

Commercial Recycling Toolkit

Hotels



Recycling Waste Makes Good Business \$ense

Yes, recycling can save money! Recycling is often less expensive than trash disposal. Whether you are just starting or are trying to improve an existing program, it always helps to have a plan. Designing an effective waste reduction program will insure that you comply with the Universal Recycling Law, will help reduce your waste stream, will save natural resources and energy, and has the potential for significant waste disposal savings. This toolkit will provide assistance in setting up a new recycling program and will provide information to help you evaluate your current recycling and/or other waste reduction programs. If your hotel has a restaurant, please review our recycling toolkit for restaurants.

Other elements of waste reduction include ways you reduce and reuse the waste you generate. The first and most effective component of the waste hierarchy is reducing the waste created. Hotels are encouraged to reduce their waste by purchasing in bulk, buying items with less packaging and switching to reusable instead of single-use items. These efforts often offer the financial incentive of lower expenses in purchases. Despite efforts to reduce the amount of waste generated, consumers and businesses still create a substantial amount of waste. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that each American generates 4.3 pounds of waste daily. Much of this waste can be reduced, reused, or recycled to minimize the strain on the environment and municipal waste management.

If your hotel is interested in other green initiatives, we suggest you check out the Delaware Green Lodging program. The Green Lodging program is a voluntary program that promotes pollution prevention practices in the tourism and hospitality industry. Please visit www.dnrec.delaware.gov/p2/Pages/GreenLodging.aspx for more information.

Recycling Plan

Step 1: Identify your recycling program coordinator

The facility manager or their designee should plan and oversee the recycling program. This individual should be motivated, have a good rapport with staff and guests, and takes an interest in waste reduction, reuse, and recycling. Announce the program and the new recycling coordinator to all staff to encourage cooperation and compliance. The recycling coordinator should:

- Establish recycling policy and procedures.
- Interface with staff and with recycling service providers.
- Determine the start date of the program.
- Facilitate education & promotion of recycling by explaining how recycling works and why it is important.
- Track the progress and success of the recycling program.
- Assemble a green team to help plan, implement, evaluate and manage the program. The team should include staff from all areas where recyclables are generated including housekeeping staff and grounds crew.



Step 2: Conduct a characterization of your waste stream

A waste characterization is the process used to quantify the types of wastes and recyclables being generated. During a waste characterization, the types of materials discarded in your trash and recycling bins are literally inspected, identified, and sometimes weighed. This will help you identify recycling and waste prevention opportunities, potential savings from reduced disposal costs or sale of recyclables, and establish baseline data.

To conduct a waste characterization:

- Utilize knowledgeable staff (*For guidance see: Additional Resources – NERC - Northeast Recycling Council*) or contact your waste hauler, recycling service provider, or waste/recycling consultant to perform the characterization.
- Small businesses may request a free characterization of their waste stream by contacting DSWA at 800-404-7080 or DNREC at 302-739-9403. Requests for a free waste characterization will be addressed on a first come, first serve basis

as resources allow.

Step 3: Identify the materials to be collected

Work with your waste hauler, service provider, or waste/recycling consultant to collect and analyze the information collected during your waste characterization. Once you see what you’re discarding, identify opportunities for waste reduction, reuse, and recycling. The following materials can be commingled in one single-stream recycling container:

- Newspapers
- Magazines and catalogs
- Mixed paper (office, junk mail)
- Telephone books
- Glass bottles and jars
- Plastic bottles, jugs, containers
- Aseptic containers
- Milk cartons and juice boxes
- Corrugated cardboard
- Aluminum and steel cans
- Boxboard
- Rigid plastic

Large quantities of certain materials may be sorted for cost-effective recycling, such as corrugated cardboard, plastic film, and office paper. Following are some examples of material streams that may be beneficial to recycle separately:

- Batteries
- Packing peanuts (EPS loose fill)
- Carpet
- Paint
- Ink and toner cartridges (Many suppliers provide take-back programs)
- Fluorescent lamps and bulbs (consider using high efficiency fluorescent ballasts and lamps (T-5 & T-8))
- Hazardous waste (see: <http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/whs/awm/SHWMB/Pages/HazardousWaste.aspx>)
- Construction & demolition debris
- Pallets
- Electronics
- Plastic film
- Used textiles
- Landscape waste (organic)
- Food waste
- White goods

For more information see: www.recycling.delaware.gov and www.dswa.com/programs.asp

