

## Home management



Household tasks like managing mail, paying bills, working from home, and generally running your household result in items like paper, office supplies, or electronics to dispose of. Instead of just figuring out disposal, you can often reduce or donate items from this aspect of your life.

### Reduce paper waste

Try to reduce the amount of paper you get in the mail, and don't print things like emails or driving directions if you can safely access them on a device. Practice paper reduction habits such as switching your printer default to double-sided printing, using single-sided pages again if you're only printing one page, and using scrap paper for notes instead of buying new pads of stationery.

#### Junk mail

To reduce junk mail, the first step is prevention. Be cautious with how often you share your contact information, and make a habit of reading privacy policies. Check online for services that will get you off national mailing lists. You can also check the piece of mail for instructions on unsubscribing. For example, Yellow Pages has directions on how to opt out of receiving their phone book. For more in-depth steps on reducing your junk mail, see the Hold the Mail brochure at [hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/business/work-with-hennepin-county/environmental-literature/hold-the-mail](http://hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/business/work-with-hennepin-county/environmental-literature/hold-the-mail).

#### Bills

Instead of getting paper bills, switch to online statements and bill paying. Just remember to practice safe password habits. Create a strong, memorable password and change it regularly to keep your information secure. If you have trouble remembering passwords, you can use an app that stores them so you don't have a paper copy sitting around for someone to find.

#### Shredded paper

Be mindful of the paper that you are shredding. Shredded paper is a nuisance at recycling sorting facilities because even bagged shredded paper can break open and fly off of sorting belts or contaminate other recycling streams. Only shred when it is absolutely necessary. Go paperless when possible or cut out the confidential portion of a document and recycle the rest. For the paper you do want to shred, it's best to bring it to a community shredding event or take it to a business that will shred and destroy your documents (usually for a fee). Paper shredded at an event or business is delivered directly to a paper recycler, avoiding the issues at recycling sorting facilities. The following businesses will shred and destroy your documents for a fee:

- FedEx
- Office Depot
- Shred Nations
- Staples

### Office supplies and electronics

There are many options for office supplies and electronics. Recycle or refill used ink cartridges and donate usable supplies to school programs or nonprofits. Try to reuse small items like paper clips, rubber bands, binder clips and portfolios. When your printer or computer dies or you buy a new one, recycle your old one at a retailer that accepts used electronics or at a drop-off facility. You can also often replace components with upgraded versions instead of replacing the whole thing. Volunteers at Fix-It Clinics may be able to help you fix or rebuild many different electronic gadgets.

The environmental impact of smart phones comes mostly from the manufacturing process. Avoid buying new versions as frequently and instead use your phone as long as possible, making necessary updates or repairs to keep it functioning.