



**A GUIDE** TO CREATING  
**A SUCCESSFUL**  
**RECYCLING**  
**PROGRAM**

# INTRODUCTION

## Looking to improve your waste management program and increase recycling rates? We can help

In this guide, you will find all the information you need to create and action an efficient and effective waste management program.

Find out how to:

- ✓ Identify and manage specific waste streams
- ✓ Recognize what can be recycled (and what can't)
- ✓ Create a successful recycling program that meets the needs of your workplace or organization

For additional resources and product guidance, visit [www.glasdon.com](http://www.glasdon.com).

## Who are we?

We're Glasdon, Inc. — Based in Richmond, Virginia, we design, produce, and supply industry-leading safety and environmental products.

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## Part 3 : Overview

# Recycling for a greener future





# Circular economy and plans for a greener future

**As the urgency of climate change becomes apparent, many governments and governing bodies are implementing action plans to combat the harmful effects of greenhouse gases on the planet — the US stands among them, and recycling in America is due to increase.**

While Europe sets its sights on a circular economy — aiming to extend the life cycle of materials by encouraging recycling and repurposing materials — the US builds on its plan to reach a 50% recycling rate by 2050.\*

With an ambition to encourage participation, action, and progress, the plan will implement strategies to increase recycling capabilities and strengthen the recycling market.\*

# The importance of recycling

Recycling, at any level, household or in the workplace, has a positive impact on the planet and this process of separating waste into streams is important for numerous reasons.



## ■ Raw Materials

Recycling and repurposing materials reduces the demand for raw materials and resources. In so doing, it protects natural habitats by eliminating the need to mine new resources. Reducing the extraction of raw materials also lowers energy emissions and pollutions.

## ■ Landfill

Landfills produce a significant amount of greenhouse gases. In contrast to sending items to landfills, recycling materials reduces greenhouse gas emissions and aids the fight against climate change.

## ■ Energy

With municipal solid waste landfills responsible for approximately 15.1% of America's total greenhouse gas emissions, recycling and repurposing materials to make new products uses considerably less energy than the energy requirements of producing a new product from raw resources.\*

## ■ Financial

By saving energy, recycling has monetary benefits for the economy.

# Advantages of recycling for workplaces and organizations

**We know how recycling is important for the planet, but what are the advantages of introducing or improving a recycling program for workplaces and organizations?**

## ■ Reduces costs

By recycling, a workplace can lower costs by reducing landfill waste, thus lowering the amount of landfill tax payable..



## ■ Increases brand image

With increasing social consciousness, implementing schemes to promote and encourage environmental responsibility, such as workplace recycling programs and other green initiatives, can enhance company standing, heighten reputation and attract customers.

## ■ Saves energy and protects the environment

Recycling lessens the demand for raw materials, which, in turn, protects the environment by decreasing the need to mine and refine natural resources. It also helps lower a workplace's carbon footprint, which aids in achieving company environmental targets and, by demonstrating corporate social responsibility, may attract customers.



# Recycling myths and faqs

**Misinformation and misunderstanding surrounding recycling can create confusion when implementing or improving a recycling program, but how true are recycling myths, and what are the answers to those frequently asked questions?**



## Where does the waste go?

**As each waste facility has differing recycling capabilities, where the waste goes will depend on the location of the workplace and the type of waste collected.**

It also depends on which waste collection company an organization or workplace employs, as many have their own recycling facilities for certain materials.

Broadly, each waste stream will transfer to facilities capable of recycling those materials before they are processed and ready to create other products.

## Doesn't it all end up in a landfill anyway?

**Recyclable waste goes to recycling centers for processing or, in the case of mixed recycling, to other facilities for further sorting.**

The only instance recyclable materials may end up in landfills is if cross-contamination occurs—either by disposing of non-recyclable waste in the recycling container or disposing of non-recyclable food waste.

If cross-contamination occurs, all the materials in the container would be considered contaminated, and the materials would revert to a landfill rather than a recycling facility. Segregation at the source is an important method to prevent cross-contamination as it filters waste into separate recyclable waste streams and, for non-recyclable materials, general waste containers.

