



# Reducing Environmental Impact

## Overview

Established in 1999 through the passage of Ballot Measure 68, Oregon Corrections Enterprises (OCE) is a semi-independent organization, whose administrator reports to the director of the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC). OCE plays an important role in carrying out Ballot Measure 17, the constitutional mandate to engage male and female adults in custody (AICs) in meaningful work. ***By statute, OCE is funded solely through the sales of its products and services.***

The mission of OCE, in partnership with DOC, is to promote public safety by providing AICs with meaningful work experience in a self-sustaining organization. OCE plays an important role in implementing DOC's Oregon Accountability Model (OAM). The OAM is a cohesive strategy to reduce recidivism and influence AICs to make effective changes, leading to better outcomes. Through the development of positive work ethics and job skills, OCE assists AICs in their transition to realizing their potential as productive citizens, creating positive outcomes, while contributing to society and their families.

## Reducing Environmental Impact

### Core Value Highlight: Innovation

OCE has five core values: integrity, respect, excellence, accountability, and innovation. The value of innovation is designated as follows:

*We seek to develop creative and efficient methods to advance our products and services while reducing costs to government and our impact on the environment.*

Going beyond the typical recycling of cardboard, batteries, plastic containers, and office paper, OCE constantly evaluates its programs to discover additional ways to operate in a more environmentally-friendly manner.

## Reduce (Use of Harmful Chemicals)

### Custodial Cleaning Products

OCE joined the efforts of all Oregon state agencies in switching custodial cleaning products to those less harmful to the environment. This removed harmful chemicals from the air and Oregon waterways, as well as reducing the risk of exposure for those using the products.

### Wood and Wood Finishing

OCE researched alternative products and switched from chemical-based stains to water-based stains and cleaning products. This removed 4.24 tons of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from the air and the risk of respiratory exposure for DOC and OCE employees, those in the OCE training programs, and the general public in close proximity to the affected facilities. Switching to the water-based cleanup/thinners reduced thinner waste by almost one barrel per year, not to mention the reduction in chemicals needed to launder the used rags.

OCE's wood products manufacturing program produces sawdust and falloff solid wood materials from the manufacturing processes. The sawdust is sent to a local recycler that uses the material to create eco-friendly potting soil so that the material is reused. The plywood and hardwood scrap pieces are either donated to the local Salem wood shop program within the City of Salem School District or reused in our soft line chairs and soft line furniture as framing components.

### Printing

By switching from petroleum-based inks to soy-based inks in 2004, the OCE Print Shop reduced the high levels of solvents that leach into the water table when printed material ends up in landfills. Soy-based inks are also easier to remove in the recycling process, thus saving energy as well. While the new inks are slower to dry, they result in brighter, more vibrant colors – a win-win for everyone. In 2011, the process for plate printing went digital. This chemical free process eliminated the heavy metal and chemical hazardous waste prevalent in the previous process.

## **Reuse (Raw Material Falloff)**

### **Trailer Refurbishing**

OCE offers trailer refurbishing services. Through this offering, customers like Oregon Parks and Recreation are able to save money by having a trailer repaired instead of replaced. OCE is able to use falloff material from other projects, reducing the amount of scrap sent to recycling facilities and landfills.

### **Fabric**

OCE sewing programs accumulate falloff material from production lines. Most of the falloff is used at the Coffee Creek Correctional facility to create marketing spiffs and small production items.

### **Laundry Water Usage**

Even before OCE became a semi-independent agency, it operated laundries in DOC for many years. In the 1990s, an AIC in one such facility used his knowledge and skills to propose a water reclamation system. Working with the institution Physical Plant staff, the system was tested and put into place. Inspired by the success of the system, OCE's other laundries began updating equipment and installing reclamation systems. All OCE laundries now have water reclamation systems, the largest facility utilizes tunnel washing machines recognized as top of the industry for water reclamation.

## **Recycle (Non-reusable Materials)**

### **Metal Scrap**

One advantage of metal working is the ability to reuse falloff in multiple projects, but, as with all metal fabrication shops, OCE projects can result in fall off which cannot be reused – around 500 – 600 lbs. per month. In addition, the Print Shop sends out used aluminum printing plates every month. In such cases, OCE sells the scrap to local recyclers who return the metals to foundries to be melted down and made into usable product.

### **Scanning Program**

The OCE Scanning Program converts paper records into searchable digital files for its customers. While this benefits the customers with more efficient records request response times and less warehousing costs, it can result in countless pallets of paper no longer needed. Upon request, OCE prepares and sends the scanned papers to recyclers who place the product back into production streams, thus reducing waste in Oregon landfills.



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