

Why should we recycle?

By Karen Bryan

Recycling is vital for many reasons that affect our future. It's a simple way to protect the environment and stimulate our national economy. There are many reasons to recycle. For example, recycling helps to protect wildlife habitat and natural resources. Before you throw paper in the trash, consider if it's recyclable or not. Recycling helps to preserve trees by reducing the need for new paper, thus preserving natural resources and wildlife. Using recycled white paper creates 75% less air pollution and 35% less water pollution than making new paper. Recycling paper also reduces the amount of garbage in landfills and saves energy compared to manufacturing new paper from raw materials. At MCBH, paper with personally identifiable information (PII) or designated for official use only (FOUO) must be cross-shredded, and it is not recycled. Despite that, the MCBH Recycling Center processed almost five tons of recyclable paper last year.



Recycling helps save money. When you finish a bottle of water or a can of soda, remember to recycle it. Selling materials that are recycled offsets the additional costs of processing and collecting the recycled materials. Recycling materials is a cheaper option for most American communities compared to the cost of disposing recyclable materials in landfills. Last year, MCBH recycled 5,065 lbs. of glass bottles, 424 lbs. of aluminum cans, and 396 lbs. of plastic bottles. In the near future, recycling trailers will be located at the Marine Mart and other convenient locations

where individuals can easily place recyclables in the appropriate containers. The trailers should help increase MCBH's recycling efforts and numbers in the future. In the photo, aluminum cans are collected from various stations around MCBH and prepped for shipping to a recycler.

We recycle to reduce pollution. Recycle or repurpose items such as coffee cans, jars, newspapers, plastic bottles, milk jugs, and clean, corrugated cardboard boxes. Recycling steel cans helps to avoid additional mining for metals to make cans and drilling for oil to make plastic. Using recycled cans produces 95% less air and 97% less water pollution than making them from raw materials. MCBH recycled more than 341,000 lbs. of steel last year which included steel cans from the chow halls such as those in the photo.





Save energy when you recycle. The US only recycles about 30% of its waste each year; however, they save 12 billion gallons of gasoline and greatly reduce greenhouse gases through recycling. Producing new products from raw materials uses more energy than making products from recycled materials, so companies reduce their energy consumption by using recycled materials. In the photo, recyclable metals have been separated and staged at the Base Recycling Center until there's enough to ship to a recycler. Last year, MCBH recycled almost 28,000 lbs. of

miscellaneous aluminum, about 8,500 lbs. of stainless steel, and over 43,000 lbs. of copper.

You can help reduce landfill waste by repurposing and reusing items. When the garbage truck comes to pick up your rubbish, they take it to the landfill. Landfills fill up over time and can harm the environment through ground water pollution. When we recycle more, we avoid sending things to the landfill that may take hundreds of years to break down. Cardboard is one of the most commonly recycled items never sent to the landfill at MCBH unless it is dirty (i.e. pizza boxes). MCBH recycled over 445,000 lbs. of cardboard last year.



We've ordered 36 new slotted cardboard bins to place around MCBH and at a units' request, so recycling cardboard will be more convenient. In the photo, cardboard is delivered to the MCBH Recycling Center and sorted before being prepared to ship to a recycler.



Recycling creates jobs. For each job at an incinerator or landfill, there are 10 jobs in recycling and 25 jobs in manufacturing based upon recycling. The recycling industry currently has more workers than the US auto industry. So, fill up those recycling bins folks! In this photo, recycle center staff process a shipment of cardboard (pictured from left to right: Chad Fukinaga, Joe Lapera, Gary Reavis, and Jovita Ambrosia). For more information about the Recycling Center at MCBH, visit:

<https://www.mcbhawaii.marines.mil/Offices-Staff/S-4-Installations-Environment-Logistics/Environmental/Recycling-and-Solid-Waste/>.