

DMA Advice for Protecting the Environment & Your Bottom Line

– Global Warming, Climate Change, and Waste: How To Lessen Your Company’s Impact –

Climate change is a serious international environmental issue. Scientists have identified that our health, agriculture, water resources, forests, wildlife and coastal areas are vulnerable to the changes that global warming may bring. This fact sheet discusses how members of the direct marketing community can lessen their organization’s impact on global warming and climate change through waste prevention and recycling.

Overview of Greenhouse Gases (GHG) & Climate Change

The Earth’s surface temperature has risen by about one degree Fahrenheit in the past century, with accelerated warming during the past two decades. Increasing emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) –primarily carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide – through the combustion of fossil fuels, and from various agricultural and industrial processes, are altering the chemical composition of the atmosphere.

The Climate-and-Waste Connection

Every stage of a product’s lifecycle—extraction, manufacturing, distribution, use and disposal—indirectly or directly contributes to the concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere and affects the global climate. Waste prevention and recycling—jointly referred to as waste reduction—offer significant potential for decreasing GHG emissions.

Together, waste prevention and recycling:

- Save energy and reduce emissions from energy consumption.
 - Manufacturing goods from recycled materials typically requires less energy than producing goods from virgin materials. When people reuse things, or when products are made with less material, less energy is needed to extract, transport, and process raw materials and to manufacture products.
- Reduce emissions from incinerators.
- Reduce methane emissions from landfills.
- Increase storage of carbon in trees.

Opportunities for Minimizing Waste & for Recycling

- For strategies you can implement immediately in your workplace to conserve energy and better manage utilities; to reduce waste; and to increase recycling efforts, please review DMA Alert: Source Reduction, Recycling & Waste Management in the Workplace at www.the-dma.org/environment.
- For strategies to reduce wasted mail, please review DMA Alert: Mailing List Management: A Key to Waste Reduction at www.the-dma.org/environment.

- To participate in DMA’s nationwide industry “Recycle Please” campaign that seeks to stimulate residential recycling of catalogs and direct mail, please visit www.recycleplease.org.
- To participate in EPA’s WasteWise Program, please visit www.epa.gov/wastewise. EPA’s WasteWise Program helps organizations reduce their impact on global climate change through waste reduction. WasteWise provides technical assistance for waste prevention, recycling and buying recycled—all of which contribute to lowering GHG emissions.

For more information

- Please visit the EPA’s Climate Change Web site at www.epa.gov/climatechange/. The site includes the latest scientific information and a listing of U.S. government programs that are actively addressing climate change. Visitors to the site will find educational tools and information to help understand their personal impact on climate change, (e.g., a calculator to estimate their “carbon footprint” – the greenhouse gas emissions produced in the course of everyday activities).