

Office Waste Reduction, Recycling & Composting

Many of us spend the majority of our day away from home or in an office. We have created a tip sheet on recycling in the office.

What you can actually recycle is dependent on who is collecting material and whether or not there are markets for the materials. However there are basic items that can be included in your office recycling program.



Paper

- Waste paper: printed paper, folders, used envelopes
- Unwanted magazines and newspapers
- Unwanted cardboard boxes

Aluminum

- Aluminum drink cans
- Aluminum caps and lids
- Aluminum foil

Metal coated plastic film is not recyclable. Use the scrunch test to check whether these wrappers are made of aluminum foil. If the wrapper springs back when scrunched in the hand it is not aluminum, and hence not recyclable!

Glass

- Soda Bottle
- Jars
- Other Glass items (vases, plates etc.)

Electronics & Supplies

- Old computers / printers
- Printer toner / ink cartridges
- Cell phones

PAPER

PLASTIC

GLASS

ALUMINUM

COMPOST

SOME RECYCLING FACTS

ALUMINUM RECYCLING

Recycling one ton of aluminum:
Saves 14,000 kWh of energy
Saves 39.6 barrels (1,663 gallons) of oil
Saves 237.6 million Btu's of energy
Saves 10 cubic yards of landfill space

CARDBOARD RECYCLING

Recycling one ton of cardboard:
Saves 390 kWh of energy
Saves 1.1 barrels (46 gallons) of oil
Saves 6.6 million Btu's of energy

GLASS RECYCLING

Recycling one ton of glass:
Saves 42 kWh of energy
Saves 0.12 barrels (5 gallons) of oil
Saves 714,286 Btu's of energy
Saves 2 cubic yards of landfill space
Saves 7.5 pounds of air pollutants from being released

PAPER RECYCLING

Recycling one ton of paper:
Saves 4,100 kWh of energy
Saves 9 barrels (380 gallons) of oil
Saves 54 million Btu's of energy
Saves 3.3 cubic yards of landfill space
Saves 60 pounds of air pollutants being released
Saves 7,000 gallons of water
Saves 17 trees

PLASTICS RECYCLING

Recycling one ton of plastic:
Saves 5,774 kWh energy
Saves 16.3 barrels (685 gallons) of oil
Saves 98 million Btu's of energy
Saves 30 cubic yards of landfill space

STEEL RECYCLING

Recycling one ton of steel:
Saves 642 kWh of energy
Saves 1.8 barrels (76 gallons) of oil
Saves 10.9 million Btu's of energy
Saves 4 cubic yards of landfill space



RECYCLING TIPS

Each area of the work space should be equipped with clearly marked recycling containers or a recycling station.

If you have a kitchen or food service area, you may also include a bin for composting. In some cities it has become mandatory. Check to see if there is composting pickup in your area.

Fact:
Recycling two aluminum cans saves the equivalent energy needed to power a PC for one workday.

OFFICE SPACE

Paper / Cans & Bottles

- Use deskside recycling containers for convenient paper & can/bottles recycling.
- Provide uniform design and clearly labeled recycling bins near copiers, shipping and receiving areas, and in employee eating areas to collect white paper, mixed paper, newspaper, magazines, cardboard as well as nonpaper products (glass, aluminum, plastic, etc).
- Don't buy paper that is a contaminant in recycling, e.g. thermal fax paper, glossy/plastic | coatings, plastic windows, bright colors including goldenrod, laser printer inks, adhesive products.
- Print directly on envelopes rather than using labels.
- Use two-way envelopes for billing.
- Use envelopes without plastic windows. The cellophane contaminates and lowers the grade of paper for recycling.
- Use computer fax software that doesn't require paper to send facsimiles. If you have to use paper, use office paper rather than thermal fax paper which is not recyclable.
- Donate out-of-date stationery to local charitable or environmental groups.

BATHROOM

- Tissue boxes.
- Cardboard toilet roll cores.
- Detergent & soap dispensers.
- If you have showers – used shampoo and shower gel bottles.
- Aerosol freshener cans. Make sure they are empty.

KITCHEN / FOOD SERVICE AREAS

- Plastic beverage and milk cartons (anchor link).
- Used cardboard boxes from breakfast cereal and tea bags boxes.
- Plastic salad and fruit containers marked with symbol 1 PET.
- Yogurt drinks bottles (not tubs).



Any plastic packaging or bottle marked with these symbols (usually on the bottom of the pack), can be placed into your plastic recycling bin. You can also check with your local recycling collector for a full list of recyclables they accept.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many grocery stores have a bin out front that will take plastic bags. If convenient, recycling plastic bags can become part of the leaving-the-office-on-the-way-to-the-store routine.

Plastic Film Recycling Organization has a drop-add locator <http://www.plasticfilmrecycling.org/#3>

- Ziploc bags (clean and dry)
- Plastic grocery bags
- Plastic retail bags

Plastics

It is always a good practice to reduce plastic use but often it is unavoidable. Instead of throwing into the landfill include the following items in your plastic recycling to set-aside for drop-off along with your plastic grocery and ziploc bags:

- Furniture wrap
- Electronic wrap
- Plastic cereal box liners (if it tears like paper, do not include)
- Case wrap (e.g., snacks, water bottles)
- Newspaper bags
- Dry-cleaning bags
- Bread bags and produce bags
- Toilet paper, napkin and paper-towel wraps
- Plastic shipping envelopes
- All clean bags labeled #2 or #4

FAQs

MILK JUICE CARTONS

Q. Are Milk cartons Recyclable?

A. YES!

Recycle Cartons website provides an informative FAQ page to answer all your questions:

<http://www.recyclecartons.com/carton-recycling-faqs/>



COMPOSTING

Each location will have a unique composting program and you may tailor yours to fit. Whether you have a mandate to compost organic materials / food scraps or you'd like to do more to reduce landfill waste, there are things you can do to make composting easy and effective.

Choosing a food waste collection bin

You can use any food-grade plastic container (such as a large ice cream tub or food storage container) but it is best to purchase a food waste bin such as the any of these that can be found at Recycle Away online:



Lining your food waste collection bin

Lining your food waste collection bin is not required. However, you can choose to line it with one of the following:

PLASTIC BAGS NOT permitted

Biodegradable bags

Find approved compostable biodegradable bags or

Paper bags

What items can be composted?

- Food scraps
- Meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, bones
- Egg and dairy products
- Table scraps and plate scrapings
- Fruits and vegetables
- Bread, dough, pasta, grains
- Coffee grounds, coffee filters, tea bags

NOTE: Soiled paper items cannot be included in regular paper recycling bin as it will contaminate the "stream" and all the items will have to be thrown into landfill.

Did you know?

You may also be able to include some serveware such as:

- Food-soiled paper
- Kitchen paper towels
- Paper Soiled paper items cannot be included in regular paper recycling bin as it Used napkins
- Pizza delivery boxes
- Paper take-out cartons without plastic lining (to test for plastic lining, tear the item; plastic is usually visible along the tear)
- Paper bags

