

University Policy: Zero Waste

Policy Category: Sustainability

Subject: Zero Waste

Responsible Executive: Chief Financial Officer, Vice President & Treasurer

Office(s) Responsible for Review of this Policy: Sustainability, Facilities Management

Related University Policies: American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment; Green Building Policy; Green Cleaning Policy; Sustainable Purchasing Policy; Talloires Declaration

I. SCOPE

This policy applies to all University departments.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

Consistent with American University's strategic goal to "Act on our values through Social Responsibility and Service," and to facilitate implementation of our existing sustainability policies (as referenced above), the purpose of this policy is to protect and restore our environment by managing material flows through the university and manage waste/recycling processes that: improve energy, water, and material efficiency; utilize renewable materials; enable the University to attain carbon-neutrality or net positive renewable energy production; eliminate waste, especially hazardous materials; enhance the physical campus environment; and protect and enhance the health of the University community.

III. DEFINITIONS

Batteries: Includes single-use and/or rechargeable batteries used in radios, phones, cameras, computers and other dry-cell types of batteries.

Construction and Demolition Debris: For the purposes of this policy, the term *Construction and Demolition Debris* includes, at a minimum: building components and structures (wall studs, insulation, doors, windows), panels, attached finishes (drywall, trim, ceiling panels), carpet and other flooring material, adhesives, sealants, paints and coatings. Furniture, fixtures and equipment; and mechanical, electrical and plumbing components, and specialty items such as elevators, are not included in this definition.

Durable Goods: For the purposes of this policy, the term *Durable Goods* includes, at a minimum: office equipment (computers, monitors, copiers, printers, fax machines); appliances (refrigerators,

dishwashers, water coolers); external power adapters; furniture; televisions and other audiovisual equipment.

Source Reduction: reduces the amount of unnecessary material brought to campus, for example excess product packaging such as disposable, single-use water bottles.

Universal Waste: EPA regulated hazardous wastes, including batteries, pesticides, mercury-containing equipment and lamps. Except where noted, the diversion rates in this policy are for nonhazardous waste.

US Green Building Council (USGBC) LEED Standard: is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to promoting cost-efficient and energy-saving green buildings through the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building certification program. LEED is a voluntary, consensus-based national rating system for buildings designed, constructed and operated for improved environmental and human health performance, addressing all building types, and emphasizing state-of-the-art strategies in: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials and resources selection, and indoor environmental quality.

Waste: comprises all materials that flow from campus to final disposal, for example paper, yard waste, food scraps, and plastics. In LEED, waste refers to all materials that are capable of being diverted from campus buildings' waste stream through waste reduction.

Waste Diversion: is a management activity that disposes of waste other than through incineration or the use of landfills, for example reuse and recycling.

Waste Reduction: includes source reduction and waste diversion through reuse, recycling and organics diversion such as composting or anaerobic digestion.

IV. POLICY

The University will strive to send zero waste to landfills and incinerators as regional infrastructure and technology allows.

- By January 2016, establish a Zero Waste Project Team co-chaired by Facilities Management and Office of Sustainability, to include: Project Planning and Management (PPM), Procurement and Contracts, Auxiliary Services, Housing and Dining Programs, Housekeeping, Athletics, Student Government representative, faculty, and other key University stakeholders as necessary. The charge of this team is to engage and lead the AU community in maximizing the effectiveness of the practices currently in place that support zero waste.
- By January 2017, the Zero Waste Project Team will develop a zero waste plan to describe waste reduction and diversion strategies. As part of this zero waste plan, the team will prepare and submit FY18-19 budget recommendations identifying the related cost to achieve zero waste. This zero waste plan will include goals not limited to:
 - Define Zero Waste as related to ongoing consumables, durable goods, construction & demolition debris, and other categories as identified by the Zero Waste Project Team

- Track and audit waste metrics
- Develop strategies to improve sustainable purchasing as related to material waste, waste reduction, and waste diversion
- Educate, train, and engage the community
- By January 2017, the Zero Waste Project Team will provide annual reports to the Vice President of Finance and Treasurer with the end goal of communicating progress to the campus community.

V. FREQUENCY OF REVIEW AND UPDATE

Any party affected by this Policy may initiate review and update at any time. Facilities Management and the Office of Sustainability will initiate review and update not more than three years from the effective date, or date of last review or update, whichever is most recent.

VI. EFFECTIVE DATE AND REVISIONS:

This Policy is effective as of September 8, 2015

Last reviewed and revised on July 21, 2015.