

What is Sustainability?

Sustainability provides for current needs without sacrificing the needs of future generations.

Sustainable practices require that we evaluate how our decisions today affect society, the environment, and the economy of the future.

Ecology uses The Natural Step System Guidelines for decision making:

1. Reducing reliance on non-renewable energy sources and limited natural resources.
2. Reducing use of synthetic compounds.
3. Reducing waste, reusing, or recycling materials.
4. Meeting basic human needs with equitable resource distribution.

A Sustainable Activity:

- * Addresses the relationship between the environmental, economic, and social equity of an activity.
- * Addresses root causes problems and prevents or eliminates them, rather than dealing with their consequences.
- * Avoids shifting impacts from one area to another in relation to the environment, the economy, and society.
- * Recognizes the irreplaceable value of natural capital in supporting all life.

**Working together, we
can make it happen.**

To ask about available formats for the visually impaired please call the Solid Waste and Financial Assistance Program at 360-407-6900. Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341.

A Pocket Guide to Sustainability



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DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Products:

- Borrow or rent instead of purchasing new.
- Repair rather than replace.
- Buy previously owned products.
- Buy only what you need.
- Support locally-owned and independent businesses.
- Buy locally made products.
- Look for independently certified products for low toxicity, greenhouse house gas emissions, and sweatshop free labor.
- Stay healthy: avoid toxic cleaners, paints, stains, and adhesives.
- Start tracking your purchases to get an idea of quantity.
- Give earth-friendly gifts with earth-friendly packaging.
- Invest with the earth and equity in mind.

Food:

- Turn your yard into organic fruit and vegetable gardens.
- Buy local food whenever possible.
- Buy a community supported agriculture (CSA) share.
- Eat less meat.
- Buy certified organic products.
- Support your local food coop.
- Carry reusable canvas bags to the store.
- Plan meals a week ahead and use a shopping list.
- Use reusable tableware.

What You Can Do to Live Sustainably

Household Operations:

- Weatherproof your home with insulation and double-paned windows.
- Change your lights and install efficient lighting and appliances.
- Adjust your clothing, not your thermostat.
- Purchase renewable solar, wind, geothermal, and tidal energy where available.
- Install low-flow devices for toilets, showers, and faucets.
- Share tools with neighbors.
- Run full loads in the washing machine and dishwasher.
- Use a clothesline.
- Think of carpenter ants as indicators of wet wood in your house to find and stop leaks.

Waste:

- Reduce: Sell or give away used furniture, clothing, and bicycles and other unneeded items.
- Reuse: Compost food and yard waste for use in the garden.
- Recycle: Paper, cardboard, glass, metal, plastic, batteries, and fluorescent light bulbs.
- Take household hazardous waste to collection days or sites.

Landscape:

- Avoid chemical applications of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers.
- Check with your local Master Gardeners for safe pest and weed management.
- Use compost to fertilize.
- Use mulch in your garden to control weeds and retain moisture.
- Plant drought resistant native vegetation.
- Install drip irrigation if you must water.
- Pick up dog waste.
- Maintain your septic system.
- Chip yard waste rather than burn.
- Don't water your lawn in the summer.

Transportation:

- Drive much less.
- Reduce idling whenever practical.
- Live near work.
- Carpool, bus, bike, or walk.
- Set goals for reducing travel.
- Vacation close to home.
- Combine errands into one trip.

Participate:

- Learn about the local environment.
- Assist local groups involved in sustainability issues.
- Get to know your neighbors.
- Attend town council meetings.
- Vote.
- Run for local office.