

Reducing Waste at the Source with Electronics

Why should you consider source reduction and pollution prevention when selecting electronics?

During the manufacture of electronic products, toxic substances are used and hazardous waste is generated. Adopting the mentality to repair products to extend their life, purchase sustainable products, and dispose of them responsibly is a great way to prevent pollution and to minimize the impact on our environment.



In this technology driven world, businesses small and large can play a role in reducing their electronic use and waste impact on the environment. Common electronics used in the workplace include:

- Computer monitors, laptops, desktops, speakers
- Audio and video equipment
- Televisions
- Projectors
- Telephones

Consider Energy Efficient Electronics Before Making a Purchase

The Energy Star® program has certified various products that conserve energy without sacrificing quality or durability. Find certified electronic products⁵ that include:

- Audio/video
- Professional displays
- Set-top boxes and cable boxes
- Slates and tablets
- Telephones
- Televisions

Also, perform an inventory of current electronics before making a new purchase. Determine if certain rooms, offices or cubes are required to have electronics. Consider a sharing program for laptops and tablets for employees that do not use the electronics often. Donate good working electronics that are no longer used. When purchasing electronics, select models that are proven to be durable with good quality. Use multi-function electronic devices.

Repair and Upgrade Instead of Replacing

Repair an electronic device before discarding or recycling it; consider replacing individual components of an electronic device. Upgrade programs and parts before making a new purchase. Electronics with individual components that fail can be refurbished and resold at a lower cost.

If a purchase is necessary, look for electronics that are less toxic, more energy efficient and contain more recycled content. Purchase electronics from companies that offer take-back programs.

Select Products that are EPEAT Registered

Select high performing electronics that meet the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool⁶ (EPEAT) criteria. The benefits of selecting an EPEAT certified electronic are:

- Environmental and financial benefits.
- Selecting a product that addresses the full life-cycle, from design and production to energy use and recycling.
- EPEAT products, in comparison to non-EPEAT products, can reduce 31 million metric tons of greenhouse gases, eliminate 565,142 tons of hazardous waste and reduce solid waste equivalent to 199,051 US household's annual waste.
- EPEAT's products meet the latest Energy Star® specifications.

Dispose of Electronics Waste Responsibly

If the electronic waste must be created, dispose of it responsibly! Recycle your

waste with certified electronics recyclers. See EPA's website on Certified Electronic Recyclers¹ to discover:

- What are certified electronics recyclers?
- What are the benefits of becoming a certified recycler?
- A map of certified electronic recyclers in the United States.

Currently there are two accredited electronics recycling standards:

1. Sustainable Electronics Recycling (SERI) Program -- SERI is a non-profit organization dedicated to the responsible reuse, repair and recycling of electronic products.
2. e-Stewards -- a global team of individuals, institutions, businesses, non-profit organizations and government agencies upholding a safe, ethical and globally responsible standard for e-waste recycling and refurbishment.

To find certified recyclers, go to [SERI's Find R2 Recyclers](#)⁴ or [e-Stewards](#)'s.¹¹ Need further information? See [EPA's Sustainable Management of Electronics webpage](#)¹⁰ to learn more about:

- The life cycle stages of electronics
- Sustainable electronics management
- Benefits of electronics stewardship

Use Available Tools and Resources

Waste Reduction Model⁷ (WARM)

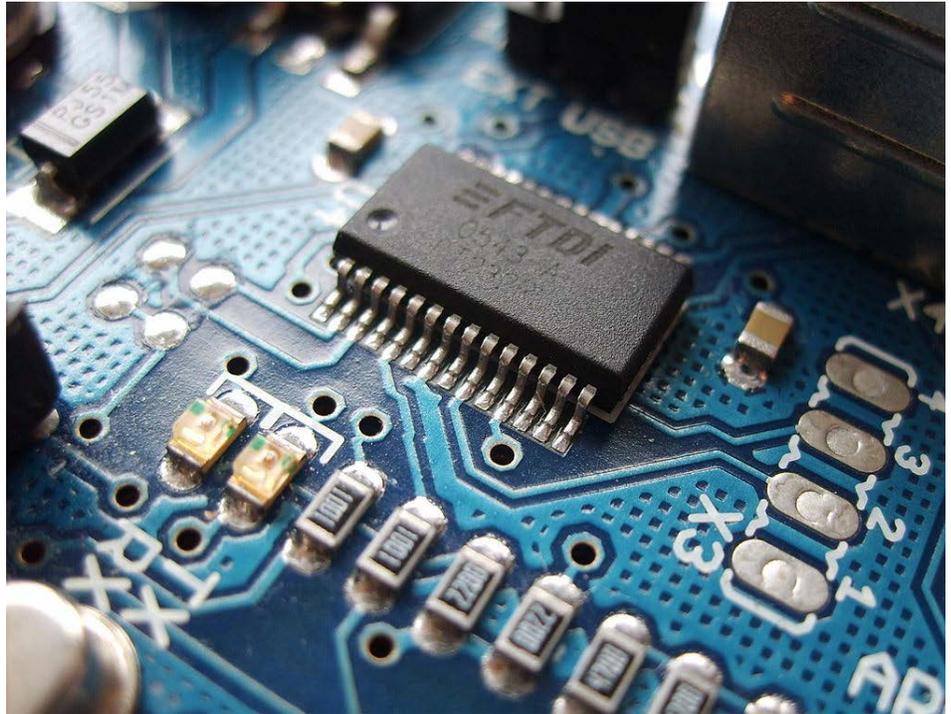
Use the WARM calculator to track and voluntarily report reduced greenhouse gas emissions and energy savings from sustainable electronics management.

Estimating Appliance and Home Energy Calculator⁸

Use the Department of Energy's appliance energy calculator to estimate the energy use of appliances and home electronics used at your business.

e-Stewards⁹

A worldwide team of non-profit organizations, institutions, businesses, government agencies and individuals who hold a globally responsible standard for e-waste recycling and refurbishment.



References

- ¹ [EPA. Certified Electronic Recyclers.](#)
- ² [Sustainable Electronics Recycling International \(SERI\).](#)
- ³ [SERI. Responsible Recycling.](#)
- ⁴ [SERI. Find a Recycler.](#)
- ⁵ [Energy Star. Certified Electronics.](#)
- ⁶ [Electronic Product Assessment Tool.](#)
- ⁷ [EPA. Waste Reduction Model \(WARM\).](#)
- ⁸ [Department of Energy. Estimating Appliance and Home Electronic Energy Use.](#)
- ⁹ [e-Stewards.](#)
- ¹⁰ [EPA. Sustainable Management of Electronics.](#)
- ¹¹ [e-Stewards. Find a Recycler.](#)

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