



Waste  
Management  
Agency

January 2018

The Government of Ras Al Khaimah's Public Services Department (PSD) and the four agencies making up the PSD have new logo. The new logo shows that the PSD is a solid block made up of four equal and equally solid parts known as agencies. Each of the four agencies is headed up by an Executive Director who is responsible for all related to the agency concerned and reports directly to the General Manager of the PSD.



دائرة الخدمات العامة  
Public Services Department

- The General Manager of the PSD is Ahmed Al Hammadi
- The Executive Director of the Waste Management Agency is Sonia Nasser
- The Executive Director of the Waste Water Agency is Alan Turner
- The Executive Director position of the Roads Agency is presently held by Ahmed Omar Jakka
- The Executive Director of Landscaping is Mark McQuire.

The new logo for the PSD clearly shows how the four agencies are totally incorporated into the PSD and that they all play equally important parts.

The updated vision and mission statement of the Waste Management Agency as reflected below is an indication that while the agency is a self-contained and managed unit, with an executive director to lead it, the vision of the agency is one that is much broader than simply the day-to-day operations of waste management. The nurturing, supporting, protecting and repairing of our environment, is central to all that Waste Management Agency does, plans and supports.

## WMA VISION

Creating a clean and beautiful Ras Al Khaimah where all residents are proud to reduce, reuse and recycle waste to achieve the UAE National target of diverting 75% of waste from landfills by 2021 and to enjoy a safe and healthy life.

## WMA MISSION

- Protect the Ras Al Khaimah environment by cleaning, collecting, sorting, treating and managing waste in a sustainable manner.
- Raise awareness and engage the community to eliminate littering, reduce waste and increase recycling.
- Implement innovative waste management solutions.



مؤسسة إدارة المخلفات

**Waste Management Agency**

# Tree planting ceremony at Van Oord in Ras Al Khaimah:



The Van Oord Daimah Yard is located within the premises of the Ras Al Khaimah Maritime City that is part of the Ras Al Khaimah FTZ. As Van Oord deals with heavy industrial machinery to develop, maintain and upgrade large projects related to Marine ingenuity, for example, dredging and developing new islands and port areas, they have a very strong focus on safety and their impact on the environment.

In line with their focus on environmental awareness and their efforts to preserve and improve the environment in which they operate, the Ras Al Kahimah Waste management was invited to their special "GO GREEN" day held on Thursday 11 January.

During the event, Van Oord showcased their solar powered outdoors lighting and internal transport vehicles which were both very impressive. In addition to the very impressive use of solar energy, Van Oord uses totally organic materials to cover their



internal roads to prevent dust pollution and have planted more than 300 trees within their premises.



The day's event was concluded



with a tree planting ceremony during which Sonia Nasser planted a tree on behalf of the Ras Al Khaimah Waste Management and all Van Oord Staff then proceeded to clean the beach along-side their premises.

According to the records of the RAK WMA collections team, 6160Kgs of waste was collected by the Van Oord staff during this one beach clean-up.



The Van Oord Management have indicated that they are very willing to share any of their environmentally related information with those who wish to more actively play a part in protecting our environment.





On Thursday 11 January the RAK MHSU (Ras Al Khaimah Medial and Health Science University) held their annual Awards Ceremony at which students and faculty were awarded for outstanding academic achievements in each subject and the outgoing student council handed over the new student council.

The ceremony is a prestigious event that showcases the academic excellence of students and the research being conducted under the guidance of faculty. This year the Vice Chancellor of the university, Dr. Rao, chose to speak about RAK Recycles during his opening address and invited Janet Hartzenberg to act as the guest speaker to further inform the audience about RAK Recycles.

## RAK MHSU SUPPORTS RAK RECYCLES

Dr. Rao (Vice Chancellor) and Dr. Manal (Dean of students) are both very dedicated and active RAK Recycles ambassadors and use every opportunity possible to inform and encourage students to carefully address environmental issues and support the efforts of the Ras Al Khaimah Waste Management Agency. Both Dr. Rao and Dr. Manal recently featured in a RAK Recycles video which will be released for public view



## RAK GREEN SCHOOLS

The date for the first RAK Green Schools Awards Ceremony has been set for Tuesday 1 May 2018. During this ceremony schools will be recognized for their efforts regarding RAK Green schools and for having made a real difference and worked hard to become greener. By 31 December 2017 sixty four (64) schools had registered in the RAK Green Schools initiative. These schools are all working really hard to follow the guidelines given and are making a huge difference to the way that students and parents perceive waste and other environmentally related issues.



