



# RECYCLING IN OFFICES

## An overview for Township of Pine Businesses

### Recycling - Business to Business!

Commercial recycling is mandatory in the Township of Pine, as a requirement of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and "Act 101" - The Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act. However, recycling is much more than a government-mandated program. The materials that you recycle in Pennsylvania are transported to other businesses - which, like you, create jobs in their communities and manufacture quality products for satisfied customers. So become a part of the business-to-business chain of recycling and recycled materials by participating in a program to recycle the following mandated materials:

#### Items mandated for commercial recycling in the Township of Pine:

- ✓ Corrugated cardboard;
- ✓ High-grade office paper; and
- ✓ Aluminum cans.

Businesses are encouraged to recycle as many materials as possible in addition to those mandated.

Businesses are also encouraged to take advantage of a paper recycling program sponsored by Abitibi-Consolidated, a major manufacturer of recycled newsprint. Abitibi-Consolidated will provide a "Paper Retriever" recycling container for various paper grades, at no charge, at a business location. In return, the business agrees to use the container and to donate the funds paid by Abitibi-Consolidated for the recyclables to a charity or not-for-profit organization. The charity may be chosen by the businesses, and it may be a local organization. This can be a great fund-raiser for local organizations. Charities and non-profit organizations in the Township of Pine can benefit directly from hosting a "Paper Retriever" container.

The "Paper Retriever" program does not include corrugated cardboard, so other arrangements must be made to recycle this material. Contact the Recycling Coordinator for more details.

#### Facts about Office Recycling

- As much as 93% of all office waste is paper -- most of it recyclable.
- 77% of paper waste generated in offices is recyclable.
- Typical business offices generate about 1.5 pounds of waste paper per employee each day. Financial businesses generate more than two pounds per employee daily.



### Recycling Works

THE TOWNSHIP OF PINE

Kathryn Socash  
Recycling Coordinator  
230 Pearce Mill Rd.  
Wexford, PA  
724.625-1636, ext. 122  
[ksocash@twp.pine.pa.us](mailto:ksocash@twp.pine.pa.us)

Nearly half of typical office paper waste is high-grade office paper.

- It is possible to achieve significant reduction in the cost of buying office paper by reducing paper use and reusing paper where possible.
- Eliminating office paper from your waste may reduce your waste collection and disposal bill by as much as 50%.
- Recycling one ton of paper typically saves about 6.7 cubic yards of landfill space. A cubic yard of stacked office paper weighs about 380 pounds. Cost savings may be estimated by multiplying the tons recycled by 6.7 times the cost per cubic yard for waste disposal (if by volume) or by cost per ton (if by weight).



Commercial and residential paper waste accounts for more than 40% of waste being landfilled. Eliminating this paper from our disposed waste stream would nearly double the lives of current landfills.

---

## Steps for Successful Recycling in Offices and Office Buildings

Almost all types of paper used in the office can be recycled. High-grade papers generally include, but are not limited to, white computer paper, bond, letterhead, and ledger. Lower grades may include mixed grades, file stock, ground wood papers, newsprint, and colored paper. Corrugated cardboard is nearly always managed separately from all other paper.



Mixed paper is generally considered low grade even if it contains high-grade paper. Therefore, it is best to try to keep all high-grade paper together because its value to the market is greater.

While most of the recycling stream in offices will be mandated paper materials, businesses and institutions in the Township of Pine are also mandated to recycle aluminum cans, and encouraged to recycle other materials such as plastic and glass bottles.

The following steps can determine how a recycling program may be structured for your particular facility:

1. Perform a waste assessment. Visit different areas of your office or office building noting what type of waste is discarded in each area. A walk-through will help you determine which types of containers are most appropriate for the types and volumes generated in specific areas which may include offices, copy rooms, receiving departments, mail rooms, employee lounges, and vending machine areas.
2. Based on the results of the waste assessment, set up appropriate recycling programs in each area.
3. Placement of containers in offices is critical, and space is often an issue. Containers should be close enough to where the waste is discarded so that they will be convenient to use, but not so widespread that they cause clutter. It is a good idea to discuss with employees who work in a particular area where containers should be placed to facilitate their use.
4. Make sure all containers are well marked. For public areas it is best to choose containers with specialized openings, such as a hole for cans or a slot for newspapers. It is also important to place containers where the materials are generated to make recycling convenient.
5. Inform employees about proper recycling procedures. Issue a memo, throw a kick-off party and explain any separation procedures when you distribute containers. Focus your education on motivating employees to take action and use the recycling program every day. Make sure to follow up to ensure that procedures are being followed and further educate employees as necessary.



6. Set up a log book or a receipt system to record the volume of recyclables leaving the premises. This will enable you to report to the Township, if requested, to track costs, and to take appropriate action if volumes decrease.
7. Include recycling information in your orientation for new employees.
8. After policies have been established, explain the recycling program to your custodial staff. Train them by showing them what to do with new containers, how to collect waste separately and where to take separated materials. For a 24-hour operation, plan pick-ups on appropriate shifts so that you do not have a problem with overflowing containers.
9. Ask for assistance from your custodial staff in monitoring the program. Have them inform you of areas with major contamination problems or where employees are not participating, and follow up with improved recycling education in these areas.
10. Ask your waste hauler for advice about keeping recyclables and wet waste separate. Depending on the company's trucks and equipment, your hauler may want to give you separate containers for trash and recyclables.
11. Remind employees to keep food waste out of recycling containers and trash. Food waste should be handled separately from trash and recyclables



### For further information...

For more detailed information about implementing a waste reduction and recycling program in your workplace, contact the Township of Pine Recycling Coordinator:

Kathryn Socash                      724.625-1636, ext. 122  
Township of Pine  
230 Pearce Mill Rd.                [ksocash@twp.pine.pa.us](mailto:ksocash@twp.pine.pa.us)  
Wexford, PA

Visit the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection website at [www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us)

(Link to "Resources, then "Commercial Recycling").

Contact The Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania (PROP) to obtain a copy of their manual "Developing a Waste Reduction and Recycling Program for Commercial, Institutional, Industrial and Municipal Establishments."

E-mail: [prop@proprecycles.org](mailto:prop@proprecycles.org)

[www.proprecycles.org](http://www.proprecycles.org)