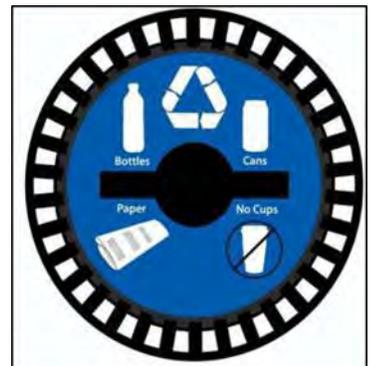
Step 4: Determine collection program logistics

Making recycling easy and convenient will boost levels of staff and guest participation. Recycling should be as easy as throwing something in the trash, so recycling containers should be placed wherever you currently have trash containers (parking lot, entrance, lobby, guest rooms, restaurant, pool area, etc.) Take the following criteria into consideration when choosing containers:

- Placement
- Location
- Capacity
- Durability
- Ease of handling
- Cost
- Appearance
- Opening type
- % recycled content

The recycling containers should look different from trash cans, be easily identified, and be clearly labeled. You can produce labels on your own or purchase them. Lids should have restricted openings. Consider choosing blue bins for recycling, black for trash, and green for food wastes. Use clear liners for recycling so housekeeping staff can easily identify recyclables from trash. Use compostable bags for food wastes. Other considerations include:

- Is your recyclable storage area of adequate size for your hauler to pick up?
- Do your recyclable materials need to be crushed, baled, banded or compacted?
- Is a recycling service needed for a specific material stream?



Step 5: Select a recycling service provider

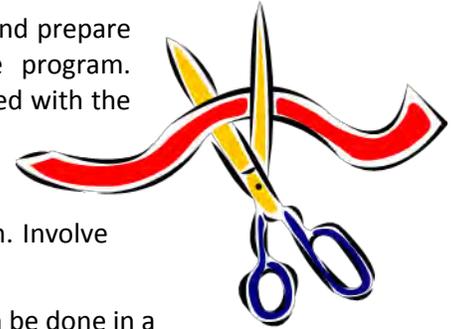
Recycling service providers are vendors that will pick up your recyclables for processing. While many waste haulers offer recycling services, some companies specialize in providing strictly recycling services. Services might include baling, shredding, crushing, or compacting; as well as transporting and marketing the recyclable materials. Discuss collection schedules and options with a variety of service providers and request a billing structure that will reduce your waste disposal costs. Monitor how full collection dumpsters get, and make arrangements to adjust the collection schedule based on volume. Keep in mind that reuse organizations will often pick up items commonly discarded from hotels (such as used textiles, art, furniture, appliances, building materials, and fixtures) for free. If you choose not to use a collection service you can self-haul your recyclables to a recycling processor.

Step 6: Outreach and Education

Before you launch the program, spend time promoting your recycling effort and educating staff about recycling procedures. Implementation will require an ability to motivate staff and your guests to participate. Once the program has begun, you should reinforce good habits and keep staff and guests interested in the program.

Choose a launch date to officially start the program. Alert staff well in advance and prepare simple information explaining the benefits and procedures to promote the program. Organize training sessions for housekeeping and grounds staffs who will be involved with the implementation of the collection program.

Prepare a press release to publicly announce and promote the program – and your business! Plan an event to launch the program and to generate enthusiasm. Involve local business and government leaders with a “ribbon-cutting” ceremony.



For a recycling program to be effective you must educate staff and guests. This can be done in a variety of ways including but not limited to:

- Download and distribute the ‘How to Recycle’ guide: www.recycling.delaware.gov.
- Download and post the ‘How to Recycle’ poster in both English and Spanish in guest rooms and staff areas.
- Meet with staff to discuss the recycling procedures and program goals.
- Inform vendors about the program: Distribute literature, electronic media, ‘How to Recycle’ guides, and posters.
- Place recycling information in guest rooms.
- Make announcements at conferences to remind people to recycle and show them where containers are located.
- Stress the importance with staff that recyclables be kept free of trash and contamination.
- Display recycling goals and/or promote the amount that has been recycled on signs and displays.
- Request feedback from staff regarding contamination or issues surrounding recycling.
- Send out press releases to publicize your recycling program when reaching milestones such as diversion rates or lower volumes of waste.
- Consider sustainable purchasing or green procurement policies: require purchasing of materials made with post-consumer recycled content, or bid specifications that give preference to ‘green’ products.
- Encourage participation and publicize recycling program successes through newsletters, e-mails, posters, and new employee orientation.

Step 7: Sustaining the program

Monitor and evaluate the recycling program on a regular basis. Request a monthly disposal report stating the amounts of recyclables by material type and disposal data in tonnage or cubic yard measurements.

