

RECYCLING IN THE WORKPLACE: Information for Douglass Township Businesses & Institutions

The Requirements

The Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act of 1988 (Act 101) requires commercial, institutional and municipal establishments located in Pennsylvania's mandated municipalities to recycle high-grade office paper, corrugated paper, aluminum and leaf waste. In addition, establishments must recycle any other materials included in the municipality's recycling ordinance or regulations, which may include glass, newsprint, plastics, and/or steel and bimetallic cans. As a mandated municipality, businesses and institutions with facilities located within Douglass Township must implement recycling programs.

Douglass Township's recycling requirements are as follows:

- 1 All commercial, institutional and municipal establishments must source separate the following materials:
 - 2 High grade office paper
 - 3 Corrugated cardboard
 - 4 Glass containers
 - 5 Aluminum cans
 - 6 All other recyclables that are designated by Douglass Township

All establishments must arrange for the collection and recycling of designated materials.

All commercial, institutional and municipal entities must provide written documentation as to the type and weight of materials recycled annually. This information can be obtained from your trash or recycling hauler. Reports are due to the Township by March 1 of each year on a form provided by the Township.

Designing Your Recycling Program

An organized recycling program requires planning and attention to detail. When you begin a program that has been planned, it not only complies with the law, but it reduces waste, but also saves money for your business or institution. Source reduction and reuse means using less resources and recycling-can than further reduce waste created in your workplace.

Elements of a successful recycling program are as follows:

1. Obtaining Management Support

Senior management support is essential to the success of your recycling program. Management's positive support promotes a certain attitude among employees and customers. Recycling programs often require outlays of capital. Management approval of a recycling budget ensures that resources are available to your company.

2. Designating a Recycling Coordinator

Every business or institution should have a coordinator to manage its recycling program. The person selected should be interested in recycling and be able to communicate with personnel at all company levels. To make sure that attention is given to the program, it is recommended to incorporate recycling responsibilities into an employee's job description.

3. Establishing a Recycling Task Force

If the facility is large enough and has a significant number of employees, a task force should be formed to help the coordinator plan and initiate the program. This group may remain in force as a permanent advisory body to ensure continued program participation. To ensure that all parts of your operation are addressed equally, task force representatives should be assigned from all departments that will be affected by your recycling program. It is also a good idea to include a spokesperson for employees.

4. Assessing the Waste Stream

The coordinator should record the amount of recyclables in your organization's waste stream, and where they originate. This process is known as a waste assessment. The waste assessment should focus on offices, cafeterias, lounges, restrooms, vending machine areas, boiler rooms, maintenance areas, storage areas, and other locations where trash originates. If the study reveals that yard debris composes a large percentage of the waste stream, the task force should consider including on-site composting as part of the recycling program.

5. Markets for Recyclables

Your recycling program will generate materials that can be used to manufacture new products. The companies that do this are known as end users or end markets. One of the more significant tasks of the recycling coordinator is to determine how to get recyclables to these markets. Recyclables may be marketed directly to an end user if agreement can be reached on the amount, quality and regularity of the shipments. Otherwise, it will be necessary to negotiate with intermediaries -- such as waste haulers, processors or brokers -- to collect, process, and/or market recyclables. The coordinator should discuss recycling strategies with waste haulers, processors/brokers and end users to determine the preferred management option before adopting a final plan for the recycling program.

6. Internal Collection

Whether your organization is housed in one room, one building, or a number of buildings, it will be necessary to design a system for collecting recyclables. The main issue to consider in developing an internal collection system should be **convenience** for both system users and collection staff. Key considerations are as follows:

- 1 **Containers.** Recycling container options range from reused corrugated boxes to a wide variety of commercially available trays and bins. Consider space availability,

container placement, the quantity needed, size, shape, color, labels that identify the containers as recycling containers, and educational materials that inform the employees and customers about acceptable materials and how to use the system. Consideration should be given to individual workstations and areas of high generation, such as copiers and lunchrooms. Check with your local fire marshal regarding fire code compliance.

- 2 **Storage.** The central storage area should be clean, dry and free of fire hazards. Containers should be clearly labeled. If storage containers must be located outside, consider using covered storage bins to preserve material quality and prevent litter and contamination.
- 3 **Collection Personnel.** Collecting recyclables from workstations and high generation areas and taking them to a central storage area is usually the responsibility of custodial staff. If recyclables must be delivered to a market, delivery personnel must be designated. A printed operations schedule is helpful to collection and delivery personnel.
- 4 **Materials Preparation.** Many end users require special preparation of materials for efficient transportation and/or incorporation into their manufacturing processes. Preparation techniques include crushing, bundling and baling. Unless your facility generates very large volumes of material (e.g. a grocery store that generates large volumes of corrugated cardboard), you should probably work with a hauler, processor or broker to determine how they wish to receive materials to facilitate further processing for end users.

7. Education and Promotion

A comprehensive and sustained program is imperative to: (1) tell employees and customers about your recycling policies, procedures and goals; (2) encourage participation; (3) stress that recyclables must be kept clean, dry and free of contaminants that can diminish their market value or cause them to be rejected; and (4) publicize program successes to maintain ongoing participation. Channels to consider for conveying this information include staff meetings, orientation meetings for new employees, newsletters, flyers and posters.

8. Evaluation

The coordinator should monitor the program to make sure it's efficient. Sources of information would include maintenance staff for input on improper handling and contamination of material. An accounting staff to determine costs for waste management. Employees and customers are important for their input regarding waste and recycling operations. A safety staff to ensure all procedures are done safely and correctly. And waste haulers are important for information about the products your company will generate and recycle

9. Procurement Policies – Buying Recycled

Purchasing products that are made from or packaged in recycled materials create a demand for the materials generated by your recycling program. Greater demand for these materials usually means greater market price, this cycle helps to reduce the cost to operate a recycling program.