

Business Recycling Program Package

Becker County Environmental Services

The following documents contain useful information for you and your employees to take advantage of, whether you have a recycling program or not. The first two are aimed at management and the last is aimed at management and employees. You may make copies of these as needed. Find the following documents below:

1. How to Start Your Recycling Program
2. Improving Your Recycling Program
3. Waste Reduction Best Practices

Additionally, we have produced numerous signs (up-right or landscape) to help with your program. The signs are not included in this package, but you may find them on the website or request from Sandy or Harrison. These include the following:

- Informational Recycling Flyer (hand out, post on wall, bulletin board)
- Non-Recyclable Items Flyer (post near recycling bins)
- Trash
- Mixed Recycling (if doing single-sort)
- Metal
- Glass
- Cardboard
- Plastic
- Paper

If you would like access to signage, go to our website, or contact Sandy or Harrison. Find contact information below.

How to Start Your Recycling Program

Becker County Environmental Services

**If you would like help with your recycling program, or have any questions, feel free to contact us or visit our website. See below.*

1. Conduct a Waste Audit

Before you start recycling, you should determine what potentially recyclable materials are ending up in your trash (plastic, cardboard, metal, paper, glass). You can do this again after your program has been established and running to gauge your progress. It is not as messy as you think.

2. Choose Between Single-Sort and Multi-Sort

If you want your program to be simple and easy, go with single-sort recycling bins, where everything recyclable (except glass) can go into one bin. Alternatively, if you want to be thorough, sort the materials into separate bins for each material. *Make sure you have the right size bins and dumpster(s) for your program, enough of them, and frequent-enough hauling pick-up.

3. Find a Recycling Champion

Consider asking for a volunteer or designating someone to spearhead your recycling effort. This shares the load and can bring passion and excitement to the program.

4. Contact Your Hauler

Waste/Recycling haulers can be a great resource for your recycling program, providing bins, identifying recyclable materials, and, of course, picking up your recyclables.

5. Involve Custodial Staff

Custodians can have notable insight regarding your waste stream and its management. Ask them for suggestions on your recycling program and any advice moving forward.

6. Educate

Before launching your program, you should explain to everyone affected why you are starting the program, how it works, and what impact it will have. Provide training to people on how and where to dispose of their trash and recycling with the new system. Also make sure that custodial staff are in the loop and up to date on its implementation.

7. Launch Your Program

Once you have everything in place, send out an email or note to everyone that the program is starting, and double-check that they really do know what to do with their trash and recyclable items. Answer any questions.

Contact:

Environmental Services

Phone: (218)-846-7310

Email: sandy.gunderson@co.becker.mn.us – Recycling Coordinator

harrison.loch@co.becker.mn.us – MN GreenCorps Member serving Becker County

Improving Your Recycling Program – Best Practices

Becker County Environmental Services

**If you have any questions, or would like help with your recycling program, feel free to contact us or visit our website.*

Customize

Make certain that your recycling program meets your specific needs (having the right size bins, enough bins, right frequency of hauling, etc). Every situation is different.

Good Bin Placement

Recycling bins should be just as easy to access as trash. Ideally, you should place recycling bins anywhere a trash bin is located (under desks, near the printer, in the break room/kitchen, in each apartment unit, laundry rooms, etc) with the exception of the restroom.

Color Coded Bins

Color coding helps to remedy confusion, prevent contamination of the recycling bin, and lower the amount of recyclable material going in the trash. A good rule of thumb is to use Blue for Recycling and Black/Gray for Trash.

Clear Signage and Flyers

Clear signage and educational posters further distinguish between your bins and help to educate people on what items can and cannot go in recycling and trash bins. A single piece of garbage in your recycling bin can send the entire container to the landfill due to contamination and throwing away recyclables fills up your garbage bin faster and is wasteful.

Small/Shaped Openings

Smaller and shaped openings help to prevent trash from contaminating recycling by limiting the kinds of items that can fit (a thin slot for paper, a round opening for plastic bottles, etc).

Avoid Bagging

Bagging recyclables may be convenient, but it makes recycling harder at the MRF (Material Recovery Facility). The bags get caught in machinery and can cause slow-downs and stoppages in processing – do not put plastic grocery bags in recycling either; instead, see if your local grocery store takes them.

Non-Recyclable Items

Some items are hard to recycle due to contamination or lack of an end market. Check with your hauler on items they do not accept.

Buy Recyclable

Be sure to purchase from suppliers whose products are recyclable and that use recycled content in their products. Work toward zero waste.

Recycling Bulletin/Newsletter

Publishing information about your recycling program (monthly, biyearly, with new people, etc) can help to highlight its importance, drive better recycling practices, and inform people of new developments.

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Waste Reduction Best Practices for Businesses

Becker County Environmental Services

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Go Paperless

Paper makes up a large portion of the waste stream for many businesses. With options like email, online billing and statements, and more, going paperless (or close to it) is easier than ever. Going paperless often saves time, will save space in your waste and recycling bins and potentially reduce the frequency of pick-up by your hauler. For the paper you do need to use, set your printer to double-sided printing, and reuse sheets as scratch paper if possible. Furthermore, if you receive subscriptions to magazines (these can often be accessed online), or get junk mail, try to unsubscribe. This will further reduce your paper waste.

Eliminate Single-Use

Single-use items such as styrofoam coffee cups, paper plates, plastic eating utensils, and coffee filters are another source of preventable waste. Try to replace these with reusable alternatives (dishes and silverware, etc)

Reduce Packaging

Products today are frequently over-packaged, and individual wrapping makes this issue even worse. Purchase your supplies with the least amount of packaging possible. If applicable, try to implement this in your own operations as well. Additionally, try to purchase from firms that use recycled and reused/reusable material in their products.

Rent Infrequently Used Items

For equipment you use infrequently, consider renting it when you need it instead of buying. Alternatively, purchasing the equipment in cooperation with other businesses and sharing it is an option.

Reuse and Repair

Many items in a business environment can be reused for a time or repaired. Before opting for new purchases and replacements, do what you can to get the most life out of your business' infrastructure and resources. Also consider purchasing used and/or refurbished items and equipment instead of buying new if possible or purchase new items and equipment from sustainable and quality suppliers.

Donate or Re-Sell

Usable goods too frequently end up in the landfill. If you have materials or items that you have no use for but are still usable, consider donating them or selling them used. These materials may include computers and computer hardware, appliances, building materials, equipment, furnishings, and more. You may also try to connect with a material exchange network, such as the Minnesota Material Exchange.

Food Reuse and Composting

A significant amount of what consumers and businesses throw away takes the form of organic material – namely food. This does not need to be the case, as food can be diverted from the waste stream and used in multiple ways. Save it for later, donate it to a food shelf, send it to a local farm for use as animal feed, or set up an *organics composting* program on site.

Recycling

Recycling is an easy way to reduce the amount of material heading to the landfill. It diverts valuable and usable materials to be re-processed and made into new products. However, keep in mind that “Recycling” comes after “Reduce, Reuse...” in the famous waste reduction motto. Try to reduce the amount of material you use first, and reuse or donate what you can before tossing it in the trash or recycling bins.

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