# Why should I recycle?

## Does it really make a difference to global warming?

**Recycling, among other strategies, plays a big role in lowering the harmful effects of global warming.**

As climate experts reveal the negative implications of global warming exceeding 1.5 degrees, governments and organizations are implementing methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

By reducing the demand for natural materials, eliminating the need to mine resources, and saving energy, recycling offers a sustainable and cost-effective alternative to landfill waste. It also emits less CO<sub>2</sub> than sending waste to landfills.





# What can I recycle? – The recycling index

Not sure what is recyclable and what isn't?

You're not alone.

**The Environmental Protection Agency cites this as one of the challenges facing recycling in America today, as consumers want to recycle but don't understand what is recyclable.\***

Knowing what can go in a recycling container is a fundamental part of correctly segregating waste. For a business or workplace, a waste management company can provide a list of waste collection services available.



## Aerosols

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.



## Aluminum Cans

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.



## Batteries

Yes. Batteries are recyclable. Check with your waste disposal contractor. Due to their classification as hazardous waste, batteries are often collected separately from other recyclable materials and **MUST NOT** be placed in the general waste as they can cause fires.



## Books

No. Books aren't recyclable now due to the binding glue used. Consider donating or starting a book swapping initiative.



## Cardboard

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.



## Carpet

Yes. Consider specialist carpet recycling firms or check with your local waste disposal contractor.



## Carrier Bags

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.



## Clothes and Textiles

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.



## E-waste

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.



## Food

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.



## Food and Drink Cartons

Many food and drink cartons are recyclable. However, this varies depending on location, so check individual packaging.



## Glass

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.



## Hazardous Materials

Some hazardous materials are recyclable. Check with your waste disposal contractor.



## Lightbulbs

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.



## Paper

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.



## Plastic

Some plastics are recyclable, but not all. It is always best to check with your waste disposal contractor.



## PPE

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.



## Printer Ink Cartridges

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.



## Soft Plastics

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.



## Tires

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.



## Wood

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

*As facilities around the United States differ, always check with local haulers and recycling centers for an updated list of accepted recyclables in specific areas.*



# The Importance of Society-Wide Standard Recycling Labels

Recycling doesn't work if society is confused at the bin.

**According to the Environmental Protection Agency, in 2017, of the 267.8 million tons of municipal solid waste generated by Americans, only 94.2 million tons were recycled or composted.**

Additionally, the contamination of materials, specifically plastics, means the recycling process is severely disrupted and more waste is sent to the landfill. One of the most prominent reasons for this is the variation in labeling across the country's dispersed waste disposal infrastructure.



Contamination occurs when materials are disposed of into the wrong waste stream, resulting in a mix of recyclable and non-recyclable materials. These contaminated materials severely slow down the recycling process, meaning some items are rejected and sent to landfill.

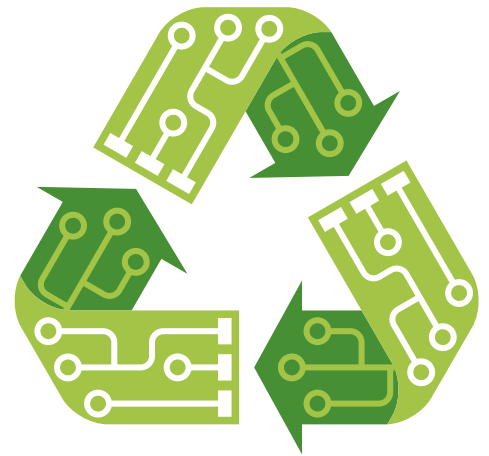
## Why Standardization Works

The society-wide standardization of labels for bins is the #1 solution to solving the country's fragmented recycling habits and eliminating the contamination of materials. By implementing these labels, like the non-profit organization 'Recycle Across America' offers, people will be able to make a more informed and clear decision to recycle correctly, in turn making recycling more effective and economically viable.



