

Recycling

This tip sheet corresponds with Green Star Award Standard # 3 – Reduce Solid Waste Disposal. Another useful tool is Chapter 3 in “Becoming a Green Star: A Waste Prevention Guide for Anchorage Businesses.”

You can find the guide online in pdf and html format at www.greenstarinc.org/guideindex.php or request a hard copy from Green Star.

Getting Started

Recycling is the next step after careful purchasing activities and waste prevention and reuse initiatives are put in place. Recycling involves collecting wastes that are generated in your workplace and sending them for processing into new products. Recycling in your workplace can include just a few materials or can be a comprehensive program including everything recyclable. About 50% of any business’ waste stream is recyclable paper, including office paper, newspaper, and cardboard. Start here in establishing a recycling program. Then look at what else is generated.

What’s Recyclable in Anchorage?

Mixed paper (includes office paper)
 Corrugated cardboard
 Newspaper
 Magazines
 Aluminum cans
 Steel (tin) cans
 Plastic bottles (#1)
 Plastic jugs (#2)
 Plastic bags and film
 Aluminum scrap
 Copper/brass scrap
 Toner cartridges
 Yard waste
 Wood waste
 Electronics
 Fluorescent lamps and ballasts
 Used oil
 Lead-acid batteries
 Rechargeable batteries
 Alkaline batteries



Recycling Containers

Bins make your program efficient and workable for all involved. We recommend that you provide a small bin at each “work” station, whether that is a desk, a copy area, a mail-sorting station, or a kitchen. Where ever recyclables are generated, collection bins should be provided. These bins can be small and inexpensive as long as they are clearly and consistently labeled and placed in close proximity to trash containers. Pairing recycling and trash containers together goes a long way toward reducing contamination in both containers.

The next step is to have consolidation areas with larger bins. This may be in a common area, hallway, copy room, storage closet, or other space with enough room. Staff or custodians will periodically empty smaller bins into these larger ones. These bins typically may be 32-, 64-, or 96-gallon bins or wheeled toters.

How We Did It

Girdwood School created a recycling bin system to fit its needs. Each classroom has a small three-drawer plastic rolling bin system (available at most office supply or home organization stores). One drawer holds newspapers, one mixed paper, and one reusable scrap paper.

The two recycling drawers are emptied weekly into larger bins in the custom-built recycling shed on school grounds. From there, material is stored until someone can transport it to the recycling center in Anchorage.

If staff is responsible for loading up recyclables for delivery to the recycling center, keep the bins small and manageable. If a recycling service comes in to empty bins, they may be larger. You may want wheeled carts or toters to move recyclables to a loading dock or other collection area on recycling day if your service does not come into the building.

Dumpsters are another option offered by at least one recycling service in Anchorage. Dumpsters range from 2-cubic-yard, up to 8-cubic-yard containers, or large compactors (typically 30 cubic yards) for high-volume generators. Dumpster service is available for mixed paper and cardboard recycling.

For large-scale operations, compactors may be the most practical option, allowing a business to reduce the volume of the recyclables before they are hauled. Another volume-reduction option is a baler. Both compactors and balers can help you create a commodity with value. The Anchorage Recycling Center will often pay businesses for large quantities of baled or compacted clean paper or cardboard.

Why Recycle?

Recycling offers many benefits both locally and globally. Recycling reduces our dependence on virgin resources like trees, petroleum, and mined products including bauxite, silica sand, limestone, and metal ores.

A Smart Choice

- Cardboard recycling uses 25% less energy than making new cardboard.
- Recycling aluminum uses 96% less energy than using new materials to make aluminum.
- Recycling one aluminum can saves enough electricity to power a TV or a 100-watt light bulb for three hours.
- Recycling 13,600 tons of paper accounts for the saving of 231,200 trees, 44,880 cubic yards of landfill space and 95,200,000 million gallons of water.

Recycling increases the life of our landfills, which, in some areas, are becoming harder and harder to site as land becomes scarce. Even in areas where there is plenty of land, the cost of building a new landfill cell with its liners, leachate collection systems, and methane gas recovery systems, can be millions of dollars. A new cell costs approximately one-half million dollars per acre to construct.

Recycling creates jobs. In the Northeast U.S. (10 states), there are 13,000 recycling and reuse establishments, 206,000 people employed in recycling and re-use industries, \$6.8 billion in annual payroll, and \$44 billion in annual revenues from recycling. Imagine trying to do that with just a few landfills.

Where To Take It?

Recycling drop-off is available for numerous items.

Anchorage Recycling Center at 6301 Rosewood Ave. in Anchorage accepts most basic recyclables including cardboard, mixed paper, newspaper, magazines, glass, aluminum, steel, and plastics.

Anchorage Regional Landfill on Hiland Rd. in Eagle River accepts cardboard, mixed paper, newspaper, plastic bottles and jugs, and aluminum cans.

Carrs parking lots in Anchorage and Eagle River have bins for newspaper and aluminum.

These are just the basics -- drop-off locations exist for electronics, fluorescent lamps, used oil, and many other items. Visit Green Star's web site for more details.

Recycling Pick-Up Services

Alaska Archives (563-7014) - commercial shredding and mixed paper recycling

Alaska Waste (522-0905) - commercial pick-up service for mixed paper, cardboard, plastic bottles and aluminum cans; residential collection of commingled recyclables in many areas of Anchorage and Eagle River

Girmschied Enterprises (770-0720) - commercial and residential pick-up service for mixed paper, cardboard, aluminum cans, steel cans, plastic bottles and jugs

Municipality of Anchorage Solid Waste Services (343-6262) - mixed paper recycling for city agencies, commingled curbside recycling for residential customers in downtown Anchorage area

Recycle Alaska (563-6045) - provides shredding and recycling services

Shred Alaska (929-1154) - provides mobile shredding and mixed paper recycling



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