Schools are not being instructed on how to become greener, but are being encouraged to think about how they can make a difference and so protect the environment. Schools will be rewarded for their innovative ideas and their own specific efforts related to the goals of RAK Green Schools. A large part of RAK Green Schools is to encourage source separation and recycling. With the assistance of the Ras Al Khaimah Waste Management Collections Team the source separation and recycling happening at schools is being closely monitored, so that we may be in a position to address issues related to misunderstanding or incorrect information being given to teachers or students. Monitoring and related correcting is a very important task but is not easy and is very time consuming. The RAK WMA Outreach section is trying hard to manage the progress and appreciate the assistance of the Ras Al Kahimah Education Zone regarding this.



# Interesting issues related to how your home impacts the environment:

The following article was published on [onegreenplanet.org](http://onegreenplanet.org) and written by Kate Good back in 2014 but makes for really interesting reading and reminds us of issues we sometimes simply forget or overlook.



“There are many **common products** found in homes that have HUGE environmental footprints. While you probably avoid toxins in your **cleaning supplies** or have ditched plastic water bottles, there are still hundreds of things in your home that could be harming the environment.

According to the Silent Spring Institute, levels of toxic chemicals are between **200 and 500 higher indoors than out**. Yikes! So who invited all of these harmful pollutants into your house? Chances are they sneaked in on any number of common household items.

In an effort to make our homes healthy for our families and for the environment, there are a few items you should look out for when decorating your home. While you see the effects of poor indoor air quality through more colds and stuffy noses, there are other hidden environmental impacts

associated with **household products**.

Check out this list for a few products you should look out for when shopping for your own home (or redecorating your current one). A smart house starts with a smart homeowner!

## 1. Flooring

### The problem

In October 2013, a **report** from the Environmental Investigation Agency found that the U.S. flooring giant, Lumber Liquidators, had purchased illegally logged wood. The high demand for flooring products across the world has long fueled corrupt logging practices that contribute to mass **deforestation**. In the **Russian Far East**, illegal logging has caused large-scale deforestation, associated with increased carbon emissions and the destruction of critically endangered tiger habitats.

According to the Environmental Investigation Agency’s **report**, Lumber Liquidators is one among many companies across the U.S, the European Union, Japan, and China that supports illegal timber exports. Nearly **80 percent** of all timber exported out of the Russian Far East is done so illegally.

Fortunately, there are strict legal guidelines in the U.S. to prevent the trade and sale of illegally sourced wood. In the U.S, for example, the **Sustainable Forestry Initiative** works to promote legal and sustainable forest management across the world.

The **World Wildlife Fund** has also created the Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN) which links companies with environmentally responsible forest products. GFTN works to responsibly manage forests used for wood and paper products

### What you can do

- Buy flooring that is certified by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. You can find a list of certified companies on the [SFI website](#).
- Avoid **tropical woods** like “Brazilian Walnut” or “African Teak” when shopping for flooring.
- Look for **reclaimed wood, bamboo, or cork flooring**.

## 2. Furniture

### The problem

Ever noticed the chemical/plastic smell new couches and chairs have? That distinct smell is actually the off gassing of thousands of chemicals that were used to produce that piece of furniture. Among the chemicals being released into your indoor air are **VOCs, formaldehyde and other carcinogens**. These pollutants can seep into your air for weeks and remain in indoor air for longer depending on how effective your ventilation system is.

Paints, wood stains, and furniture glues have been known to contain off gassing carcinogens that can cause respiratory irritation, headaches, and even cancer. These chemicals are especially dangerous to children and pets who have a lower tolerance.

When VOCs off gas into the atmosphere they contribute to **smog production**.

Like flooring, some furniture is made with illegally logged wood. This not only contributes to deforestation, but also increased carbon emissions as illegally harvested lumber is shipped long distances to reach U.S. markets.

