

# Waste Overview

Our planet can no longer support the present consumption habits and environmental damage brought about by its five billion people. In a mad rush for progress, we have helped change productive land into desert, produced acid rain, dangerously increased the Earth's temperature, depleted the ozone layer, contaminated food chains and water supplies with chemicals, and filled the land with piles of garbage.

The time has come for each person to do his or her part to help rectify these problems. Most people will ask how can one person help to fix an entire planet. The answer is to fix your own little piece of it. Small changes by many people add up to big changes. One of the best ways to help is by being less wasteful.

**Waste**  
**is the discarded or unwanted by-products**  
**of human activities.**  
**It can be biodegradable or non-biodegradable and occur in**  
**any of the three physical states: solid, liquid, or gaseous.**

Waste uses energy, renewable and non-renewable resources, land and money. It creates pollution and pollution related problems (e.g., global warming). Industrialized nations and countries with high standards of living are the biggest waste producers. Canadians are number one in the world; each person makes, on average, one tonne per year.

The time has come for each of us to look at the waste we generate. Through careful re-evaluation of our actions and buying habits, we can improve our homes. If enough people participate, an entire community could be changed. Enough communities would improve a country and enough countries, the planet itself. There is only one Earth.

Many intricate pieces make up this planet. We must clean or repair the piece each of us has changed. Being the best "wasters" is not a title or position to be proud of.