- Post results and accomplishments listing the quantity of recyclables collected, total waste diverted, and revenue from the commodities.
- Percentage of waste diverted by your recycling program – compare the tonnage of recyclables collected to the tonnage of waste generated
- Maintain records for charges for hauling waste and recyclables. Calculate savings from reduced disposal costs
- Request contamination reports from recycling hauler or perform routine inspections of recyclables
- Monitor progress and make the diversion rates mean something –Translate the data into terms the average person can understand (e.g., how many rooms the waste would otherwise fill up in the hotel)
- Consult DNREC or a private consultant for help

Additional strategies for waste reduction

In addition to recycling, there are other ways to reduce hotel operating costs, unnecessary material use, and waste. The Delaware Green Lodging Program offers more information: www.dnrec.delaware.gov/p2/Pages/GreenLodging.aspx.

Reduce – Purchase, consume, and throw away less. Use upstream control of the volume and types of wastes generated by your hotel through purchasing decisions. Source reduction actually prevents the generation of waste in the first place, making it the preferred method of waste management. Methods may include:

- Partner with www.CleantheWorld.org to collect used soap and shampoo for distribution to those in need
- Discontinue the use of phone books in guest rooms

- Offer hotel amenities such as soap and shampoo in bulk dispensers rather than single-use sizes
- Make single-use amenities such as toothpaste, cotton swabs, and lotion available only upon request
- Switch to reusable coffee cups, stirring spoons, and water glasses in guest rooms instead of disposables
- Don't provide daily newspapers to each room - offer just a few papers in the lobby and breakfast room
- Provide filtered tap water, pitchers, and glasses instead of bottled water
- Encourage suppliers to reduce packaging in purchases and shipping
- Use long-lasting, energy efficient light bulbs and fixtures
- Implement double-sided copying as the default setting on all printers and copiers
- Encourage staff to bring their own travel mug or water bottle for beverages

Reuse – Reusing items by repairing, donating, or selling them. Reuse is even better than recycling because items do not have to be reprocessed before they can be used again.

- After 90 days, offer phone chargers from the lost and found for other guests' use
- Offer a lending library of books and magazines in the lobby
- Use reusable mugs, plates, and cutlery in the break room
- Reuse laser and printer cartridges by participating in take-back programs
- Store and reuse shipping boxes, packing peanuts, and containers
- Set-up a 'Reuse Area' in the workplace for items no longer needed
- Purchase or donate surplus materials
- Donate leftover materials such as lumber, fixtures, and paint to a reuse organization

Buy Recycled – If you are not buying recycled content products you are not recycling! Purchase products that are re-manufactured or made from post-consumer waste (PCW) recycled content such as:

- Office paper
- Paper towels, napkins, and toilet tissue
- Carpeting
- Key cards
- Recycling and trash containers
- Toner and printer cartridges

Additional Resources:

DNREC Universal Recycling Grant and Low Interest Loan Program: www.dnrec.delaware.gov/services/Pages/Loans.aspx

Delaware Recycles: www.recycling.delaware.gov and www.facebook.com/DelawareRecycles

(Download 'How to Recycle' guide, posters, Commercial Recycling toolkits)

DNREC, Division of Waste and Hazardous Substances: www.dnrec.delaware.gov/whs/awm or call (302) 739-9403

Delaware Solid Waste Authority (DSWA): www.dswa.com or call 1-800-404-7080.

Electronic waste: For guidance in disposing of electronic waste and take-back programs

DSWA: www.dswa.com/programs_EGRbusiness.asp

EPA: www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserva/materials/ecycling/index.htm

EPA Environmentally-Preferable Purchasing Program: www.epa.gov/epp (Costs and benefits of purchasing choices)

EPA Food Recovery Challenge: www.epa.gov/foodrecoverychallenge (Food waste reduction)

Green Business: www.greenbiz.com

Habitat for Humanity: www.habitat.org/restores/directory/de

Northeast Recycling Council: www.nerc.org/documents/town_business/recycling_makes_sense_guide.pdf

(See Appendix C)

Special Wastes: www.recycling.delaware.gov or www.dswa.com/programs.asp (Some material streams including: batteries, fluorescent lamps and bulbs, ink and toner cartridges, and paint may require special handling)

Sustainable Business: www.sustainablebusiness.com

The Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act: www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-104publ210/pdf/PLAW-104publ210.pdf Encourages food donation to nonprofits by minimizing liability

US Green Building Council: www.usgbc.org

More recycling information: www.earth911.com