### What you can do

- Look for furniture made from recycled metal or plastic instead of wood. These materials **require less processing** to convert into new pieces and help save old furniture from the landfill.
- Go for **reclaimed wood** furniture that is finished with **non-toxic wood stains and varnishes**.
- Shop for furniture in vintage stores or flea markets instead of buying new.
- Always consider the future of the furniture you buy: can these materials be recycled? Check out [HermanMiller.com](#) for inspiration — all their chairs are made with a full-life cycle evaluation minimizing their environmental impact.

## 3. Electronics

### The problem

Cell phones and computers can have **very large environmental footprints**. According to the EPA in 2007, up to 1.8 billion

tons of electronics were disposed in landfills, only 18 percent were recycled.

This is really hard to hear if you are like me and spend 90 percent of your time staring at a screen of some sort. This is not to say you should go off the grid but you might want to reconsider upgrading to the latest phone/laptop/tablet just for the sake of having the newest gadget.

Electronics are made from many non-renewable resources like the oils used to make plastic and heavy metals for wiring and circuitry. There are finite supplies of the metals used to make computers and other electronics and global demands contribute to material scarcity. The environmental impact of mining these metals also creates social issues. According to [RISI](#), in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the profits from mining coltan (a metal used in computers) have been used to finance civil war.

Screens, hard drives, and plastic casings are usually made by different companies, meaning various components need to be **shipped across the world** to assemble a single device.

RISI estimates that the amount of fossil fuels used to produce a computer screen is about **10 times** its weight.

#### What you can do

- First you should try and hold on to your old devices for as long as possible! Opt to replace broken parts rather than getting a whole new device. Or buy **refurbished electronics**.
- But if you must upgrade...recycle, recycle, recycle! Chemicals such as mercury, lead and nickel can leak out of electronics sitting in landfills causing more environmental damage. By recycling **one million laptops**, the U.S. could save the same amount of electricity used to power over 3,657 homes a year.
- Check out the **EPA's website** for instructions on how-to "eCycle" your old

computers, TVs, and cell phones.

#### 4. Carpet, Curtains, and Upholstery

##### The problem

Carpet, curtains and other decorative upholstery are all hiding places for indoor air pollutants and toxins. These household decorations are commonly made from **petroleum byproducts and synthetics** like nylon, polypropylene and acrylic. While these fabrics are used for their durability, they are filled with **VOCs and toxins** that can be harmful to your family and pets. The same qualities that make these items last for long periods of time in your home make for even longer lives in

landfills. Synthetics do not biodegrade overtime but will continue to **leach toxins into the environment for decades**.

(Not to mention, the use of petroleum products for household furnishings adds to our nation's **dependency on oil**.) Upholstery fabrics used on furniture and curtains are often treated with **flame retardants** that are **hazard to human health**. According to the **NRDC**, exposure to flame retardants has been linked to attention problems in young children, male birth defects, infertility and cancer."



# Making mistakes does not always mean you do not care



For those who try hard but sometimes forget, or think that they are not trying hard enough, the following article posted on Cavemenworld.com by Rocknette Cavemen will encourage you to keep on trying.

Our environment is in too much trouble for us not to try and to keep on trying.

“We all make mistakes, from leaving the tap water running while brushing our teeth to tossing dead batteries in the trash, but once we become aware of the harm we are doing, it’s easy to make changes.

1. Littering. Most people do not deliberately trash the environment, but almost everyone carelessly litters now and then. It takes a conscious effort to put refuse in its place, from cigarette butts and plastic water bottles to food packaging

seen on the sides of roads and often within several feet of waste bins.

2. Wasting Food. Most leftovers can be frozen and reheated for future meals. Most packaged goods can be used long after their supposed expiration dates. Nevertheless, up to 14% of all food purchased in the United States ends up in the trash.
3. Wasting Paper. Although it can be recycled, most paper isn’t. We still use disposable paper bags, diapers, napkins and towels instead of reusable cloth ones, utility bills sent by mail instead of digitally, books purchased from stores rather than borrowed from libraries... the list is virtually endless.
4. Wasting Water. Apart from letting the water run while

brushing our teeth, we don’t use low-flow showerheads to reduce water usage or water filters to purify tap water for drinking. We landscape with thirsty lawns instead of xeriscaping.

