PRM-003

Waste Minimization and Landfill Diversion (formerly Recycling)

Effective Date Wednesday, January 18, 2006

Status Final

Last Revised Monday, November 18, 2024

Policy Type University

Contact Office Sustainability (Office for)

Recycling Services

Oversight Executive
Senior Vice President for Operations

Applies To Academic Division, the Medical Center, and University-Associated Organizations.

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Reason for Policy

The University of Virginia's 2030 Sustainability Plan includes goals to reduce UVA's total amount of waste generated and the total amount of waste landfilled 70% below 2010 levels by 2030 to reduce negative impacts on the environment.

Additionally, in accordance with the Code of Virginia (Section § 10.1-1425.6), this policy describes the University's Recycling Program that is designed to conserve resources and foster environmental stewardship through reducing solid waste generation and increasing recycling and reuse.

Definition of Terms

Compostable Materials

Description

Materials that can be accepted by a locally available industrial composting facility, such as products that are Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) Certified.

Recyclable, Recoverable, or Reusable Materials

Description

Materials that can be diverted from disposal in a landfill and accepted by the University's Recycling Program.

Single-Use Plastics

Description Plastic products that are typically used once, or for a short period of time, before being discarded.

Solid Waste

Description

Materials which are typically disposed of in a landfill. This does not include hazardous, bio-hazardous, or other regulated waste.

Source Reduction

Description

Programs that target the elimination of waste at its source and prior to it entering the waste stream. Examples include working with manufacturers and suppliers to use less packaging or ordering materials and supplies in bulk.

Waste Stream

Description

Waste materials generated in UVA facilities that can be recovered to be reused, recycled, composted, or disposed in a landfill.

Zero Waste Event

Description

An event that produces 10% or less waste, meaning at least 90% of waste generated is diverted from landfills through reuse, recycling, or composting.

University Funds

Description

All funds appropriated, generated, awarded, donated, or otherwise received by the University regardless of their source. The term University Funds does not include Agency Funds that the University maintains for legally separate external student organizations or other entities.

Policy Statement

The University of Virginia prioritizes waste reduction in the following order: reduce, reuse, and then recycle/compost. UVA will eliminate unnecessary purchasing first, then prioritize the purchase of surplus/reuseable materials, followed by multiple-use products, before considering recyclable or compostable

materials.

1. **Single-Use Plastics:**
   UVA is committed to reducing single-use plastics on Grounds and shall not purchase, sell, or distribute certain single-use plastics when alternatives are available.

   UVA will not purchase, distribute, or sell the following:
   - Single-use plastic and polystyrene food service containers (plates, cups, bowls, lids, trays, sauce containers, and hinged containers)
   - Single-use disposable plastic straws and cutlery (straws, forks, spoons, knives, and stirrers)
   - Single-use plastic water bottles (non-nutrient enhanced) up to and including 33 ounces
   - Disposable plastic shopping bags

   These single-use plastic items must be replaced with reusable materials or locally compostable alternatives. The use of water refill stations should be prioritized to support the transition from single-use plastics to reusable materials.

   These requirements apply to:
   - Purchases made with University funds.
   - All units, University-Associated Organizations, and/or affiliates (e.g., caterers, food service providers) operating or providing a service on Grounds.
   - All events and projects occurring on University Grounds or in University-owned buildings.

   Purchasers and service providers are expected to take all reasonable efforts to replace these materials with reusable or compostable alternatives. UVA will reduce and to the extent possible, eliminate, expanded polystyrene (Styrofoam), additional single-use plastics beyond those listed above – such as individually-wrapped items with bulk alternatives, plastic giveaways, and beverage bottles when feasible.

   a. **Exceptions:**
      There may be instances where the aforementioned single-use plastics cannot be avoided. Exceptions include but are not limited to emergencies, public health concerns, and patient care.
   b. **Zero Waste Events:** All events must adhere to the single-use plastics requirements noted above. If all food-service materials being used for the event are compostable or reusable, efforts must be made to request compost collection bins.

2. **Landfill Diversion:**
   Strategies for landfill diversion focus on the entire waste stream and include *source reduction*, the beneficial *reuse* of materials, and efforts to recover and compost or, *recycle* materials to the maximum extent that is economically feasible.

   Waste infrastructure must be visible, accessible, conveniently placed, and prominently labelled with clear instructions for use. Recycling and landfill bins should always be paired (co-located) in central spaces within buildings.

   University trash and recycling containers are to be used for University-generated materials only.

3. **Recycling:**
   The University complies with the Code of Virginia through its Recycling Program, which establishes University-wide recycling and waste reduction goals, implements strategies to achieve the goals, monitors the rates of recycling and trash production, and documents the effectiveness of the program.

   UVA operates a Recycling Program designed to reduce solid waste through source reduction, reuse, composting, and recycling. This includes limiting unnecessary purchases, seeking to eliminate excess packaging, and purchasing environmentally preferable options when possible.

4. **Compliance with Policy:**
   Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion in accordance with relevant University policies.

   Direct questions about this policy to the Office for Sustainability and Recycling Services.

Related Information

Recycling Program
Zero Waste Events
IRM-003: Data Protection of University Information

Major Category Physical Resource Management

Next Scheduled Review Sunday, July 25, 2027

Revision History

Added term University Funds 11/18/24; Revised 7/25/24; Added Compliance section 7/21/21.

Category Cross Reference

Safety, Security and Environmental Quality

Supercedes Policy Text

XIII.C.1 Facilities Management - Utilities Services.

Approved By Policy Review Committee

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