



School District Guide to Recycling in Central Ohio

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Introduction

The Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO) has developed this guide to help your school district in implementing an efficient, cost-effective, long-term recycling program in every classroom, school and office building. A district-wide recycling program properly utilized by staff and students can be the best hands-on lesson for teaching students about waste reduction and conservation. It also goes far in raising civic awareness in addition to saving the District money!

Generally Accepted Recyclable Materials

Please note: recyclable material markets vary depending on your location. The below list is specific to Central Ohio only. Please check with your recycling hauler or local Material Recovery Facility (MRF) to learn more about what is currently accepted in your area. To learn more about how a MRF operates please visit:

http://www.rumpkerecycling.com/recycling_basics/videos.aspx

Paper/Cardboard

Newspaper with ad slicks, magazines, phone books, brown grocery bags, “junk” mail, chip board, corrugated cardboard and office paper

Metal

Aluminum and bi-metal beverage cans, steel food/tin cans, clean aluminum foil and empty aerosol cans

Plastic Bottles Only

Numbers 1-7 bottle-neck containers only please e.g. soda bottle, water bottles, milk bottles, detergent bottles, and shampoo bottles

Glass Bottles Only

Unacceptable Materials for Recycling

Metal

Paint cans, coat hangers and steel scraps

Plastic

Caps, plastic containers that are not bottles, oil jugs, plastic grocery bags (please find a grocery store near you that accepts bags for recycling), plastic film or other plastic packaging

Glass

Ceramics, Window or Drinking Glass, Light Bulbs

Aseptic Containers

Gable-Top Cartons or Paperboard Cartons containing such items as Milk, Juice, Fabric Softener, Egg Substitute Containers, Frozen Food Cartons, Frozen Juice Containers, etc.

Getting Started

Step 1. Contractual Obligation

Work with the Director of Operations in your District to learn more about the current hauling contract and when it expires. When it is time to re-bid the hauling contract it is important to include recycling language in the bid. It helps to meet prior to re-bidding the hauling contract in order to build support and communicate roles various staff members will play. At this point, a budget should be established. Can your district afford the cost of recycling containers and labels for both recycling and trash containers? If not, is outside funding available to you through another organization?

Step 2. Form an on-going Recycling Committee

Form a committee made up of administrative staff, custodial and teacher representatives and students to discuss the most effective way of coordinating a district-wide recycling program. Parents can also be great volunteers in assisting with your program's implementation. Someone should be designated to be in charge of organizing the committee and meetings. Many times this is the Director of Operations. The committee should develop a plan of action. Items that should be included in the plan are:

- Do we have more recycling than trash? Many times the answer is "Yes"
- What will the recycling containers look like?
- Should the recycling containers be larger than the trash cans?
- Who will develop the recycling and trash only labels for each container?
- Who will collect the recyclables?
- Who will collect the trash?
- Will student organizations assist with collection and/or education and outreach?
- Where will the containers be placed and how many will be needed?
- Can your District afford to buy recycling containers or will you need to seek outside assistance?
- Who will evaluate the program?

The committee members that are not students and parents should commit to continued meetings every new school year to ensure the on-going success of the program.

Step 3. Follow Your Custodian

The custodial and teaching staff is a critical component in the implementation of your recycling program. By working with them closely you will ensure that the recycling and trash containers are emptied every evening and disposed of in the proper dumpsters. Your custodian should be able to help in addressing these questions and more:

- How will the recyclable materials be moved from the classroom to the outdoor storage dumpsters?
- How will the trash taken to the staged collection areas be moved to the outside trash bins for pick-up?
- How will mixing of trash and recyclables be prevented?

Step 4. Set up Containers for Recycling

After a budget has been approved you can begin to evaluate what containers will best meet your needs. Consider the following when doing so:

- Does the Fire Marshall require specific containers for trash? If so, they will most likely require them for recycling.
- Depending on the type of school (elementary, middle or high) what type of waste is leaving the classroom and is the majority of waste recyclable. If so, the recycling containers should be larger than the trash containers.
- Recycling containers should be placed in every classroom next to the trash can.
- Be sure to place containers where recyclables are generated. For example a recycling container by the copying machine can help keep recyclable paper resources from going to the landfill.
- ALL containers should be clearly labeled. The “Recycling Only” containers should list only what can be placed in those containers (the hauler can help clarify this for you). The trash containers should also be labeled “Trash Only”. You could also list different types of trash on them e.g. tissues, paper towels, gum, food, pencils, pens, etc.

Step 5. On-going Education and Support

Reinforcement can sometimes be the best teacher. Articles in teacher, custodian and student newsletters can help in promoting the program. Make announcements at games, competitions and contests. By frequently reminding staff and students how to recycle, what to recycle and why it is important you can begin to cultivate the change in behavior it will require in order to implement a successful recycling program.

Step 6. Evaluate the Recycling Program

The recycling program should be reviewed every year. A survey may be conducted among faculty and students to determine whether or not your program is effective in reducing the

amount of trash leaving your school. Typically, a contract with a waste hauler that includes pick up for recycling and trash reflects the “cost per pull” or how much they are charging the District to have a truck empty or pull a trash and recycling dumpster. Many times it is cheaper to pull the recycling dumpster since the material is a commodity and sold to a broker. If you can reduce the number of pulls on the trash dumpster and increase the number of pulls on the recycling dumpster the District may see a cost savings on the hauling contract.

Step 7. Other Recommendations

- It may help in having the support of your School Board.
- It may be easier to start small and implement your recycling program in phases. If implemented in phases it could be easier to customize a program to meet your schools specific needs.
- Recycling containers in the cafeterias should only be labeled to collect bottles and cans
- Remember no recycling containers in bathrooms.
- Remember “No Trash Can Stands Alone”. Be sure to have a recycling container by each trash container.
- Press releases are great in touting your commitment to recycling.

Learn more about your schools recycling program at:

Additional resources are available to schools in Franklin County through SWACO. Please visit our website at www.swaco.org and learn more about SWACO’s Environmental Education (EE) programs.