

Chintan
Commonsense
Series 2019

ZERO WASTE OFFICE

A USER'S HANDBOOK



ZERO WASTE

COMMONSENSE GUIDE

FOR ZERO WASTE AND SINGLE-USE PLASTICS IN OFFICES

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank Bharati Chaturvedi (Chintan) and Chitra Mukherjee (Chintan), as well as Lovisa Mehrotra (intern Chintan) and Meenakshi Nath whose inputs helped us in compiling the guide.

ABOUT CHINTAN ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND ACTION GROUP

We are a registered non-profit organization with a vision of inclusive, sustainable, and equitable growth for all. Our mission is to reduce ecological footprints and increase environmental justice through systematic change brought about through partnerships, capacity building at the grass roots, advocacy and research, and sustainable, scalable models on the ground.



Ministry of Environment, Forest
and Climate Change

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INTRODUCTION

More and more organizations try to reduce their waste, and protect the environment. It is not easy. What to keep? What to throw away? It is always a challenge, and administration departments are not sure.

This handbook has been created for organisations in order to better manage plastic waste, and move towards Zero Waste. It is based on practical insights and the laws: Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 and Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016.

It is rather easy to use this guide. You have to simply look at each sub-section, and see if the various parts apply to you. If they do, then simply look at the alternatives. Most of them are easy and generic across India, so it is possible to source them. **The column Y/N is for you to fill in as a baseline for your organization.**

This guide offers a comprehensive list of different plastic items that may be frequently used in your office. Use this guide to set a baseline for your organisation in order to progressively reduce the use of plastic. Look at the offered options to see what plastic you can remove from your office. This handbook will push you to what you may feel are extremes. You may feel some ideas are not practical. Don't worry. Do what you can.

STATIONERY

STATUS	Y/N	IF YES, CONSIDER TO SWITCH TO
 <p>Paper envelopes with plastic lining</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlined paper envelopes
 <p>Rubber bands</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reuse
 <p>Plastic files</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thick paper files or cardboard files • Go digital and save the files
 <p>Plastic coated paper clips</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metallic clips with no plastic
 <p>Stapler</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper clips instead. See above
 <p>Writing supplies (single-use pens)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refillable pens or pencils • No single-use pens

 <p>Whiteboard and marker</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackboard and chalk
 <p>Notebooks</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy notebooks made with recycled paper • Ensure they are not covered in plastic
 <p>Tape</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Or masking tape instead of clear plastic tape
 <p>Post-its</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use sparingly
 <p>Plastic board pins</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metallic board pins
 <p>Pen and paper stands</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metallic/ wooden/ paper pen and paper stands
 <p>Stationery for conferences</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage people to carry own notebooks and pens to avoid unnecessary consumption of stationery • Use loose papers for taking notes instead of small booklets

PANTRY AND FOOD

Often, simple items like cookies and namkeens come packed in plastics, even in those that cannot be recycled. We tend to serve several edibles and drinks in single-use plastics too. This section helps you eliminate this problem. Take the time to talk to your team, to explain why you are making these changes, because people are sensitive to food and drinks. You can also make one shift at a time, so that people adjust and welcome the initiatives.

STATUS	Y/N	IF YES, CONSIDER TO SWITCH TO
 PET water bottles		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide filtered or mineral water and re-usable glasses• Encourage people to carry own steel bottles
 Tea bags		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cannot be composted as the bags are not fully biodegradable.• Move to tea leaves
 Coffee machine		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid any coffee filters or pods• Alternative is to use a French press



Ketchup and other sachets (single-use)

- Make bottles of condiments available



Jam and achar plastic packets

- Make bottles of condiments available



Straws

- No straws
- Where essential, use paper straws



Biscuits (packed in multilayered packaging)

- Go to a local old-fashioned bakery
- Ask for products in paper bags



Biscuits in single packets

- Avoid



Chips/snacks (packed in multilayered packaging)

- Avoid
- If essential, buy chips in clear plastic bags
- Buy chana or other snacks without plastic packaging



Disposable plates

- Create a crockery bank in office
- Let everyone know cutlery is available (for small rate)
- Ban disposables via office order or policy



Disposable glasses for water

- Create a crockery bank in office
- Let everyone know cutlery is available (for small rate)
- Ban disposables via office order or policy



Disposable glasses for beverages

- Create a crockery bank in office
- Let everyone know cutlery is available (for small rate)
- Ban disposables via office order or policy



Disposable katoris

- Create a crockery bank in office
- Let everyone know cutlery is available (for small rate)
- Ban disposables via office order or policy



Disposable cutlery

- Create a crockery bank in office
- Let everyone know cutlery is available (for small rate)
- Ban disposables via office order or policy



Plastic water bottles

- Replace with steel flasks and glass
- Make refilling facilities available (including water filtration systems and coolers)
- Advertise so everyone is aware of this



Cling film

- Cover the food with a reusable plate or a cloth napkin



Paper napkins on a plate on which cookies etc. are served

- Unnecessary



Food ordered in is packed in plastics

- Establish relationship with local vendors to deliver in tiffin boxes
- For smaller offices: take your own vessel and bring back food



Food ordered in contains plastic spoons, sachets of ketchup etc.

