address below.

**This material will be provided in alternate formats upon request.**

#### To contact us:

Phone: 206-296-8800

Email address: [greenworks.swd@metrokc.gov](mailto:greenworks.swd@metrokc.gov)

Website: [www.metrokc.gov/greenworks](http://www.metrokc.gov/greenworks)

Fax: 206-296-4475 • TTY Relay: 711

## Building a Recycling Directory

The 2001–2002 Seattle/ King County Construction Recycling Directory is available, courtesy of the Construction, Demolition and Landclearing program of the King County Solid Waste Division. Inside you'll find area recyclers, disposal facilities and useful tips on setting up job-site recycling programs. The directory lists resources and

services by geographic area, as well as by type of materials accepted (i.e. wood, concrete, metals, fluorescent lights, landclearing). For a personal copy, or answers to your questions over the phone, call 206-296-4407. The directory is also published online at: [dnr.metrokc.gov/swd/bizprog/sus\\_build/CDLguide.pdf](http://dnr.metrokc.gov/swd/bizprog/sus_build/CDLguide.pdf).

## In The Works...

#### Summer Issue:

- Focus: **Water Conservation.**
- Recycled products: What are they? How can businesses locate them?
- Paper Reduction: Helpful tips on using less.

We at King County Green Works—producer of this newsletter—take pride in putting into practice what we preach. This newsletter is printed using soy-based inks on French Paper Company's Speckletone Basics—Pepper Off-White—an acid and chlorine free 100% post-consumer non-deinked recycled paper.



**What Have We Here?**

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