

ESTABLISHING A WASTE REDUCTION PROGRAM | COMMERCIAL BUSINESS



Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District

A waste reduction program combines waste prevention with recycling efforts.

Waste reduction programs can reduce waste disposal costs; and in addition to financial advantages, waste prevention programs benefit the environment, society, and demonstrate a commitment to environmental protection.

ESTABLISHING A WASTE REDUCTION PROGRAM:

A GUIDE FOR COMMERCIAL BUSINESSES

RECYCLE AND REDUCE WASTE?

To save resources: Recycling saves valuable resources. Using recycled metals, plastic, glass, and paper requires less energy use and creates less pollution than manufacturing with virgin materials.

To reduce costs: Like other businesses, workplaces pay for waste disposal. In many cases, recycling services cost less than trash disposal; companies that reuse or recycle can save significant costs on waste disposal. Reusing products can also reduce purchasing and handling costs.

To improve customer service: Recycling demonstrates your business' commitment to environmental protection. People already recycling at home now expect to find recycling containers wherever they travel. Offering recycling is just another way to better serve your customers.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY A COORDINATOR & OBTAIN MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

It's important to identify a point person who will oversee the program and can be the source of waste reduction information for your company. The individual could have a management position or be an employee particularly motivated about waste reduction.

If the coordinator is not in management, it is important to get management buy-in. It signals to employees that waste reduction is important to your company and ensures the correct policies and funding are in place.

STEP 2: UNDERSTAND WASTE REDUCTION & RECYCLING NEEDS

Look into your waste dumpster. What do you see? By visually inspecting your business's trash, you can learn a lot about what kind of waste is generated and in what quantities. Once you see the most prominent materials being discarded, you can develop strategies to reduce the waste and recycle what can't be reduced or reused. Below are commonly recycled materials in the commercial sector:

Common Office Recyclables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Office paper• Magazines & catalogs• Cardboard• Aluminum cans• Plastic bottles• Toner & ink cartridges• Computers & electronics• Fluorescent lightbulbs	Common Retail, Warehouse, & Manufacturing Recyclables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cardboard from shipping and packaging• Used oil and oil absorbents• Tires• Lead acid batteries• Scrap metal & plastic• Large appliances
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STEP 3: SET UP A RECYCLING HAULER

If a private hauler picks up your trash, first approach them about adding recycling pick-up. The hauler will help you decide the size carts or dumpsters you will need and discuss schedules for pick up and billing structures that will reduce the cost of waste disposal.

If you would like assistance in this process, contact our Business Specialist, Mary Sticklen through [email](#) or call 513-946-7732.

STEP 4: INTERIOR CONTAINERS

Making recycling as easy and convenient as throwing something away in the trash is key to employee and customer participation. Place recycling containers next to current trash containers in high traffic areas or in areas where a lot of recyclables are generated. Recycling containers should be easily recognizable and have consistent signage indicating what is and isn't recyclable. Examples of common areas to place recycling containers include:

- Lobby or reception area
- Desks or cubicles
- Kitchen or break areas
- Outdoor entrance
- Conference rooms
- Print rooms

Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District offers free recycling containers for businesses setting up or expanding recycling programs through the Let's Stop Waste ... At Work program. To set up a walkthrough to evaluate recycling container need and placement, contact our Business Specialist, Mary Copenbaker through [email](#) or call 513-946-7732.

STEP 5: COMMUNICATE WITH JANITORIAL STAFF

The success of recycling in the workplace hinges on the people who collect the recycling. If your company uses a third party janitorial service it's important to ensure your contract includes service for recycling; for sample language view this document.

Other information that should be communicated to the collection crew regardless of whether they are a contracted or in-house service are:

- Information about the placement of the bins
- How often the recycling will be collected
- Whether or not a liner will be used
 - If liners are used, ensure they are clear liners

Collection crews are also one of the best sources of information for feedback about the success of a recycling program. Talk with them regularly to see what they are noticing, such as whether a bin needs to be moved because isn't being used, if there is an area that is underserved, or if there are any bins with high rates of contamination.

STEP 6: EDUCATE EMPLOYEES

A crucial component to the success of a waste reduction program is the participation and support of employees, managers, and customers. Take time to educate employees about the program and meet with housekeeping or janitorial staff to discuss the new program with them and solicit feedback on the logistics of how collection will work.

Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District offers educational materials about waste reduction and/or informational presentations for employees at the start of a waste reduction/recycling program. [Employee enrichment seminars](#) offered by the District are also a good way to encourage employees' interest in sustainable behaviors once the program has started.

For other ideas on how to educate and motivate employees about waste reduction programs, see this [guide](#).

STEP 7: EVALUATE THE PROGRAM

Monitor and evaluate the program on a regular basis. Continuously communicate with janitorial staff, recycling coordinators, and your hauler to identify problems, adjust pickups, or brainstorm improvements.