

## **Commercial Recycling in Delaware**



### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Q: Is recycling required in the commercial sector?**

**A:** Yes.

All commercial sector entities are required to actively participate in a comprehensive recycling program, identify recyclables and keep them separate from the solid waste stream, and ensure the recyclables are collected for recycling. Commercial sector means any for-profit or not-for-profit retail or wholesale stores, offices, food service establishments, hospitality, utility, warehouses, and other manufacturing, industrial or processing activities, and institutions such as social, charitable, educational, healthcare, professional and government services. Property managers in the single and multi-family residential sectors, and in the commercial sector shall ensure that recycling services are available for tenants in a manner that is convenient and cost effective. Property managers, at a minimum, are to provide annual notification to their tenants that recycling services are provided with instructions on participation. For more information see: [Delaware Code - Solid Waste Recycling](#) and the [Universal Recycling Regulations](#)

#### **Q: Can recycling really save money?**

**A:** Yes; however, it is important to understand circumstances vary considerably. While many businesses have implemented recycling programs and saved money, it is not a given. Savings can be achieved by reducing trash disposal costs, generating revenue from the recycled materials, or a combination of both. The only way to know for sure if you can save money by recycling is to completely understand your waste stream and evaluate all of the available options to reduce, reuse, and recycle the waste that is generated.

#### **Q: How much does recycling cost?**

**A:** Recycling costs vary depending on a variety of factors: the type, volume, and value of the recyclables, as well as the frequency of collection all significantly impact recycling costs/savings. With the implementation of recycling make sure you request a billing structure that will reduce your disposal costs.

#### **Q: How do I know what recyclables are in my waste stream?**

**A:** The best way for a commercial business to understand its waste stream is to conduct a waste assessment. A waste assessment is the process used to qualify the types of wastes and recyclables being generated. Your waste is literally inspected, identified, and sometimes weighed to determine the types of materials discarded. A waste assessment will help you identify recycling and waste prevention opportunities, potential savings from reduced disposal costs, potential revenue from the sale of recyclables, and help you establish baseline data for measuring the future effectiveness of the program.

#### **Q: What must be recycled?**

**A:** The type of materials that must be recycled is not specified; however, you must have a comprehensive recycling program. Materials commonly recycled in the commercial sector include, but are not limited to, corrugated cardboard, scrap metals, scrap lumber, office paper, aluminum, and various plastics. As indicated in the "How do I know what recyclables are in my waste stream?" Q&A above, in order to determine the best

materials for your business to recycle, you need to understand the waste you generate. The best way to understand the waste you generate, and therefore what can be recycled, is to conduct or request a waste assessment.

**Q: Who should I contact to collect my recyclables?**

**A:** A recycling service provider can be one or more vendors that will pick up your recyclables for processing. While many waste haulers offer recycling services, some companies specialize in providing strictly recycling services. Services might include baling, shredding, crushing, or compacting as well as transporting and marketing the recyclable materials. Discuss collection schedules and options with a variety of service providers and request a billing structure that will reduce your waste disposal costs. Monitor how full collection dumpsters are and make arrangements to adjust the collection schedule based on volume. Also note that scrap yard dealers may pick up scrap metal and other materials at no charge or even pay you for sufficient quantities of metal you may generate. Reuse organizations will often pick up donated items such as used appliances, building materials, fixtures, and furniture from remodeling projects. Finally, if you choose not to use a collection service you can self-haul your recyclables directly to a recycling processor.

**Q: How do I implement and sustain a recycling program?**

**A:** The DNREC offers a variety of recycling toolkits and technical assistance and conduct waste assessments to support recycling program implementation. Please contact the Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Section at 302-739-9403 for more information.

**Q: What are some other waste prevention and reduction tips for my business?**

**A:** The first and most effective component of the waste hierarchy is reducing the waste created. Generators of waste are encouraged to reduce their waste by purchasing in bulk, buying items with less packaging and switching to reusable instead of single-use items. Businesses can adopt manufacturing methods that require fewer resources and generate less waste. In addition to benefiting the environment, these efforts often offer the financial incentive of lower expenses in purchases.

**Q: What if my hauler mixes the trash and recyclables together?**

**A:** Persons engaging in the collection, transportation, processing or marketing of recyclable materials shall conduct such activities in a manner that the recyclable materials enter the marketplace and are otherwise not disposed via a landfill or by incineration. If your hauler/recycling service provider is mixing trash and recyclables together please contact DNREC at 302-739-9403 immediately to report this activity.

**Q: Why is universal recycling in the best interest of Delawareans?**

**A:** Landfills in all three counties have had to undergo expansions that are costing residents and businesses well in excess of ten million dollars per year in higher disposal costs. Increased recycling conserves valuable natural resources, energy, and existing landfill space and reduces the cost of developing new landfill space in the future. Recycling also supports job creation through the collection and processing of recyclables and in the manufacturing of new products from the recycled materials.

**Q: What happens if I don't recycle?**

**A:** The [Delaware Code - Solid Waste Recycling](#) states in §6053 (4) that *Universal Recycling be adopted by the commercial sector and that all commercial businesses actively participate in a comprehensive recycling program no later than January 1, 2014.* In addition to losing out on a host of environmental and economic benefits, 7 Del. C. § 6059 affords DNREC enforcement authority for failure to comply with the requirements of universal recycling. Penalties range from \$100 to \$1,500 per day for failure to comply.