

About the District's Office of Recycling

The services provided by the DC Office of Recycling are designed to balance today's needs with tomorrow's obligations by fostering both environmental sensitivity and economic sensibility. The Office of Recycling promotes sustainable resource management throughout the District by campaigning for residents and businesses to:



Rethink

The things we do each day have an impact on the environment: the waste we generate; the water we use; the products we buy; and the energy we consume. Think of new ways to use and reuse common items and you'll discover new possibilities for source (waste) reduction and recycling. Changing habits is the key.

Reduce

Participate in waste prevention by reducing the amount you consume and throw away. Reduce the number of products you buy that have unnecessary packaging. You can also adopt practices that reduce waste toxicity. For example, instead of using pesticides plant marigolds in your garden to ward off certain pests. Learn about alternatives to household items containing hazardous substances. In some cases, products that you have around the house can be used to do the same job as products with hazardous components.

Reuse

Consider purchasing reusable products and refillable containers instead of disposable items. Try to maintain and repair durable products. If you have no use for something, sell or donate goods instead of throwing them away. Make an effort to reuse bags, containers, and other items. Think about borrowing, renting, or sharing items you don't use often.

...And then Recycle.

After you've done all you can to avoid waste, recycle. Producing goods from recycled materials typically consumes less energy and conserves raw materials. Yet, our landfills are crammed with many packages and products that can be recycled. When making a purchase choose recyclable products and containers as well as products made from recycled materials. Afterwards, reuse and/or recycle the container.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the real benefits of recycling?

Recycling cuts down on the waste we throw away; it helps to conserve natural resources, it extends the life of landfills, and it reduces water and air pollution. The District can significantly reduce its waste stream through recycling therefore cutting the costs of waste disposal for everyone.

Does the DC Office of Recycling provide Environmental Education support to DC Schools?

Yes. Our program includes the use of an award winning, multidisciplinary environmental curriculum, Project Learning Tree (PLT). We assist educators in setting up school recycling programs, provide support with service-learning activities, and conduct environmental education training workshops. For more information, call the Recycling Hotline (202-645-8245) and ask to speak to one of our Environmental Educators for schools.

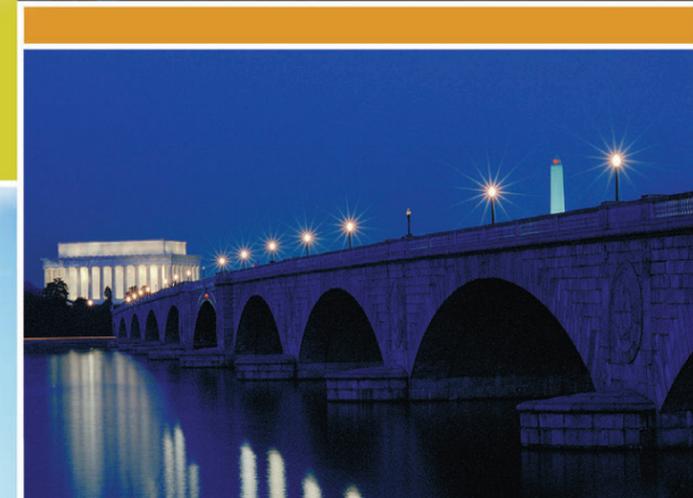
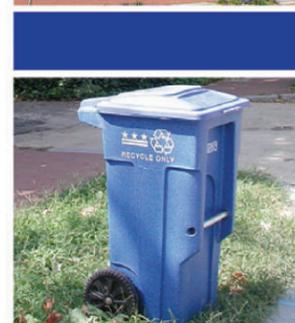
I recycle, isn't that enough?

Recycling is an important element in our efforts to reduce the quantity of waste that the District has to transport for disposal. We can all go one step further and buy products made from recycled material. By helping to create a market for recycled products, we ensure that recycling works. A package label will usually identify whether the product or packaging is made of recycled materials. Checking labels and buying goods with recycled content will help us "close the loop" and make recycling work. The paper, plastic, and metal cans you separate and recycle at the curb find new life in new products. Everything from pencils to computers, shoes to fleece jackets, and much more are made with recycled materials.

How do I find out more?

Call the DC Recycling Hotline at 202-645-8245 or visit www.Recycle.dpw.dc.gov for additional information.

DC Recycles



The Government of the District of Columbia



A Better Residential Recycling Program is Coming!

We have heard you, our customers, and beginning in February 2005 the District will roll out an improved recycling collection program. It will be a simpler, cleaner and much more consumer friendly program. Watch your mail for more details and your new BLUE container.

Frequently Asked Questions

What should I do if my recycling has not been collected?

Call the DC Recycling Hotline at 202-645-8245 to report the miss. Your recycling will be collected within 24 hours after the request has been made.

How do I request a recycling bin?

Call the DC Recycling Hotline at 202-645-8245.

Important Note...

Food is considered a contaminant. Recyclable products contaminated with food waste will not be collected. Soiled recyclables are also considered contaminated and will not be collected. Make sure all recyclables are clean and dry.

AND... please do not put recyclables in plastic bags.

Why Recycle?

Recycling means reusing items we would normally put in the trash – items such as aluminum cans, plastic bottles, and newspapers. By recycling we essentially remove these items from the waste stream and convert them to new, reusable items.

