

Commercial Recycling Toolkit

Public Spaces



Reducing waste makes economic and environmental sense

Highly effective waste stream management programs in public places can help to reduce waste disposal expenditures for your municipality or government agency. Visitors in public spaces have the potential to generate large volumes of trash, food waste, and recyclables. This toolkit will provide assistance in setting up a recycling and waste reduction program in your public spaces.

Recycling Plan

Step 1: Identify your recycling program coordinator

Select a staff member from your public works, streets department, or maintenance staff to oversee the recycling program. This individual should be motivated, have a good rapport with staff and the public, and take 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 new program will lead to changes such as new job responsibilities for some staff, or new procedures for some employees. 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.
- Procure recycling containers and design a collection program
- 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 key employees such as staff from the areas where recyclables are generated, members of the housekeeping staff and grounds crew.

Step 2: Identify the materials in your waste stream

Conduct an assessment of your public space waste stream to identify the type and quantity of available recyclable materials.

- Work with your waste hauler, service provider, or waste/recycling consultant to collect and analyze the information about the amounts and types of waste generated in your public spaces
- 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: Determine collection program logistics

Making recycling easy and convenient will boost levels of public participation. Inconsistent participation or failure to follow recycling procedures will affect the yields of your program—both in terms of the quantity of the recyclables recovered and their quality (i.e. how much contamination is in your recycling stream). Place recycling containers next to trash containers and near the source of generation such as near sidewalks, park benches, picnic grounds, concession areas, campsites, and parking areas. In larger public spaces such as parks, place recycling containers in centralized locations. The type of recycling collection that works best is a function of its accessibility. Considerations include:

- Select carts / bins with the following criteria: cost, durability, capacity, ease of handling and servicing (e.g. side entry vs. top), and the amount of recycled-content material used in production
- Collection bins and liners: Recycling carts/bins should look different from trash cans, be easily identified, and include labeling and signage. (examples: “Recycling only – No trash” and “Trash only - No Recycling”)
- Consider using clear liners so service staff can easily identify recyclables from trash

- Bin placement: Place recycling carts/bins next to trash containers. Recycling should be as easy as throwing something in the trash
- Color-coded containers: blue - recycling; green – organics; black – trash
- Plan to have trash and recycling bins emptied regularly so waste does not end up in recycling bins

U.S. Open Food Court



Washington D.C. Mall



Step 4: Outreach and Education

For a recycling program to be effective you must educate the public

- Send out press releases to promote and publicize your recycling program
- Source separation collection systems will require additional outreach, education, and monitoring to support the

- public in correct recycling
- Clear and simple labeling with icons and language - to identify materials - placed near hole in receptacle
 - Lids should have restricted openings to receive recyclable materials
 - Include what is acceptable vs. what is not acceptable
 - Source separated collection systems should have special lids with restricted openings

Education / Messaging on Bins / Restricted Openings



Step 5 – Operational Issues:

Containers should have side entry to avoid ergonomic issues for service and maintenance staff. Use clear liners so that recyclables can easily be identified from trash.

Side entry



Additional Resources:

Delaware Recycles: www.recycling.delaware.gov

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



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

US EPA - Recycle on the Go:
<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserve/rrr/rogo/index.htm>