

How to implement a Recycling Policy and begin the journey towards “Zero Waste”

CONTENTS:

Objective and Timeline

Gain Management Support

Selecting a Recycling Coordinator

Research

Select Recyclers

Set up a Collection System

Educate Employees

Promote Your Program

Tracking and Reporting

Challenging Items

ZERO WASTE TIMELINE

OBJECTIVE: To produce zero waste

TIME TO COMPLETE INITIATIVE: 1 Year

The most dramatic reduction in waste will take place during the first month. A successful program will make it easy for employees to recycle and reduce waste immediately. This handbook outlines the steps needed to help you follow the timeline below:

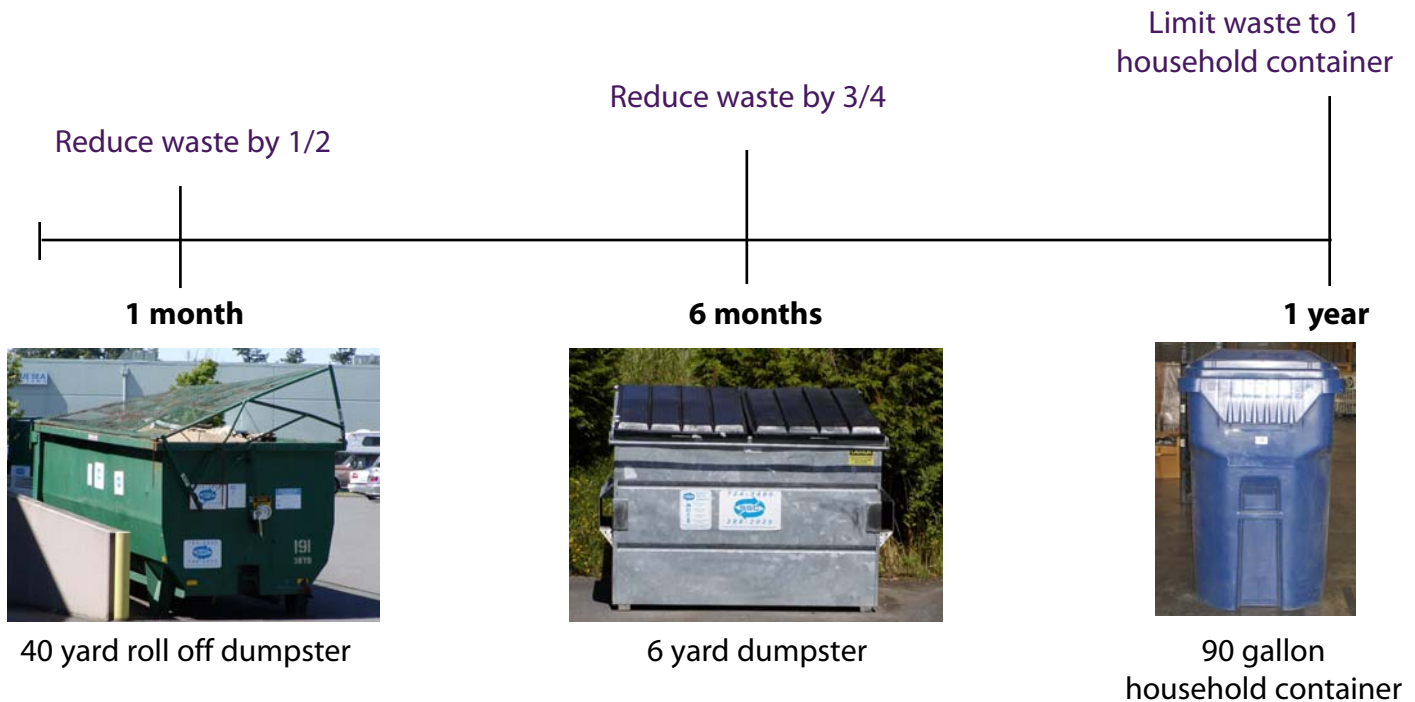
After 1 month - reduce waste by 1/2

After 6 months - reduce waste by 3/4

After 12 months - limit waste to 1 household container

A typical company may easily fill over two large dumpsters every month, so their goal should consist of reducing waste to:

