

Waste-Wise Word Guide

3R GLOSSARY TERMS

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

3R Hierarchy	Three waste management strategies – reduce, reuse, recycle – listed in order of importance to maximize the potential benefit of a material, while minimizing waste generated.
Reduce	To produce less waste by avoiding waste in the first place.
Reuse	To use an item more than once, or many times over.
Recycle	To transform used material into a product or material that can be used again.
Rethink	To shift the way we look at “waste” that involves a change in manufacturing practices or in our purchasing behaviour to reduce waste at the source.
Recyclable	The capability of a product or material to be recycled into a new product or material.
Closed-Loop Recycling	Used materials are recycled into new products that are easily recycled again, reducing waste sent to the landfill.
Open-Loop Recycling	Used materials are recycled into new products that are not easily recycled again, and may eventually be sent to the landfill.
Post-Consumer Waste	Waste that is generated by the consumer after the product or material has served its intended use.
Pre-Consumer Waste	Waste that is generated through the manufacturing process (also known as post-industrial waste).

RECYCLING SYMBOLS



Mobius loop, known worldwide as the recycling symbol. The way it is displayed has different meanings (see below).



Mobius loop displayed on products indicating that the product or packaging is recyclable, where facilities exist.



Reverse mobius loop displayed on products indicating that the product or packaging contains recycled materials. This symbol is normally accompanied by a percentage referring to the amount of recycled material used.



WASTE

Dump	A disposal site containing a collection of discarded materials.
Landfill	A disposal site where layers of waste and aggregate are built up over time and where engineered leachate and methane controls are in place.
Waste Diversion	Redirecting specific waste streams from waste disposal sites through recycling and composting programs.
Biodegradable	Refers to a material's ability to break down naturally.
Leachate	Liquid that is generated by rainwater and decomposing material that runs or seeps from a waste disposal site.
Methane Gas	Gas produced when organic matter breaks down anaerobically (without oxygen) in a waste disposal site. You can help reduce methane gas by composting (an aerobic process – with oxygen).
Hazardous Waste	Waste that contains hazardous substances such as poisonous, corrosive, flammable and explosive material.
E-Waste	Discarded electronic equipment and material.
Garbage	Discarded material that is considered worthless.

COMPOSTING

Composting	The natural process whereby microorganisms break down organic matter aerobically (with oxygen) into a nutrient-rich, soil-like material.
Organic Waste	Waste material that is living or was once alive and will decompose under the proper conditions.
Decomposition	The process by which organic material breaks down into simpler forms of matter to be used by other organisms.
Backyard Composting	Using a backyard compost bin or heap to allow food and yard waste to break down naturally into nutrient-rich material.
Vermicomposting	Using a bin of red wiggler worms to allow organic waste to breakdown naturally into nutrient-rich material.
Humus	The end result of composting. Dark, crumbly nutrient-rich soil conditioner made up of fully decomposed organic matter.

ENVIRONMENT

Stewardship	A collective responsibility to ensure natural resources are protected and managed for current and future generations.
Sustainability	Progress that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
Biomimicry	Mimicking or taking inspiration from the earth's natural processes and systems in the design of human technology. Composting is an example of how we learn from nature's ability to break down natural materials.
Ecological Footprint	A measure of human demand on the earth that calculates the land and water area required by a human population to replenish resources and absorb wastes.

CONSUMERISM

Consumerism	Society's preoccupation with acquiring consumer goods.
Overconsumption	Consumption of resources beyond their capacity to be renewed.
Greenwashing	Environmental claims that mislead consumers into thinking a product, service, or company is more environmentally friendly than it actually is.
Planned Obsolescence	A product that is designed to become obsolete (unfashionable or unusable) to encourage consumption of subsequent versions of that product.
Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)	A model where producers/manufacturers are typically required, under government regulation, to develop, finance and manage collection and recycling/waste disposal programs for their products.

PLASTIC

Plastic

Synthetic material that is generally derived from petroleum and can be moulded into shape.

BPA-Free

Refers to plastic products that do not contain the potentially harmful material, bisphenol A (BPA).

Resin Identification Codes

A number (1-7) inside of three arrows forming a triangle that is displayed on plastic products to indicate the type of plastic resin used in the manufacture of that product. These codes do not denote that the product is recyclable or made from recycled material.



#1 PET:
Polyethylene Terephthalate
Ex: Beverage containers



#2 HDPE:
High Density Polyethylene
Ex: Juice jugs and detergent bottles



#3 PVC:
Polyvinyl Chloride (Vinyl)
Ex: Piping and credit cards



#4 LDPE:
Low Density Polyethylene
Ex: Grocery bags and zipper bags



#5 PP:
Polypropylene
Ex: Margarine and dairy tubs



#6 PS:
Polystyrene
Ex: Meat trays and foam cups



#7 OTHER:
Other plastics made from a variety of resin types.
Ex: Bacon packaging and ketchup bottles

CERTIFIED LOGOS



EcoLogo: Third-party certified environmental standard logo that was founded by the Government of Canada for environmentally-preferable products.



Forest Stewardship Council Logo: Certification label for paper and wood products that come from responsibly managed forests and verified recycled sources.

INFORMATION

For more information please contact:

Marketing and Public Education Officer
Tel: 709-753-0948
Toll Free: 1-800-901-6672
Fax: 709-753-0974
Email: inquiries@mmsb.nl.ca
Website: www.mmsb.nl.ca

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