

Recycling and Waste Reduction at Work

Rental Property Companies

This fact sheet is designed for property management companies in Gaston County that lease commercial property and provide waste disposal services for tenants. This information is designed to provide guidance on beginning a recycling and waste reduction program.



How Does Waste Reduction and Recycling Benefit Us?

Improves Public Image. Businesses and residents alike are becoming more conscious of how environmentally-friendly local businesses are. Having a waste reduction and recycling program in place may attract businesses to your property, and could even help increase their business.

Improves the Bottom Line. If your company handles the waste disposal contract, a waste reduction and recycling program may decrease your hauling costs by reducing the trash produced, therefore reducing your hauling and disposal fees. In addition, if you are recycling materials that can easily be sold, the revenue gained may help offset your recycling costs.

Keeps You Legal. NC General Statutes ban a number of items from the landfill, and more will be banned in 2008 and 2009. Depending on what types of materials your tenants are disposing of, these bans may apply to their waste stream.

Before You Get Started:

There are a few questions that you need to answer before you try to set up a recycling program. The first two can be answered by looking at your waste hauling contract. The last question will depend on the contract that you hold with your tenants. Answering these questions will provide you with the information that you need to get started.

- What type(s) and how many trash containers are provided by your trash hauler (roll-off containers, dumpsters, roll-out carts, etc.)?
- How many pickups are scheduled each week, and what is the cost per pickup?
- How is trash removed from inside the building? Do tenants handle trash removal, or does the management company provide janitorial services?

How Do We Get Started?

1. Know Your Tenants and Evaluate Their Needs. What kind of materials are your tenants producing? In part, this will depend on the type of space you are renting. If you rent office space, you can expect to see a lot of paper. If you rent retail space, you will probably see a lot of cardboard and packaging materials. Industrial waste will depend entirely on the industry, although you can still expect to see a lot of cardboard and packaging materials, as well as pallets. Take a look in the trash dumpsters to help determine your needs.

- If you have multiple tenants, do certain tenants produce the majority of waste, or do all tenants produce comparable amounts of waste? If certain tenants are producing most of the waste, is there enough space for a recycling container close to those tenants?
- Are containers full when they are dumped, or are you paying for pickups of empty space? If space remains, you might want to adjust the number of pickups or containers.

Contact the Gaston County Solid Waste and Recycling Division at 704-922-7729 for assistance with waste assessments.

2. Determine Your Collection and Transportation Options. Depending on the materials that you see in the waste stream, you will need to determine what material(s) will be the easiest to collect and recycle. Don't forget that the recyclable materials will be generated inside the building, but at some point they will need to be moved outside the building and transported to the recycling facility. This means that you will need to consider both collection and hauling options before implementing a program.

Collection Considerations.

- a. **Where Will Recyclables be Generated?** In retail outlets that are mostly generating cardboard, the majority of recyclables may stay in the loading area. In a professional office building, where office paper will be the largest part of the waste stream, recycling will be generated in all of the offices. Regardless of where the recyclables will be generated, make sure that there is an easy way for recyclables to be moved outside (carts to transport the recyclables outside, aisles and walkways that are wide enough for the carts, etc.).
- b. **Where Will Recyclables be Collected?** Depending on the material that you are collecting, and the area where it is being generated, you might need recycling bins located at various points inside the building. If you are concentrating on office or mixed paper recycling, you will need to determine whether to have a recycling bin in every office, or just in certain areas. If you are collecting drink containers, you will need to decide whether to place bins in waiting rooms or public areas, or just to have recycling available in break rooms/kitchen areas.
- c. **Who Will Collect the Recycling?** Are tenants currently responsible for taking their trash to the dumpsters, or do you provide janitorial services as part of the rental contract? If janitorial services are provided, will tenants be responsible for any aspect of recycling collection, or will the janitorial staff handle everything?

Hauling Options. There are a number of options available when it comes to transporting your recyclables, and the best option for your company will depend on the amount and type of recycling being generated.

- d. **Hauling by the Recycling Company.** In the Gaston County area, there are a number of local recycling companies, some of which will provide recycling containers and pickups for certain materials. As a general rule, you will need to generate a certain amount of recycling material for the company to provide containers and pickups for free, but some companies may be willing to rent containers or provide pickups at a lower cost than trash containers. See the back page for suggestions on questions to ask.
- e. **Hauling by Your Trash Hauler.** You can also check with your waste hauler to see about amending your contract to support recycling. Once you begin separating out recyclable materials, you should be able to decrease the number of pickups and/or the number (or size) of trash containers available. Many waste haulers are able to designate a truck just for recycling collections, so you may be able to vary containers and pickups accordingly and end with a recycling program that does not increase your contract costs.
- f. **Hauling to Drop-off Sites.** If you will not be generating enough materials for options (a) or (b) to work, there are six County-run recycling drop-off centers located around the County for your convenience. These sites will accept mixed paper, newspaper, cardboard, aluminum cans, plastic bottles, and glass and steel cans for recycling. For more information on site locations and hours, see the back page of this fact sheet.

Keep Your Tenants Involved

It is important that the management company supports waste reduction and recycling efforts at their rental properties, but your support of the programs doesn't mean a thing if you can't get your tenants to participate. How can you make sure that your tenants get involved and stay involved?

