

Multi-Unit Recycling Program Package

Becker County Environmental Services

The following documents contain useful information for you and your tenants to take advantage of, whether you have a recycling program or not. The first two are aimed at management and the last is aimed at tenants. You may make copies of these as needed. Find the following documents below:

1. [How to Start Your Recycling Program](#)
2. [Improving Your Recycling Program](#)
3. [Waste Reduction Best Practices](#)

Additionally, we have produced numerous signs (up-right or landscape) to help with your program. The signs are not included in this package, but you may find them on the website or request from Sandy or Harrison. These include the following:

- Informational Recycling Flyer (hand out, place on doors, post on wall)
- Non-Recyclable Items Flyer (post near recycling bins)
- Trash
- Mixed Recycling (if doing single-sort)
- Metal
- Glass
- Cardboard
- Plastic
- Paper

If you would like access to signage, go to our website, or contact Sandy or Harrison. Find contact information below.

How to Start Your Recycling Program

Becker County Environmental Services

**If you would like help with your recycling program, or have any questions, feel free to contact us or visit our website. See below.*

1. Conduct a Waste Audit

Before you start recycling, you should determine what potentially recyclable materials are ending up in your trash (plastic, cardboard, metal, paper, glass). You can do this again after your program has been established and running to gauge your progress. It is not as messy as you think.

2. Choose Between Single-Sort and Multi-Sort

If you want your program to be simple and easy, go with single-sort recycling bins, where everything recyclable (except glass) can go into one bin. Alternatively, if you want to be thorough, sort the materials into separate bins for each material. *Make sure you have the right size bins and dumpster(s) for your program, enough of them, and frequent-enough hauling pick-up.

3. Find a Recycling Champion

Consider asking for a volunteer or designating someone to spearhead your recycling effort. This shares the load and can bring passion and excitement to the program.

4. Contact Your Hauler

Waste/Recycling haulers can be a great resource for your recycling program, providing bins, identifying recyclable materials, and, of course, picking up your recyclables.

5. Involve Custodial Staff

Custodians can have notable insight regarding your waste stream and its management. Ask them for suggestions on your recycling program and any advice moving forward.

6. Educate

Before launching your program, you should explain to everyone affected why you are starting the program, how it works, and what impact it will have. Provide training to people on how and where to dispose of their trash and recycling with the new system. Also make sure that custodial staff are in the loop and up to date on its implementation.

7. Launch Your Program

Once you have everything in place, send out an email or note to everyone that the program is starting, and double-check that they really do know what to do with their trash and recyclable items. Answer any questions.

Contact:

Environmental Services

Phone: (218)-846-7310

Email: sandy.gunderson@co.becker.mn.us – Recycling Coordinator

harrison.loch@co.becker.mn.us – MN GreenCorps Member serving Becker County

Improving Your Recycling Program – Best Practices

Becker County Environmental Services

**If you have any questions, or would like help with your recycling program, feel free to contact us or visit our website.*

Customize

Make certain that your recycling program meets your specific needs (having the right size bins, enough bins, right frequency of hauling, etc). Every situation is different.

Good Bin Placement

Recycling bins should be just as easy to access as trash. Ideally, you should place recycling bins anywhere a trash bin is located (under desks, near the printer, in the break room/kitchen, in each apartment unit, laundry rooms, etc) with the exception of the restroom.

Color Coded Bins

Color coding helps to remedy confusion, prevent contamination of the recycling bin, and lower the amount of recyclable material going in the trash. A good rule of thumb is to use Blue for Mixed Recycling and Black/Gray for Trash.

Clear Signage and Flyers

Clear signage and educational posters further distinguish between your bins and help to educate people on what items can and cannot go in recycling and trash bins. A single piece of garbage in your recycling bin can send the entire container to the landfill due to contamination and throwing away recyclables fills up your garbage bin faster and is wasteful.

Small/Shaped Openings

Smaller and shaped openings help to prevent trash from contaminating recycling by limiting the kinds of items that can fit (a thin slot for paper, a round opening for plastic bottles, etc).

Avoid Bagging

Bagging recyclables may be convenient, but it makes recycling harder at the MRF (Material Recovery Facility). The bags get caught in machinery and can cause slow-downs and stoppages in processing – do not put plastic grocery bags in recycling either; instead, see if your local grocery store takes them.

Non-Recyclable Items

Some items are hard to recycle due to contamination or lack of an end market. Check with your hauler on items they do not accept.

Buy Recyclable

Be sure to purchase from suppliers whose products are recyclable and that use recycled content in their products. Work toward zero waste.

Recycling Bulletin/Newsletter

Publishing information about your recycling program (monthly, biyearly, with new people, etc) can help to highlight its importance, drive better recycling practices, and inform people of new developments.

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Waste Reduction Best Practices for Residents

Becker County Environmental Services

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Cut out Single-Use Items

Single-use items have become a part of everyday life. They make for convenient containers and utilities, but they also make up a large part of the waste stream. Worse yet, while some of these items are recyclable, many are not, lacking an end-market, and therefore are hard to recycle. Remove these items from your daily routine if you can.

Buy Products with Less Packaging

Many of the products at the store are wrapped in excessive layers of packaging. When buying, aim for those products with less packaging than the rest. Additionally, buying in bulk can help to reduce packaging, just make sure to use the product before it expires (if applicable).

Stop Using Plastic/Paper Grocery Bags

Eliminate the need for paper/plastic grocery bags by purchasing reusable grocery bags at the store. Keep them in your car for convenient access. In the meantime, reuse your existing collection of grocery bags for lining trash cans, carrying and wrapping presents, and so on.

Reduce Your Paper Use

While households do not use as much paper as businesses, there is still usually a significant amount of paper that could be eliminated from your waste stream. This generally takes the form of mail, notes, and so on. Try to switch to online billing and statements, cancel magazine subscriptions (or access them online), and unsubscribe from junk mail. For the paper you do need to use, make sure you set your printer to use both sides of the sheet, and try to reuse sheets of paper as notepads.

Rent and Share

Unless you use them frequently, opt not to buy certain tools and products. Instead, rent them when you need to use them, or borrow from a neighbor or friend.

Do You Need It?

Before making a purchase, ask if it is something you *need*, or something you *want*. If the latter is the case, opt not to buy it, or put off buying until another time. Prevent waste before it happens.

Reuse and Repair

Try to reuse as much as possible and repair broken items, appliances, tools, and clothes. Also consider purchasing used and/or refurbished items and products instead of buying new if possible or purchase new products from companies with a track record of “building to last” as to alleviate the need for frequent replacement.

Donate or Re-Sell

Usable goods too frequently end up in the landfill. If you have materials or items that you have no use for but are still usable, consider donating them or selling them used. These materials may include clothes, appliances, extra building materials, furniture, computer parts, and more.

Food Reuse and Composting

A significant amount of what consumers throw away takes the form of organic material – namely food. This does not need to be the case, as food can be diverted from the waste stream and used in multiple ways. Save it for later, donate it to a food shelf, or set up an *organics composting* bin.

Recycling

Recycling is an easy way to reduce the amount of material heading to the landfill. It diverts valuable and usable materials to be re-processed and made into new products. However, keep in mind that “Recycling” comes after “Reduce, Reuse...” in the famous waste reduction motto. Try to reduce the amount of material you use first, and reuse or donate what you can before tossing it in the trash or recycling bins.

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