

Recycling at Philadelphia City Agencies

An Office Manager's Guide



Michael A. Nutter, Mayor
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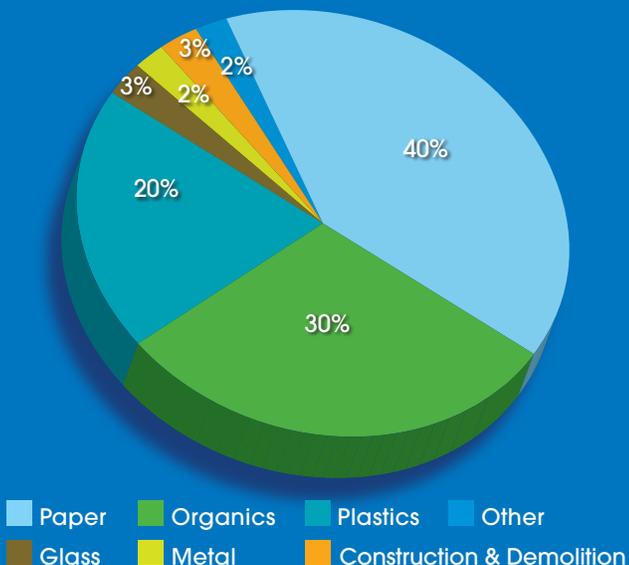
Recycling Requirements for Municipal Agencies

A Primer for Office Managers

Just like businesses and institutions, City buildings and municipal agencies in privately leased space are required by City ordinance to recycle. Recycling conserves energy and natural resources, reduces pollution, and lowers the City's waste disposal costs. It's also a key component of Mayor Nutter's Greenworks Plan to make Philadelphia the greenest city in the nation. When it comes to recycling, municipal agencies should not only comply, they should lead by example.

This document provides an overview of recycling requirements and offers guidance in managing an effective program in your office. Most of the waste generated in the typical government office is recyclable (see chart below), so implementing and managing an effective recycling program is relatively easy.

Typical Waste Composition % in Government Buildings



What Is Recyclable?

Recycling in Philadelphia is "single-stream," which means that most waste haulers collect paper, cardboard, glass, metal, and plastics mixed together in a single recycling container. Some recycling haulers work differently, so check with your building manager before establishing a recycling program. Philadelphia's recycling law requires the following materials to be separated from trash and recycled:



Keep plastic bags and foam containers out of recycling bins. These contaminants reduce the value of recovered materials. You reduce contamination by using bin labels, posters, and email updates to communicate about the program. Contact the Recycling Office at **215-686-5444** for these and other helpful materials.

Managing an Effective In-House Collection Program

Collection of recyclables starts with the employee. The foundation of a strong recycling program is the provision of suitable recycling bins at each desk and workstation.

Recycling bins make participation convenient and remind employees that the program is up and running. The best recycling programs pair each trash container with a recycling container. Depending on supply, the Streets Department may be able to provide both desk-side recycling bins and larger containers for common areas such as copier rooms and break rooms. To request bins, contact the Recycling Office at **215-686-5444**.

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City agencies can also purchase blue plastic desk-side recycling bins through City-wide contract **No. 100255 (BP 13034)**. The commodity code is **31650-269-028-00**. Larger 22-gallon and 32-gallon containers can be purchased by the Streets Department on behalf of other agencies through an inter-departmental fund transfer.



Finally, your regular office supply vendor probably stocks recycling bins. Many hardware and home supply stores also sell an array of bins and labels for office use. Labels are also available for free from the Recycling Office.

Select bins based on their intended use. Place larger containers near copiers, printing stations, and other places where large amounts of paper are generated.

Larger recycling bins are also appropriate wherever food is prepared or consumed. Canteens, cafeterias,



and kitchenettes generate large quantities of glass, plastic, aluminum, and steel containers. There are numerous types and styles of large recycling containers for these common areas. Use signs to remind everyone to minimize contamination, especially around food. Contact the Recycling Office for free recycling posters.

If your agency leases space in a private building with centralized waste collection, the building owner or manager is responsible for ensuring recycling services are available. The owner or manager must file a Recycling Plan with the Streets Department, issue instructions to tenants, and post the plan along with signs describing the recycling program throughout the building. He or she must also facilitate the purchase and placement of adequate recycling containers. If your private office building has no apparent recycling program, contact the Recycling Office for help on getting one started.

Managing a successful recycling program in your office isn't hard, but it requires a sustained effort. The Recycling Office is here to help. In addition to providing free educational flyers, posters, stickers, and bins, we can arrange for SWEEP officers (Streets & Walkways Education and Enforcement Program) to visit your office and troubleshoot recycling problems with you.

Working with Custodial Staff

Once employees have sorted their recyclables, the materials need to be delivered to a loading dock or holding area to await collection. How recyclables get picked up varies among facilities. In some buildings, custodians empty individual recycling bins on a set schedule while others require employees to take recyclables to a nearby centralized bin. Check with the building manager if you're not sure which applies to your office. Custodians and housekeepers are a critical link in the recycling process. If you're establishing a new plan, be sure to include custodians in the process. Ask how containers will be emptied and how cleaners will consolidate and store materials. Be sure that custodians and housekeepers understand the benefits of recycling.

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As an office manager establishing a new program, you may need to modify the custodial service contract to include the management of recyclables. In most cases, reduced handling of trash offsets added handling of recyclables with no added costs incurred. This is especially true if employees empty their personal bins into central intermediate containers.

Custodial collection carts in buildings with a recycling program are typically fitted with separate bags or compartments for trash and for recyclables. These dual bagging systems allow custodians to collect both materials streams on single sweeps through a building.

Collection from Buildings

The third stage of a successful office recycling program is separate collection from the building by a licensed solid waste recycling hauler. Managers of municipal offices in leased space can skip this step if the collection contract is managed by the building owner or property manager. However, be vigilant of inadequate separation at the point of collection! Private buildings that lack separate recycling collection are in violation

of City ordinance and should be reported to the Recycling Office.

In buildings owned by the City of Philadelphia, collection methods vary. In large City buildings, recyclable materials are collected in dumpsters or from loading docks. Smaller facilities such as recreation centers, police district headquarters, fire houses, and neighborhood library branches can be part of the Streets Department's residential collection routes. Sanitation crews collect recyclables placed at the curb in any 32-gallon plastic or metal container as long as it is labeled RECYCLING. The Recycling Office can provide large recycling bin decals for containers. Managers of City facilities requiring collection more than once per week or using dumpster or roll-out carts instead of curbside recycling bins need to arrange for collections by a solid waste and recycling company. You may receive collection services from more than one hauler (e.g., one for recyclables and another for trash). If you need to add recycling service to an existing private contract, check with your facility's current solid waste hauler as they should be able to provide recycling services too. You may wish to have your existing hauler work with you as you develop a Recycling Plan. Your hauler may also be able to set up the in-house collection component of your program.

By adding recycling, you'll proportionately decrease the amount of trash that needs to be collected. Recycling collections usually cost less than garbage collections, and you may be able to offset any added costs by reducing either your garbage collection frequency or the size or number of your facility's dumpsters.

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Additional Considerations

Cardboard: In office buildings, cardboard is sometimes managed separately from other recyclables. It may be consolidated in utility areas on each floor and then flattened and moved at the end of the day to a staging area. Establishing a recycling system for corrugated cardboard can be as simple as creating a staging area and arranging for separate collection.



Public Space Recycling: Recycling programs in public areas are often the most difficult to manage. But with proper signage, including pictures of the recyclables that are designated, recycling in public spaces is well within reach.



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CONTACT US FOR ASSISTANCE:

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