

According to Maritime Aquarium, over 50 billion plastic bottles were used by Americans and over 70% ended up as litter in the environment. Some of those plastic bottles end up in our oceans and have detrimental effects on that ecosystem. Today, the harmful effects are often overlooked and undereducated. Through the help of Solid waste managers across America, there are many opportunities they offer that help alleviate the damaging effects of plastic pollution. As producers and handlers of this toxic waste, our responsibility is to educate ourselves on these harmful effects, the opportunities that Solid Waste Management offers to help, and guidelines on minimizing waste.

Plastic pollution within our oceans is causing detrimental effects and they are frequently overlooked today. Plastic pollution is the relocation of improperly disposed plastics into the environment. Plastic within the ocean never fully decomposes and just multiplies into smaller pieces that travel quickly. Because of their crumb-like size, they easily stick around with plankton at the bottom of the food chain. The toxic microplastics are then so easily consumed by sea animals and work their way up the food chain. Microplastics contain harmful chemicals and kill thousands of sea animals each year. In the coming years, if not contained, microplastics are going to take over our oceans and decrease the living population.

Within manufacturing, their responsibility is to minimize waste and meet EPA regulations and guidelines. Manufacturers have many responsibilities from product design to disposal. One of those is educating themselves on the EPA regulations and how to reduce the harmful chemicals of plastic being distributed into the environment. Under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), the EPA regulates industrial, household, and manufacturing waste by developing methods of managing solid waste. As Manufacturers, their overall responsibility is to reduce, reuse, and recycle. They need to reduce the amount of waste and harmful chemicals as much as possible through their products. It is also important that they reuse materials and practice recycling as much as possible.

As producers within our communities, our responsibility is to educate ourselves on the opportunities that Solid Waste Management offers to help our environment and utilize those practices. Through Solid Waste Management, there are many opportunities to help minimize waste such as composting, landfilling, and recycling. The easiest one of these is recycling. Furthermore, through the utilization of recycling, we can help the environment by cleaning and reusing plastic throughout our community. Recycling is one of the biggest and most effective ways people can help out our environment. Recycling is offered all across America and it hasn't been easier to recycle plastic. There are millions of recycling bins across America. Through the practice of recycling, plastics are received and processed where they are sorted, cleaned, and processed into new reusable materials. After processing, recyclables are repurposed in a safe and beneficial way by creating recycled egg cartons, bottles, and even playgrounds in communities for children. Increasing the amount of recycling throughout America will help alleviate the waste that ends up in our environment and our oceans.

Overall, As consumers and producers, we have the responsibility of protecting and preserving our environment. Our job is to educate ourselves on the potential toxins and the opportunities around us that help contain them. To protect our environment, we need to utilize those practices such as composting, landfilling, and especially recycling. In the manufacturing field, we need to keep up with EPA regulations and guidelines. Manufacturers should follow the guidelines to reduce, reuse, and recycle.