- one large dumpster after one month
- one small dumpster after six months
- one household container after one year



40 yard roll off dumpster



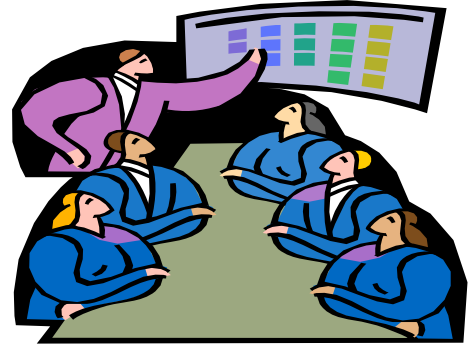
6 yard dumpster



90 gallon household container

Step 1: Gain Management Support

Support from upper management is crucial if your program is to succeed. Even though commercial recycling is mandatory in most large cities, it is still important for everyone to know that upper management is serious about the business and environmental responsibilities.



First, the CEO or organizer should meet with the Senior Management team. Then, a second meeting with Senior Management and all department heads is needed to gain support.

The meetings should accomplish the following:

Explain why the company should institute a recycling program:

- Reduces landfill costs and energy costs
- Prevents pollution caused by manufacturing of products
- Saves energy
- Decreases emissions of greenhouse gases
- Conserves natural resources
- Helps sustain the environment
- Cleaner facilities
- Competitive advantage for sales
- It's the law in some states and cities
- Corporate security (shredders for paper and plastic)

Involve the upper management in setting up the program:

- Ask for suggestions or recommendations
- Make sure they are supportive
- Include them in training sessions with the employees

Educate managers on how to use resources efficiently:

- Order materials and supplies more precisely
- Donate used or discarded goods to assist your community
- Use durable, reusable products in place of disposable
- Print documents double sided instead of single sided

Organize a plan for the CEO or President to endorse the program publicly to the company:

- Announce personally in a company wide meeting
- Send out an e-mail memo
- Hold a special inaugural event

Facilitate open communication to keep everyone informed of the progress of the program

- Be open to ideas and suggestions

Step 2: Selecting a Recycling Coordinator

Description of ideal person:

- Passionate about our environment
- Good communication skills
- Comfortable with public speaking
- Good listener
- Hands-on problem solving
- Great organization skills
- Ability to coordinate events/training
- Leadership skills
- Motivating
- Detail orientated when documenting progress
- Willingness to learn regulations and federal compliance
- Inventory management skills
- Not afraid to touch garbage



Depending on the size of your office, the coordinator may spend anywhere from a few days to a few months getting the program off the ground. Once it's running smoothly, no more than a couple of hours a month will be needed to monitor the program.

Some of the coordinator's responsibilities may include:

- Selecting a recycler and working with them to develop the collection system
- Purchasing and distributing containers
- Creating a promotion and education campaign
- Answering questions from employees and managers
- Working with various departments and supervisors to help encourage employee participation
- Acting as liaison with the recycling company and the janitorial staff
- Detailed tracking and reporting of the program's success

Step 3: Research

Phase One: Identify all waste produced from your company

1. Take digital pictures of all garbage
2. Where does it come from?
3. How is it collected on site?
4. How is it removed from the site?
5. What happens to it once it is removed off site?
6. What is the cost of removal?
(estimate monthly or annual costs)



Phase Two: Identify what is currently being recycled

1. Take digital pictures of all recycled materials
2. Where does it come from?
3. How is it collected on site?
4. How is it removed from the site?
5. What happens to it once it is removed off site?
6. What is the cost of removal or profit?
(estimate monthly or annual costs)



Phase Three: Identify what garbage can be recycled

Add any additional items you can recycle to this list:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Steel | Mixed Plastic Film/Bags |
| Aluminum | Polystyrene |
| Dirty* Aluminum | Polyethylene |
| Copper Wire | Rubber |
| Electric Motors | Plastic Bottles |
| Circuit Boards | Sealed Air Foam |
| Mixed Paper | Cardboard |
| Aluminum Cans | Batteries |
| Rigid Plastics (Clean) | CD/DVD |
| Rigid Plastics (Dirty*) | Floppy Disks |
| Bubble Wrap | Glass |
| Clear Plastic Film/Bags | Monitors/CRT's |

*Dirty items contain a foreign material (such as wood or other metals) that can't be economically removed

Phase Four: Estimate quantity and conduct a waste audit

To determine if there are other recyclable materials in your garbage, conduct a simple waste audit to provide data on how much waste is generated, disposed of, and recycled.

