
Environmental Fact Sheet



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY REGION 10

December 1998

1998 Evergreen Award For Pollution Prevention

IKEA Home Furnishings

Renton, Washington

The Environmental Protection Agency's 1998 Evergreen Award for Pollution Prevention honors the environmental efforts of the IKEA home furnishing store of Renton, Washington. IKEA's commitment to safeguarding the land, water and air resources makes the company a deserving recipient of this recognition.

IKEA is a global retail furniture corporation operating 136 stores in 28 countries; in 1994, IKEA opened its only privately-held franchise store in Renton, Washington. The 148,600 square-foot Renton facility employs 350 people, and is the focus for this 1998 Evergreen Award.

Pollution Prevention Success

Since 1991, IKEA has ensured that the company causes as little negative impact as possible on the environment through its retail activities. Both the corporate IKEA and Renton-IKEA stores engage in various unique initiatives to reduce pollution:

- o Renton-IKEA participates in a local energy conservation program to upgrade lights at the facility; the facility reduced its energy usage by approximately 213,200 kilowatt-hours per year, representing \$12,060 in annual energy cost savings.
- o To conserve paper and reduce pollution, corporate IKEA reduced the size of their catalogue to 4" x 5.5", and prints only on non-chlorine bleached paper.
- o To conserve landfill and disposal costs, IKEA's "As Is" program salvages returned furniture items for spare parts rather than ship goods back to the manufacturer or discard them. Employees reassemble the products to be sold "As Is". The IKEA-Green Program estimates that this program prevents the land filling of approximately 1,000 tons of solid waste per year.
- o Taking this program one step further, IKEA-Renton actually redesigns and rebuilds returned or damaged items and resells them as "Green As-Is" items. This program reduces the store's wood waste by 80-85% with an estimated cost savings per week of over \$1,000 in disposal costs.
- o Through the Holiday "Rent a Tree--Plant a Tree" program, IKEA encourages customers to rent a 6' fir tree for a small deposit and fee; after the holiday, customers return the tree, get their deposit back and IKEA mulches the tree. Resulting compost is either kept by the customer or given to the local municipality; in conjunction with the National Arbor Day Foundation, IKEA then plants another tree in its place.

Commitment to Environmental Quality

IKEA's Environmental Policy, adopted by its Board of Directors in 1991, calls for the company to "strive to minimize any possible damaging effects to the environment which may result as a consequence of our activities."

The company's corporate environmental action plan is called "Green Steps," which is based upon four intended actions/conditions posed in the form of questions:

- 1) Is the company systematically reducing its dependency on mining and non-renewable sources?
- 2) Is the company reducing the use of long-lasting, unnatural substances?
- 3) Is the company reducing its encroachment on nature and its functions?
- 4) Is the company reducing unnecessary use of resources?

To ensure this policy is followed, IKEA provides training to new employees, and regularly provides co-workers with clear and up-to-date environmental information. The company also established an internal Environment Council, and all business plans and reports describe environmental measures and costs pertaining to the Green Steps.

Environmental Leadership

IKEA is a leader in setting high standards for its products, particularly environmental standards. For IKEA, this means manufacturing so that materials, technology and transportation have the least damaging effect on the environment. IKEA openly demonstrates its commitment to pollution prevention, and encourages other businesses to follow suit.

In 1995, IKEA received the *Business in the Green Award* from the King County Solid Waste Department's "Green Works" Program; in September 1998, IKEA was upgraded to a "Distinguished Green Works Member".

**For more information about IKEA's environmental program, contact
Todd Swan, IKEA Green, at (425) 656-2980, extension 3060.**

The Evergreen Award for Pollution Prevention

EPA's *Evergreen Award* recognizes outstanding pollution prevention efforts within all sectors of the greater Pacific Northwest business community.

For more information about EPA Region 10's
Evergreen Award for Pollution Prevention, contact:

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