- Ensure that the guard checks for these; refuses to let them in
- Ask your colleagues to specify that no condiments etc. should be sent



Leftover food and peels that are thrown away

- Set up a composting unit
- These days they do not even smell



Plastic dustbins and dust pans

- Switch to steel dustbins and dust pans



Plastic coasters

- Switch to jute, cloth or wooden coasters

CELEBRATIONS

All offices and teams must take out time to celebrate. But must they pollute in the process? Often, items that seem harmless are actually made of plastics that cannot be recycled. Our best bet is to recognize them, eliminate them or replace them with more benign alternatives. A celebration that is greener also ends up being useful because it helps several employees see for themselves that change is possible, and what it looks like.

STATUS	Y/N	IF YES, CONSIDER TO SWITCH TO
 Balloons		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not use• They are not recyclable and not bio-degradable.
 Buntings		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure they are only made of paper
 Plastic rope		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use jute rope, or sutli• Ask your team and vendors to source it, if you cannot find it



Vinyl banners

- Do not use
- They are not recyclable and not bio-degradable
- Try using canvas if you can, or simply, cloth for a more simpler look



Ribbons

- Most are no longer biodegradable, which means that you have to give them up
- Use jute rope



Shiny wrapping paper used for gifts

- Avoid packing gifts
- If you have to: use paper or newspaper



Plastic mementos and trophies given

- Just give certificates
- Trophies are dumped and wasted



Flowers on the dias and for decoration

- Minimize usage
- Compost
- Do not accept colored flowers (e.g. bright blue) as composting them will bring toxins in the compost

WASHROOMS

Washrooms are spaces where you can not only make change, but educate employees about the change. They will learn why the change, and perhaps, even feel inspired to make some changes at home. Don't forget to put up posters to explain your shifts, so everyone becomes part of your green steps.

STATUS	Y/N	IF YES, CONSIDER TO SWITCH TO
 Wet wipes		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use cloth towels• Get a local dhobi to wash them if you like
 Dettol and other hand soap procured in sachets		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use large bottles• Refill them
 Plastic bin liners		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use two sheets of newspaper• Train the cleaning staff
 Toilet papers		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use jet spray instead

VEHICLES

We tend to acknowledge that significant parts of a car are made of plastics, but we don't realize how much plastic we additionally put inside a car. Here are some ways to prevent them. Mind you, this part of an organization's effort to go zero waste requires much more work if the office is bigger. To make it successful, involve your teams and find ways to help them monitor it, enjoy it and spread it around.

STATUS	Y/N	IF YES, CONSIDER TO SWITCH TO
 Plastic bottles of water in cars		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide steel flasks • Wash with hot water inside and around mouth area • Etch in the car number on the flask
 Paper tissue boxes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide towels instead • Wash them weekly (use local dhobi)
 Wet wipes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unnecessary
 Decorations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid all plastic and thermocol decorations
 Cloth bags for shopping		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep cloth bags in car for employees to borrow • Make sure to put up a system for bags to be returned (or paid for)

DOCUMENTS

We waste an enormous amount of paper. Government offices are one example who are forced to burn much paper. Fortunately, solutions abound. Do not be afraid of composting your wet paper instead of burning it. Remember, poor waste handling is an acknowledged cause of air pollution.

STATUS	Y/N	IF YES, CONSIDER TO SWITCH TO
 Do you burn confidential documents?		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shred the paper, and compost, ideally in a drum composter
 Print outs		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Print double sided• Create a space for sharing documents to minimize repeated printouts of the same document

E-WASTE

We know that e-waste is highly toxic, if poorly disposed. We also know that India is the world's 5th largest producer of e-waste. Every office and organization must take action in regard to two types of e-waste, and ensure all e-waste is disposed with an authorized collector and recyclers. The two types of e-waste are those which the organization uses, such as computers and projectors and those which employees use, such as mobile phones, chargers and adapters. Hold an e-waste drive in your office so every employee is aware of green options.

STATUS	Y/N	IF YES, CONSIDER TO SWITCH TO
 <p>E-waste such as: Laptops, Mobiles, Wires and Adapters, Projectors, Printers, Air Conditioners, Room Heaters</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Buy long life products• Maintain these properly• Make sure disposal is safe (leave to recyclers)• Tie up with an e-waste recycler/PRO as per E-waste Management Rules, 2016

The posters given below may be used by the organization as motivators and reinforcers. Write to us for soft copies and space for the logo of your organization. Please contact us for more information and guidance.

ANNEXURE

FOR ZERO WASTE AND SINGLE-USE PLASTICS IN OFFICES

Play your part in beating plastic pollution!

1 MILLION PLASTIC BOTTLES PURCHASED EVERY MINUTE AROUND THE WORLD

Send for Recycling

Repurpose after Reusing

91% OF ALL PLASTIC IS NOT RECYCLED

Buy in Bulk

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Segregating your waste at home

Organic Waste (Green Bin): Kitchen waste, vegetable peels, fruit and vegetable scraps, garden waste, animal manure, etc.

Dry Waste (Blue Bin): Paper, cardboard, cloth, plastic, metal, glass, etc.

Plastic Waste (Red Bin): Plastic bottles, containers, etc.

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PLASTIC TICKING BOMB!

By 2050, an estimated 10% of seabirds would have ingested plastic.

Marine litter harms over 600 marine species.

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Plastic or Ocean?

By 2050 there could be more **PLASTIC** in the **OCEAN** than **FISH!**

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WHY IS E-WASTE?

WHY IS IT HARMFUL?

WHY IS IT HANDLED PROPERLY?

ENVIRONMENTALLY HARMFUL TOXINS

GREEN ENERGY

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Real cost of Ordering food

- Paper Receipts
- Fuel Consumption
- Single use Plastic cutlery/crockery
- Single use Plastic Bag

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