1. Collect 1 week's worth of garbage and recycling.
2. Set up labeled boxes and sort out waste. If applicable, there should be 1 box for each type of waste mentioned above.

(You can also use digital pictures to estimate answers to these questions.)

- A. How much waste will be produced on a monthly/yearly basis?
- B. Who can collect the waste?
- C. How can it be collected and removed from the site?
- D. What happens once it is taken off site?
- E. What is the cost to dispose of it or the profit that can be made by selling it?

Step 4: Select Recyclers

Now that you know which materials you'd like to recycle, compare the services of several local recyclers. More than likely, a common recycler will recycle:

- Metals
- Glass
- Paper
- Cardboard
- Plastic film



Not as common, are recyclers who accept the following:

- Rigid plastics, DVDs, CDs
- Circuit boards
- Foam
- Rubber

Depending on your location, you may be able to receive money for many items such as:

- Steel
- Aluminum
- Copper
- Plastic
- Cardboard
- Paper

You should expect to pay for disposal of the following:

- CRTs
- Monitors
- TVs
- Batteries
- Food Scraps

You may want to spend extra money to ensure that certain items containing confidential information are not resold.

Use the table on the next page to help you identify the best recyclers in your area.

Research local resources to find the recyclers:

- Phone book
- Internet
- Local waste management facility for your county (solid waste division)

Invite the recyclers onto your property and establish a relationship with them. This will help them get acquainted with your facility and help you determine the best collection methods (location, time, packaging and sorting requirements). Also, review any city, state, or province specific regulations and restrictions with your recycler to make sure nothing is overlooked.

Identifying the best recyclers in your area

Service Options			
	Recycler #1	Recycler #2	Recycler #3
What types of materials are accepted?			
Is there a minimum quantity for pickup service?			
What is the collection schedule? Are they flexible?			
What are the charges, if any, for the service?			
What materials will they pay for and how much?			
Does the price change if the item is compacted or bailed?			
Containers, Collection, and Storage			
Will the recycler provide containers or equipment? What type? Costs?			
Do the recyclables need to be in separate containers or can they be combined ?			
Does the recycler have specific requirements for storage and pick-up?			
Special Services			
Will the recycler provide reports with materials and volumes recycled?			
Will they provide training for employees?			
Will the recycler come on site and help setup the program?			
Compliance and Reference Checklist			
Have they filled out an audit document and proved licenses?			
Have they provided references?			
Have you checked local government records for compliance?			

Step 5: Set up a Collection System

A simple and convenient collection system is essential for employee participation. Recycling containers placed at every desk and in the other common work areas are the cornerstone to a successful program. BE CREATIVE! Design a collection system unique to your business' needs. Here are some helpful tips for setting up a successful collection system:

- Remove existing garbage cans and replace with a desk side collection container (see fig. A)
- Place containers for paper collection by copiers, printers, and other paper-related workstations
- Provide desk side paper shredders to managers for sensitive materials
- Place containers for food waste in the employee's lounge, cafeteria, or work areas
- Make sure that all of your recycling containers are clearly labeled for easy use
- Place an inline station in the workspaces and in the lunchrooms

You may need to purchase:

- a. 1 desk side container for every employee
(Use the small container for compostable items and the large container for recycling)
- b. A supply of small biodegradable plastic bags for the small container of the desk side collection unit (from local janitorial supply company)
- c. Plastic stackable collection bins (from local recycler)
- d. In-line stations for installation in:
 - ~Lunchroom– use as a launch/event/installation
 - ~General work area(s) – make it convenient
 - ~Front of the building – install at the end of the initiative to set the stage for people when they first arrive

**For In-line Stations:
Fibrex Products**
www.fibrexgroup.com
Phone: 757-487-5744



A. Desk side container



B. Small bags



C. Plastic stackable bins



D. In-line station

Tailor your system to your business by figuring out the best role for employees, janitors, facility, staff and the recycling vendor. Common answers to the following questions are noted below:

- Who will be responsible for emptying desk side recycling containers? (employees)
- Who will be responsible for emptying the common area recycle containers? (janitors)
- Will the janitors empty the containers every night? (yes)
- Will employees empty them in a central location once they are full? (yes)
- Who will transfer the contents to outdoor collection containers? (janitors)
- Who will train staff and janitorial personnel? (facilities administrator)

Make sure your system is convenient and flexible and keep the janitors and facilities staff involved throughout the process. Your janitors might surprise you and take the idea to their other clients!

