

RECYCLING IN RETAIL OPERATIONS

CITY OF HARRISBURG
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Recycling in your retail operation may be a tool to help you sell product. By implementing a recycling program-- and showing it off--you will communicate to customers that you care about the environment and are cost-conscious.

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 Retail Operations

Packaging materials, particularly corrugated cardboard, make up a large portion of any retail store's waste. Because much of this waste is generated outside the retail establishment, reduction efforts must be made in cooperation with vendors.

Incoming packaging such as bags and boxes can be reused as packaging for customers. However, while this reduces disposal requirements, it does not solve the problem of unnecessary packaging. If vendors ship products in unnecessary or non-recyclable packaging, you should consider asking them to reduce packaging or switch to materials that can be recycled or reused.

Here are some hints to help in planning:

1. Perform a waste assessment. Walk through your operation noting what type



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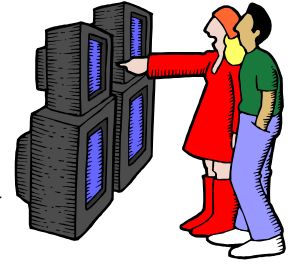
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of waste is discarded in each area. A walk-through will help you determine which types of containers are needed.

2. Based on the results of the waste assessment, set up appropriate recycling programs in all areas.

You will probably find that most of your waste will be corrugated cardboard. To reduce volume and make storage easier, you may wish to flatten and/or bale or compact the cardboard.



3. Make sure that managers of public areas in shopping complexes are provided with containers for recycling, and that all containers, but particularly those placed in public/retail areas, are well-marked. For public 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.



Don't forget to post signs to tell customers that you recycle.

4. Inform employees about proper recycling procedures by issuing a memo and reviewing procedures at staff meetings or at the beginning of shifts. Make sure to follow up to ensure that procedures are being followed and further educate employees as necessary.
5. 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.
6. Include recycling information in your orientation for new employees.

7. After policies have been established, explain the recycling program to custodial 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.

In a multiple retail facility such as a mall, there may be central staffing for waste/recycling collection. You will need to work with these personnel to ensure that materials are collected efficiently.



8. Ask for assistance from custodial 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.
9. If appropriate, make sure that your grounds crew knows to keep yard waste separate from other waste.
10. 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.
11. Remind employees to keep food waste out of recycling containers and trash. Food waste should be handled separately from trash and recyclables.



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 Hospitals & Health Care Institutions
- Recycling in Office Buildings
- Recycling in Hotels & Motels
- Recycling in Manufacturing & Warehouse 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