- **Ask for their needs and opinions.** Putting a recycling program in place that doesn't meet their needs won't accomplish anything. Plus, if you involve the tenants, and make it "their" plan, they are more likely to participate in the program.
- **Make yourself available.** Make sure your tenants know that you will help with any problems they come across. If they need containers or have questions, do your best to provide the resources and information they need.
- **Keep them informed.** Make sure that your tenants know about any changes to the program.
 - Keep signage up-to-date and easy to read.
 - Post fliers, send emails, or maintain a website that tenants can access.
- **Let your tenants know what they accomplish.** Make them aware of any cost savings, and let them know how much material they have recycled.
- **Be positive.** Make sure that your tenants understand that they are not doing more work, or handling more materials – they are simply handling the same materials in a different way.

3. **Develop a Plan and Educate Your Tenants.** Once you and your tenants have decided which recycling options will work best, develop those ideas into a recycling plan. Provide educational sessions and materials for your tenants. Let them know where recycling bins will be located, and what materials are acceptable in the bins. If there is a janitorial service that will be handling recycling collections, make sure that they are aware of the locations of all of the collection containers they will be emptying. Anyone that will be collecting and/or sorting materials needs to know how the materials should be separated, how materials will be transported to the recycling company, and where and how materials will be stored. Education is an on-going process, and the businesses involved may need to develop their own education plan depending on the size and turn-over rate of their staff. Proper signage is very important to the success of the program, so make sure that bins and recycling areas are properly labeled.
4. **Implement Your Program.** Place containers, and begin recycling. Just remember that your recycling program is a work in progress, and you may end up having to change collection methods or procedures. As you add more materials, and get more comfortable with the program, you will find more efficient ways to do things. Make sure that you take the time to evaluate your recycling program and gauge whether or not you are meeting your goals.

Where Can I Find Out More?

The North Carolina Department of Pollution Prevention & Environmental Assistance (NC DPPEA) offers waste assessments for businesses to help identify areas where costs and waste can be reduced. For more information, visit www.p2pays.org/main/services.asp.

For more information on recycling in the Gaston County area, and for help developing your program, contact the Gaston County Solid Waste and Recycling Division at 704-922-7729.

Waste Reduction and Recycling... **Easy Tips for Property Management Companies**

The following tips can be passed on to your tenants and janitorial staff as easy ways to decrease the amount of waste that they are producing.

In An Office Environment:

- Use e-mail and maintain electronic files instead of paper whenever possible.
- Make double-sided copies whenever possible.
- Keep letterhead on computers to print as needed rather than keeping a stock of pre-printed letterhead.
- Practice preventive maintenance on equipment.
- Sell or donate unused or unwanted furniture and equipment rather than throwing in the trash.
- Reuse office supplies like file folders and manila envelopes whenever possible.
- Order items in bulk when possible to cut down on packaging materials.
- Purchase supplies with minimal or recyclable packaging.
- Purchase office supplies (copy paper, envelopes, file folders, etc.) made with recycled-content materials.
- Convert scrap paper, outdated forms, and old letterhead into memo pads.
- Recycle office paper, drink containers, and toner cartridges.

In A Retail Environment:

- Flatten and recycle cardboard rather than throwing in trash.
- Ask suppliers to take back unwanted or unneeded packaging materials.
- Ask suppliers to reuse pallets or deliver materials in reusable crates.
- Depending on their condition, consider selling slightly damaged goods at a reduced price rather than discarding them.

For Janitorial Staff:

- Purchase recycled-content trash and recycling containers, trash bag liners, and storage bins.
- Buy cleaning solutions in bulk, and use refillable spray bottles rather than aerosol cans.
- Purchase non-toxic or less toxic cleaners.
- Purchase multi-purpose cleaners rather than cleaners designed for one type of job.
- Dust and wipe down surfaces with washable cloth towels rather than with disposable towels.
- Provide janitorial staff with reusable gloves and other protective supplies if needed.

Questions to Ask Recycling Companies

When you are looking for a company to take your recyclable materials, there are a number of questions to ask. The following questions can help assess which companies best fit your needs.

- What material(s) does the company accept for recycling?
- Can the company provide recycling containers? If so,
 - Is there a charge?
 - How much of the material do you need to generate?
 - Does the company empty the containers for free?
- How do your recyclables need to be separated (i.e. can you mix all types of paper, or does cardboard need to be kept separate from office paper)?
- Will they pay for your recycling, or do you need to have a certain quality or quantity?
- Do recyclables need to be prepared a certain way (i.e. paper baled or bottles flattened) before the company will accept them?

Legal Requirements

North Carolina General Statute 130A-309.10(f): Bans certain items from being disposed of in landfills. Depending on the types of businesses that lease property from you, some or all of the material bans may apply. Banned items are: **aluminum cans, antifreeze, used motor oil, whole scrap tires, lead-acid batteries, white goods** (large appliances like dishwashers and ovens), and **yard debris**.

House Bill 1465: This bill expands on G.S. 130A-309.10(f) to ban additional materials from disposal in landfills. Under this bill, **plastic bottles** will be banned, along with **used oil filters** and **wooden pallets**. House Bill 1465 becomes effective October 1, 2009. The full text of this bill is available online at <http://www.p2pays.org/ref/38/37333.pdf>.

For your convenience, Gaston County maintains six recycling drop-off centers. Recycling materials can be dropped of at these sites at no charge.

