



Fact Sheet #5: RECYCLING IN OFFICES

Lehighton Borough

To establish a successful recycling program in your office or office building, you need to determine what kind of program will work in your facility. You should first analyze your options. For example, do you have a way to collect a number of different recyclables and transport them to the County recycling drop-off center, or is the County's commercial curbside corrugated collection service sufficient for your business's needs? Knowing your facility will help you to decide which program best suits your needs. Below are some recommendations to assist you.

It should be noted that if you manage office buildings with multiple tenants, you should offer your tenants with an opportunity to recycle. Tenants must be informed of their responsibilities and your privately contracted waste hauler must accommodate recycling.

Recycling - It's Your Business!

Lehighton Borough does mandate commercial recycling. The borough invites businesses and institutions to take the lead and implement a commercial recycling program.

Items accepted for recycling in Lehighton Borough:

- ✓ Glass jars and bottles (clear, brown, green);
- ✓ Plastic containers (acceptable plastic items will have HPE numbers 1 thru 7 stamped on the container);
- ✓ Corrugated cardboard, cereal, gift boxes, etc. are acceptable (LARGE boxes should be cut down and all cardboard should be flattened and bundled);
- ✓ Mixed paper (magazines, books, catalogues, white paper, newspaper, and phone books - no wax-coated)
- ✓ Aluminum and rinsed steel cans

Offices and office buildings in Lehighton Borough can:

- Arrange through a private licensed hauler for the collection and recycling of all designated material

Facts about Office Paper

As much as 93% of all office waste is paper, most of it recyclable. As noted above, recycling options for mixed paper and corrugated cardboard are offered to commercial establishments located in Susquehanna County

- 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

LEHIGHTON BOROUGH

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- 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 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 waste 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. Susquehanna County does not require paper to be separated into various grades ranging from high to low. 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 may also be recycled, but it is nearly always managed separately from all other paper.



Mixed paper is generally considered low grade even if it contains high-grade paper. The County may request that easily identifiable high-grade papers (such as computer printout) be kept separate if it's possible to take advantage of its higher market value.

While most of the recycling stream in offices will be paper, businesses and institutions in Susquehanna County may also recycle aluminum cans, plastic bottles (ONLY), and glass bottles. These materials may be taken into account when planning a program.

1. Perform a waste assessment. Walk through 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 needed. Typical programs are likely to involve some of the following:
 - **Administrative and office areas** - office paper, corrugated cardboard, other paper, cans, bottles, toner cartridges.
 - **Food service areas** - glass, metal, cans, plastic containers, corrugated cardboard (make sure that food waste is separated from recyclables).
 - **Public areas** - newspaper, magazines, bottles, cans.
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 people 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 that 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. 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 receive proper compensation for your materials 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. If appropriate, make sure that your grounds crew knows to keep yard waste separate from other waste.
11. 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.
12. Remind employees to keep food waste out of recycling containers and trash. Food waste should be handled separately from trash and recyclables