Recycling...

- Conserves valuable landfill space
- Safeguards our environment for future generations
- Saves our natural resources – trees, fuel, and metals
- Protects our vital water supply
- Saves energy
- Helps control litter
- Is required by District law

Recycling is part of the overall solution to reducing waste, and we can all help by participating in the District's recycling program. All it takes is a behavior change, something as simple as tossing items into a separate container from our regular trash container.

Residential Recycling

General Information

Properly prepared recycling containers can be placed at the point of trash collection any-time **after** 6:00 pm the evening before collection and **before** 6:30 am the day of collection. Please return your empty recycling containers to your private property by 8:00 pm on collection day.

Recycling and trash are collected on the same day. It's simple! Neatly place your bin(s), cart, paper bags, and tied bundles where your trash is collected.

What Can I Recycle and How?

	Recyclables	Proper Preparation	Not Acceptable
Recyclable Paper Products	Mixed Paper: Newspaper, Telephone Books, Magazines, and Catalogs, and Cereal Boxes	Keep clean and dry. Place in brown paper bags or tie in bundles. Glossy inserts may be included.	Plastic wrappers, tissue, plastic coated paper, blue prints, cups, plates, and any food contaminated paper.
	Corrugated Cardboard	Keep clean and dry. Flatten and cut down to 42 inches on all sides if necessary. Stack and tie in bundles.	Soiled or food contaminated cardboard (i.e., pizza boxes, carry-out containers).
	White paper	Place items in a brown paper bag (e.g., all clean, dry, white, bright, and coated papers, envelopes, copy and computer paper, brochures, greeting cards, and folders).	Soiled paper
Containers: Do not put them in bags or bind them before placing them inside the recycling bin.	Aluminum, steel (tin), and bi-metal food and beverage containers	Empty and rinse. Squeeze the open end of food cans closed.	Do not crush aluminum cans.
	Glass food and beverage containers	Empty and rinse. Remove and dispose of lids.	Drinking glasses, mirror and window glass, light bulbs, ceramics, or crystal. Broken glass.
	Narrow-neck plastic bottles	Empty and rinse. Remove plastic lids. Include milk and water jugs, plastic juice and soda containers, and detergent bottles.	Containers used for oil-based substances (i.e., motor oil, salad dressing), plastic food tubs (i.e., butter, yogurt, or deli containers), medicine containers, or PVC pipes.

Commercial Recycling

DC law requires recycling in all commercial establishments. These include office buildings, churches, retailers, warehouses, apartment buildings (with four or more units), cooperatives, condominiums, bars and restaurants, as well as museums, associations, non-profit organizations, schools, and universities. The following items are required by law to be recycled:

- Paper (newspaper, cardboard, and office paper)
- Aluminum, steel, and tin cans
- Brown, green, and clear glass bottles and jars
- Plastic food containers and beverage bottles are optional but we encourage you to recycle them.

All commercial establishments are required to submit an updated Commercial Recycling Plan to the DC Office of Recycling every two years. To receive a Commercial Recycling Plan template, Registered Recycling Hauler Information, or if you would like additional Commercial Recycling information please visit www.Recycle.dpw.dc.gov or call the DC Recycling Hotline at 202-645-8245.

Your Responsibilities By Law

- Implement a recycling program that includes a contract for recycling service, a recycling plan, and employee, tenant, and resident education.
- Require all residents and tenants to participate in the recycling program.
- Specify in your recycling program that recyclables be separated from trash.
- Hire a licensed, registered recycling hauler.

Commercial Recycling Violations

Violations of the District's recycling laws are subject to tickets and fines ranging from \$25 to \$1,000. Fines are determined by type of establishment or business, square footage, and/or number of units. Violations include:

- Failure to have an approved and updated recycling plan
- Failure to separate recyclables from other solid waste
- Insufficient collection of recyclables
- Failure to have a sufficient number of containers for separated recyclables
- Refusing to provide access to authorized DPW Commercial Recycling Investigators
- Using an unregistered hauler

Your company's recycling efforts will save landfill space and conserve natural resources, which will improve the environment and help to contain escalating costs of garbage disposal.

• Did You Know? •

During the past 35 years, the amount of waste each person creates has almost doubled from 2.7 to 4.4 pounds per day. The most effective way to stop this trend is by preventing waste in the first place.

Frequently Asked Questions

How much will it cost my business to recycle?

The price for your recycling collection is based on the volume of recycled materials, your location, and other factors. Research several haulers, their price quotes, and their license and registration information before making your final decision.

Are District schools considered commercial establishments?

Yes. All schools are considered commercial and are required by law to recycle.

What are some ways that my commercial establishment can reduce waste?

- Use e-mail whenever possible.
- Print double-sided or reuse the blank side of the paper.
- Share or give away old books and magazines with colleagues or donate them to charities.
- Buy materials with as little packaging as possible or buy in bulk.
- Return used copier and toner cartridges and purchase remanufactured cartridges.
- Use mugs or reusable cups for beverages and Tupperware or dishes for lunches.
- Set the fax machine to beep when the material is sent, rather than printing out a confirmation sheet.
- Keep an empty closet for used office and other supplies for reuse within your department or home.