ISWA TECHNICAL POLICY NO. 4

WASTE REDUCTION AND MATERIAL USE PRACTICES

IN PRODUCT AND PACKAGING DESIGN

Policy

ISWA supports initiatives by manufacturers, businesses, institutions, governments (states, provinces, and local governments), private sector service providers and individuals to reduce the amount of waste generated at the source (point of generation). ISWA supports initiatives by industry to foster and implement material use practices, which should enhance and promote the longevity, reuse and recyclability of products and packaging to minimize the amount of waste generated through source reduction.

Position

Manufacturers, businesses, institutions, governments and individuals have both individual and collective roles in reducing the amount of waste generated at the source. ISWA takes the following positions on the roles of the respective parties:

Manufacturers and Businesses and Industry

ISWA supports initiatives by industry to implement materials use policies that result in product and packaging designs which strike an optimum balance among economic, environmental and quality considerations (there are other considerations as safety, social) that result in one or more of the following:

- reduction in the weight or volume of consumer product packaging,
- reduction in the levels of toxic constituent concentrations in consumer products and packaging,
- improvement of the rate of recycling of consumer products and packaging,
- extension of the life-span of consumer products,
- actions and initiatives to use materials containing recycled material,
- improvement of the compatibility of discarded materials with waste treatment methods such as biodegradation and/or thermal treatment to minimize emissions to the environment, and
• improvement in consumer habits by advancing their education and understanding of the benefits of recycling.

Manufacturers and businesses are encouraged, through waste audits, to implement waste generation reduction initiatives which:

• address manufacturing processes to identify means to reduce the generation of off-specification products and other wastes, and implement the findings of those waste audits,

• reduce the amount of materials wasted in the manufacturing process,

• prepare actual final products, as well as off-specification and waste product materials to be more readily recyclable,

• plan and implement internal recycling programmes to reduce the amount of waste introduced into the waste stream,

• utilize raw materials with less toxic constituents or no toxic constituents,

• use reusable instead of single-use items,

• purchase products which contain recyclable materials,

• purchase products which reduce the amount of waste generated, and

• adopt business practices which promote less paper use and discarded paper generation.

Provincial and State Governments

Provincial and state governments are encouraged to implement waste generation reduction initiatives which:

• informs manufacturers, businesses, institutions, local governments and individuals about the need for planning and implementing waste reduction programmes,

• encourage businesses and manufacturers to conduct waste audits and plans to implement the findings of those audits,

• consider giving priority to the purchase and use of materials and products with recycled content and which are recyclable after use,

• support pilot waste reduction programmes to demonstrate the efficacy of such programmes and to generate increased support for waste reduction programmes,
• provide information through clearinghouses, or through relationships with existing clearinghouses, about waste reduction programmes, methods and initiatives,

• provide public education about waste reduction.

Local Governments

Local governments are encouraged to implement waste reduction initiatives which:

• foster purchasing habits that minimize the generation of waste, either initially or at the end of the products’ life,

• assist businesses, manufacturers, institutions and individuals to assist them in planning and implementing waste reduction programmes,

• establish alternative programmes for the diversion and utilization of yard waste from all generators, such as special leave-on-lawn programmes and backyard composting programmes,

• consider giving priority to the purchase and use of materials and products with recycled content and which are recyclable after use,

• support reuse programmes,

• stimulate change of shopping practices to reduce the amount of waste generated, and

• provide public education programmes.

Individuals

Individuals are encouraged to implement waste generation reduction initiatives that:

• implement leave-on-lawn grass cutting practices,

• support recycling programmes,

• consider giving priority to the purchase and use of materials and products with recycled content and which are recyclable after use,

• establish backyard composting programmes,

• implement purchasing habits which result in the generation of less wastes,

• donate usable items no longer needed rather than discard them,

• maintain and repair items to extend their useful life, and
support education for children to instill the ethic of the need to reduce the amount and type of waste that is generated.