

Lessening Your Footprint With Environmentally Sound Refurbished Furniture

It sounds complicated, but you can make a difference as a consumer and a company with your buying power. Office Furniture NOW! has been reducing the amount of solid waste – including hazardous waste – that has been going to the landfill for years by selling refurbished office furniture.

Pre-owned office furniture - including chairs, filing cabinets, desks and cubicles can have a new life with minor repair and be kept out of the landfill. Reusing office furniture as is or buying refurbished office furniture (pre-owned office furniture that has been upgraded with new fabric, paint and/or accessories) is a financially, aesthetically and environmentally wise option.

Re-manufacturing just 40 cubicles diverts one tractor-trailer load of furniture from a landfill. Since our company began in 1997, we have resold over 12,284 as is or refurbished cubicles.



Office Furniture NOW! is a resource for businesses seeking to sell the furniture they no longer need and a source for them to buy replacement furniture that a business may have outgrown. For example, when Whole Foods built its new corporate headquarters, we bought their used workstations, which were then resold into a new workplace life to 29 different companies.

The office furniture business is a bulky business. A task chair takes up about 15 cubic feet of space; a desk suite takes up about 100 cubic feet. There is a huge amount of cardboard and packaging materials that arrives with each new desk or chair. Reuse and resale re-establishes the balance by giving usable furniture a new life and lessening the landfill impact. Office Furniture NOW! continues to do its part:

1. We reduce the volume of trash we take to the landfill.

- When we have no choice but to send a piece of office furniture to the landfill, we first compact this solid waste with our own compactor. By doing this, we reduce the mass of the office furniture to 25% of its original volume. Since opening our doors in 1997, Office Furniture NOW! has kept approximately 29,000 cubic feet of solid waste out of the landfill through our waste compacting efforts.
- We responsibly recycle whenever we can. We compact metal and sell it to a commercial recycler and we recycle packaging materials (cardboard, foam and shrink wrap) from new office furniture that we buy and resell.

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Recycling office furniture reduces the amount of new office furniture that must be produced, reducing air pollution and greenhouse gases from these manufacturing processes.

2. We divert materials from the landfill by selling used office furniture, either “as is” or “refurbished.”

- The environmental problems created by office furniture are many. The industry trade group, OFDA (Office Furniture Distributors Association), states that “The EPA has estimated that approximately 3 million tons of office furniture and furnishings are discarded each year.
- Re-manufacturing just 40 cubicles diverts one tractor-trailer load of furniture from a landfill. For nearly 20 years, we have resold 12,284 as is or refurbished cubicles. That means we’ve diverted 307 tractor trailer loads of just cubicles from the landfill. Add other pre-owned items like desks,



credenzas, chairs, reception stations, conference tables and filing cabinets that we’ve sold, and this adds up to a significant amount of office furniture kept out of our local landfill.

3. We reduce the amount of pollution caused by manufacturing new office furniture.

- Besides the benefit of reducing the volume of materials sent to the landfill, recycling office furniture reduces the pollution caused by the manufacturing process. Carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, sulfur oxides, nitrous oxides, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and particulate matter are all reduced by recycling office furniture.
- By reducing the amount of these contaminants, global warming, acid rain, photochemical smog, and other forms of air pollution are reduced. Air pollution is a universal problem that knows no city, state or national boundaries. Recycling office furniture reduces the amount of new office furniture that must be produced, reducing air pollution and greenhouse gases from these manufacturing processes.
- OFDA also states that, “The amount of labor and energy required to alter an existing product during remanufacturing is 85 to 95 percent less than that required to manufacture a new product.”

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- For each pound of natural resources used in remanufacturing, 5-9 pounds of original materials are conserved!
- Recycling office furniture by purchasing as is or refurbishing it saves the enormous amounts of energy required for the production of new office furniture - particularly because metals (which form the inner structure of office cubicles and the majority of file cabinets) are kept out of the re-smelting process.

Office Furniture NOW! is a hub of activity, but our commitment to the environment is focused. We buy pre-owned furniture from all over the country and from local Austin companies to resell as is or refurbish prior to resale. We have purchased used office furniture from over 250 companies who do business in Austin and have sold pre-owned or refurbished office furniture to nearly 3000 companies and individuals.

If you are earning LEED points, the following chart will show you how valuable pre-owned chairs, desks and cubicles purchased from Office Furniture NOW! can be toward your efforts to go green.

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MR 2	Materials Reuse: Construction Waste	Intent: Recycle or salvage 50% of non-hazardous construction and demolition debris. Client can receive another point if they reach a 75% level. Aids in landfill diversion. Re-manufacturer/Refurbisher can count existing on-site furniture and these salvaged products can be applied toward this credit.
MR 3.2	Materials Reuse: Furniture/Furnishings	Intent: Required use of salvaged, refurbished or used furniture for 30% of the total furniture/furnishings budget. Remanufactured/refurbished furniture enables clients to obtain credit with MRc 3.2.
MR 4	Materials Reuse: Recycled Content	Intent: Use recycled content, 10% remanufactured/refurbished furniture applies toward recycled content on the total project. Another point is available for 20% on the total project.
MR 5	Materials Reuse: Regionally	Intent: Use regional re-manufacturer/refurbisher to supply finished products. One point is available if 20% of the material used on a project is manufactured within 500 miles of the project. Allows client to receive points in this category that they might not be able to receive with larger centralized new furniture manufacturers.
IEQ 4.5	Environmental Quality: Low Emitting Materials - Systems Furniture & Seating	Intent: Low VOC /air contaminants emissions. Greenguard or ANSI BIFMA x7.1-2007.
IEQ 6.1	Environmental Quality: Controllability of Lighting Systems	Intent: User controlled task lights and occupancy sensor products can contribute to reducing ambient light requirements and energy load
IEQ 8.1	Environmental Quality: Daylight & Views - Daylight	Intent: Lessen need for artificial light with glass walls and low height, open plan furniture to allow for natural light.
IEQ 8.2	Environmental Quality: Daylight & Views- Views for Seated Space	Intent: Lessen use of artificial with glass walls and below 42" height open plan workstation panels
MR 7	Materials Reuse: Certified Wood	Intent: Remanufactured/refurbished furniture incorporating FSC [Forest Stewardship Council] Certified wood composition.