Step 6: Educate Employees

Learn what will work with every department. Since certain departments may need special attention, be open-minded to suggestions and ideas. Employees know their work areas best and can help come up with solutions.

Organize group meetings to show a presentation and discuss:

Why you are instituting a recycling program:

- Reduces the need for landfilling
- Prevents pollution caused by manufacturing of products
- Saves energy
- Decreases emissions of greenhouse gases
- Conserves natural resources
- Helps sustain the environment
- Competitive advantage for sales
- It's the law in some states and cities
- Corporate security (shredders for paper and plastic)

Why the current recycling system (if there is one) doesn't work

The solution/action-what you are instituting

How to recycle and the importance of separation

Who your recyclers are and where they send materials

A timeline to reach your goal of zero waste

Photos of your facility's waste stream (the "before" photos)

Safety hazards and concerns about materials such as:

- Batteries
- Light bulbs
- Chemical disposal
- Electronics
- Solder/lead



Step 7: Promote your Program to Keep it Growing

Promotion is the key to all successful recycling programs and well-informed employees will actively participate. Up-front education and planning will help ensure that you have fewer implementation problems. Involve your staff in promotions and planning so that they have ownership in the program.

Schedule training sessions for management, employees, and janitorial staff so that everyone understands how the program will work:

- Give everyone a "how to" handout on waste prevention and recycling
- Distribute a list of recyclable materials to all staff
- Make sure staff know whom to contact with questions

Introduce the program by using some of the following ideas:

- Place promotional posters on display in high traffic areas
- Officially kick off the program when you hand out desk side containers
- Make sure everyone knows the locations of the central containers
- Throw a party to celebrate the start of the program
- Create a contest such as a recycling relay to build enthusiasm

As you hire new employees, work with HR to educate new employees:

- Include recycling documents in a new hire book
- Organize meetings for new hires (at least once per quarter)

Monitor waste to determine weaknesses:

- Look into garbage cans and pull out garbage from dumpsters
- Meet with the janitorial group to address any concerns
- Conduct follow up meetings with departments that have challenging waste

Other suggestions:

- Provide staff tips and monthly e-mail reminders about recycling
- E-mail awards for outstanding participants, competitions, etc.
- Highlight milestones or accomplishments (e.g., when you are down to one dumpster/month)
- Add new materials to recycle programs when needed: toner cartridges, fluorescent light bulbs
- Move or sell valuable items on the internet

Remember, this is something new.

It will take some time to get everyone to participate, so be patient. The more people that help with planning and setting up the program, the easier it will be to implement.



Step 8: Tracking and Reporting Progress

Tracking and reporting your progress is essential and proves the program’s success. A report should be given every month to the head office. It must include a detailed spreadsheet showing cost and container reduction.

When compiling your end of month report:

- Measurements by weight are preferred (from recycler, pallet scale, or other type of scale)
- Weigh each container
- Use specific categories that are broken out by commodity

To calculate dumpster reduction:

- Document original quantities and size of dumpster
- Factor in the amount / expense
- How many times is it dumped and what is the cost per dump?

Behavior Changes:

Not all things are easy to recycle, and sometimes we needed to change our behaviors.

Urinal Deodorizer

For instance, most men’s bathrooms have a deodorizer in the urinal. No recycling companies will recycle the deodorizer because it is considered toxic waste after it is used. One solution might be to eliminate the deodorizer and use wall mounted air fresheners that spray deodorizer into the air automatically.



Cigarette Butts

Another difficult item is cigarette butts. What can you do with the toxic waste? The butts will inevitably end up in a land fill, but you can persuade employees to quit smoking by promoting and offering reimbursement for smoking cessation programs. By assisting employees to quit smoking, you are improving their health as well as eliminating toxic waste.

