# Protect the Environment

## WHAT'S AT STAKE?

There is a direct link between environmental protection and your personal safety.

Companies are responsible for working in an environmentally friendly way. For employees,
that means a responsibility as well to do work in a way that will protect the natural environment.

Just how this is accomplished will vary a great deal from one industry to the next. In many work situations, good environmental habits may be quite similar to the ones you would practice off the job. In other industries which use large amounts of resources or produce quantities of hazardous waste, there may be a lot more to learn about safe environmental practices. But the principles are basically the same:

**EXAMPLES**

- Reducing – the amount of natural resources which you use, including materials and energy.
- Reusing – materials and energy.
- Recycling – as much as possible.
- Safe waste management – making sure that materials, products and waste do not harm people or the environment.
- When you travel (even to and from work) practice fuel efficiency and help reduce auto emissions. Drive steadily and don't speed. Use carpools and public transportation if feasible. Encourage the use of fuel-efficient, well-maintained vehicles in the workplace.
- Do your part in recycling programs. This may include separating your trash in the lunchroom. It may also include

separating job-related materials and supplies as directed. Be sure to carefully follow instructions about how to separate and store materials.

- Encourage the substitution of less hazardous substances wherever feasible.
- Be alert for opportunities for your company to exchange waste materials with other companies.
- Encourage better disposal practices for hazardous materials. Large quantities of hazardous waste may need to be incinerated, or treated chemically or physically, either on the site or elsewhere. Small quantities need to be treated with equal respect. Do not just toss unused quantities or empty containers into the trash, and do not dump hazardous substances down the drain. Dispose of them according to company policy and manufacturers' directions.
- Be aware of your company's environmental responsibilities, and your individual responsibilities as well.

# FINAL WORD

*There is a direct link between environmental protection and your personal safety. Chances are that the procedures and materials which are safer for the environment will also be safer for you in the long run.*