



RECYCLING IN HOSPITALS AND HEALTH CARE INSTITUTIONS

CITY OF HARRISBURG
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Because hospitals and health care institutions must manage infectious and chemotherapeutic wastes that may be hazardous in nature, they have different waste requirements than other types of businesses. Please note that the recycling regulations do not apply to "red bag" waste. This material must be specially managed and should be handled as it has been in the past.

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 the City of Harrisburg must implement recycling programs.

The City of Harrisburg's recycling requirements are as follows:

- All commercial, institutional and municipal establishments must source separate the following materials:
 - High grade office paper
 - Corrugated cardboard
 - Glass containers
 - Aluminum cans
 - Any other recyclables that may be designated by the City
- Those served by the City's curbside program must set their materials at the curb in the City's blue recycling bins for collection.
- Those not served by the City's curbside program must arrange for the collection and recycling of all designated materials.
- All commercial, institutional and municipal entities must provide written documentation as to the type and weight of materials recycled annually. Reports are due to the City by January 15 of each year on a form provided by the City.



Steps for Successful Recycling in Hospitals & Health Care Institutions

Even though health care facilities must manage certain wastes very carefully, most of the same rules apply for managing all other wastes generated in these facilities. The challenge to good management is that unlike offices, restaurants, or other establishments that serve primarily a single purpose, these institutions must plan for a wide range of areas that encompass management of everything from office waste and cardboard to food waste and related materials. Here are some hints to help in planning:



Recycling Works

CITY OF HARRISBURG
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS

1690 S. 19th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17104

Phone: (717) 236-4802

Fax: (717) 236-9051

1. Perform a waste assessment. Walk through the facility noting what type of waste is discarded in each area. A walk-through will help you determine which types of containers are needed. Typical programs are likely to involve some of the following:

- **Administrative and office areas** - office paper, corrugated cardboard, other paper, cans, bottles, toner cartridges.
- **Food service areas** - glass, metal, cans, plastic containers, corrugated cardboard (make sure that food waste is separated from recyclables).
- **Public areas** - newspaper, magazines, bottles, cans.



2. Based on the results of the waste assessment, set up appropriate recycling programs in administrative offices, food service areas and waiting rooms. Unless a large amount of recyclable material is present, it may not be practical to collect recyclables from patient rooms and clinical areas.



3. Make sure that containers in public areas are well-marked. For these areas, it is best to choose containers with specialized openings, such as a hole for cans or a slot for newspapers. It is also important to place containers where the materials are generated to make recycling convenient.

4. Because of the high cost for processing/disposal, be sure that regular waste is not being disposed with red bag waste. Educate staff members about what does not belong in the red bags and make sure that regular trash containers are available in medical areas.

5. Inform employees about proper recycling procedures. Issue a memo, throw a kick-off party and explain any separation procedures when you distribute containers. Make sure to follow up to ensure that procedures are being followed and further educate employees as necessary.

6. Set up a log book or a receipt system to record the volume of recyclables leaving the premises. This will enable you to receive proper compensation for your materials and to take appropriate action if volumes decrease.

7. Include recycling information in your orientation for new employees.

8. After policies have been established, explain the recycling program to your housekeeping staff. Train them by showing them what to do with new containers, how to collect waste separately and where to take separated materials. For a 24-hour operation, plan pick-ups on appropriate shifts so that you do not have a problem with overflowing containers.



9. Ask for assistance from your housekeeping staff in monitoring the program. Have them inform you of areas with major contamination problems or where employees are not participating, and follow up with improved recycling education in these areas.

10. If appropriate, make sure that your grounds crew knows to keep yard waste separate from other waste.

11. Ask your waste hauler for advice about keeping recyclables and wet waste separate. Depending on the company's trucks and equipment, your hauler may want to give you separate containers for trash and recyclables.



12. Remind employees to keep food waste out of recycling containers and trash. Food waste should be handled separately from trash and recyclables. Where appropriate, your facility should consider composting this waste, and/or recycling grease with renderers.

For further information...

The following fact sheets are available from the City of Harrisburg's Department of Public Works:

- Recycling at Work: Information for Harrisburg Businesses & Institutions
- Developing a Recycling Program at Work
- Conducting a Waste Assessment
- Recycling in Office Buildings
- Recycling in Hotels & Motels
- Recycling in Manufacturing & Warehouse Operations
- Recycling in Retail Operations
- Recycling in Restaurants and Taverns
- Recycling in Schools, Colleges and Universities
- Helping to Solve Solid Waste Problems in Your Business or Institution
- Recycling in Apartments & Condominiums
- Recycling at Outdoor & Special Events

To obtain one or more of these fact sheets, contact:

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For more detailed information about implementing a waste reduction and recycling program in your workplace:

Visit the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection website at www.dep.state.pa.us, click on the "Recycling Works" logo, and go to "Commercial Recycling."

The Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania (PROP) has published "Developing a Waste Reduction and Recycling Program for Commercial, Institutional, Industrial and Municipal Establishments." To obtain a copy, contact PROP at:

P.O. Box 25
Bellwood, PA 16617
(814) 742-7777
Fax (814) 742-8838
e-mail prop@epix.net
www.proprecycles.org