5. Wasting Electricity. Power plants are the biggest polluters on the planet. When we leave lights and appliances on unnecessarily, heat or cool unoccupied rooms, or fail to insulate homes and water heaters, we add to the pollution.
6. Toxic Chemicals. Most homes contain detergents, degreasers, stain removers, pesticides and a variety of hazardous chemicals. Even when used properly, they eventually return to the environment, contaminating groundwater, lakes and oceans. The solution is to



use natural, eco-friendly products.

7. Improper Disposal. Toxic garbage must be taken to a hazardous waste collection site. That includes batteries, light bulbs, paint, chemicals and even CDs and DVDs. Recyclable materials such as plastic and aluminum need to be separated and sent to the appropriate recycling facilities.

8. Car Travel. – Rather than bicycle, walk, carpool or use public transport, we hop in the car, even for short trips, wasting fossil fuels and adding to pollution. The solution, of course, is to leave the car in the garage as often as possible.

9. Air Travel. Flying produces almost as much CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per passenger per mile as driving the same distance alone in a car. Planes also emit nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide directly into the atmosphere at high altitudes, perhaps doubling their overall climate warming effect. Avoid flying whenever possible.

10. Ignorance. It is hard to make changes for the better when one's own contributions to the problem are unknown.”

It is so important to remember that all the little bits add up to the bigger things that really do make a difference. Both little bad things and little good things, all matter and all have a cumulative effect.





## The PSD Innovation Team visits the Ras Al Khaimah MRF just before the MRF undergoes an Upgrade

The PSD Innovation team recently visited the Ras Al Khaimah Waste Management Materials Recovery Facility to see first-hand what happens to all municipal solid waste collected in Ras Al Khaimah. At present approximately 550 tons of municipal solid waste is collected in Ras Al Khaimah daily and all this is brought to the centrally located MRF for sorting.

Once sorted, all municipal solid waste will fall into one of the following two very broad categories; for recycling or for landfilling. It is obvious that the Ras Al Khaimah Waste Management Agency is working very hard to reduce the amount of waste going to landfilling and to increase the amount going for recycling. In a federal directive issued by the Ministry of Climate change, all Emirates in the United Arab Emirates, are required to divert 75% of all waste generated from landfilling, by 2021. At present Ras Al Khaimah is diverting around 15% of generated waste from landfilling.

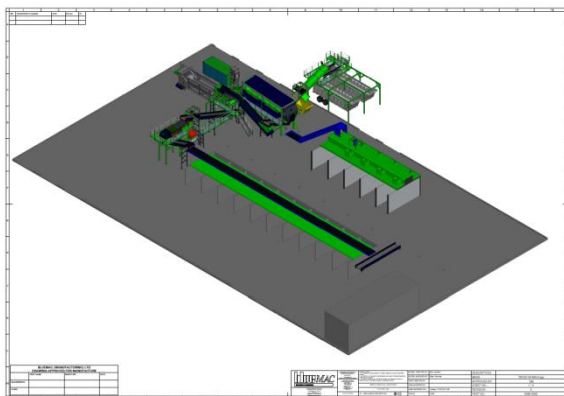


RAK Recycles, launched on 20 September 2017 is an initiative to encourage every resident to source separate the waste that they generate. This is seen to be the best way to ensure that we reach the set target for diversion of waste from landfills.

During the PSD Innovation Team's visit to the MRF, they were able to see the urgent need to educate and encourage all residents to correctly use the Green and Brown bags available for households to source separate their waste.

The MRF closed its doors to visitors on 15 January, for a much needed upgrade and hopes to be in a position to invite visitors again from June 2018. The upgrade at the MRF is to ensure that the Ras Al Khaimah Waste Management Agency is moving towards semi-automatic waste sorting to ensure higher levels of recycling and to stay up-to date with world trends related to waste recovery and management. Once the MRF upgrade is complete, an additional line will be added to the operation to ensure quick and safe bag opening and a trommel (tunnel using wind and magnetic separation techniques) will be added to ensure semi-automatic sorting of waste received.

The MRF upgrade will also include the building of new administrative offices, staff facilities and workshops.





**We have the choice to make our world  
different and better!**