# Common workplace waste streams

Totalling sixty-five percent of the total recycled materials, paper and paperboard are the most common single streams among workplaces, and, as the digital age continues to expand, e-waste is rapidly becoming the fastest-growing waste stream globally.\*



# Niche workplace waste streams

Whether you're an office with a high consumption of coffee pods and cups, a school with a constant use of pens, a healthcare facility with a large supply of PPE, or anything in between, for many workplaces and companies, adapting a recycling container to collect niche waste streams is more suitable.

- Coffee Pods
- Used Pens
- Plastic Bottle Tops
- PPE
- Batteries



# The Practical Guide To Creating A Successful Recycling Program



# 6 steps to start a successful recycling program



Starting a recycling program can seem daunting at first, but a recycling program can unlock innumerable benefits.

So, what are the steps?

## 1 Complete a waste audit

**A waste audit is an essential component in helping a workplace achieve a successful recycling program and, ultimately, achieve its environmental goal.**

Responsible for allowing companies and organizations to understand their waste management requirements, a waste audit identifies waste needs and provides recommendations for improvement or adaptation.



## 2 Hire a waste hauler

It is the responsibility of the company to contract a waste management company while ensuring that the chosen company has all the necessary licenses.

But that isn't the only element to consider when contracting a waste hauler. To Here is a list of possible questions and considerations you may decide to ask your new or existing waste management company to optimize a recycling program.

### ■ Type

- What can and can't be recycled with them?
- Will an additional fee be levied if cross-contamination occurs?

### ■ Collection

- How frequent are collections?
- How are missed collections reported?
- Are there any height or weight restrictions to consider?
- Is there a charge for overfilled recycling containers?

### ■ Extras

- When are charges reviewed?
- Can you terminate the contract if you are not happy with the service or if a price increase occurs?
- Does the waste hauler provide incentives to encourage recycling?
- How and when can services be amended?

*Some cities and municipalities mandate specific city-selected haulers for commercial recyclable collection. Always check with local municipalities to see if this is the case.*





# 3 Selecting your waste streams

A waste stream is a specific flow of waste, from source to disposal and recycling. Individual recycling capabilities, treatment levels, and hazard levels of items determine a waste stream. After completing a waste audit, a workplace will have a good idea of which waste streams they should collect.

In association with 'Recycle Across America' (RAA), we have implemented a society-wide standardization of labels across our recycling bin range to assist in the correct disposal of waste and eliminate the contamination of materials.



The labels feature specific recycling rules, following a unified methodology and format of colors, fonts, terminology, and images. They are clear, concise, and informative, ensuring all users can effectively recycle efficiently.

There is a standardized RAA label created for nearly every sorting need and waste stream, ensuring they cover a wide range of our recycling containers.



As advised by multiple waste collection companies, a separate, single stream is the recommendation for any materials individual companies collect predominantly. For smaller recyclable collection amounts, a waste audit may highlight the need for multi-stream containers.

## Designated Waste streams such as:

- Mixed Recycling
- Batteries
- Aluminum Cans
- Plastics
- Glass
- Food Waste



Always check stream collections with your waste hauler, as some waste management companies offer different recycling services and collections.

## 4 Choose your recycling containers

Choosing the correct recycling containers can help determine how successful a workplace waste management program is. With various sizes, colors, styles, and streams available, there are several things to consider when choosing which recycling containers will optimize recycling programs:



### PLACEMENT: indoor or outdoor

Recycling containers come in various shapes, sizes, materials, and styles, but what are the key differences between indoor and outdoor recycling containers?

#### Outdoor Recycling Containers

Ideal for on-street locations, school and universities campuses, playgrounds, high streets, car parks, and leisure establishments, among other places, outdoor recycling containers often offer a larger capacity than indoor varieties to fulfill the waste needs of high footfall areas. They also tend to come with lockable entry and vandal-resistant material to provide added security and lessen the possibility of damage caused by vandals or weather. Hooded apertures may also feature to contain possible odors and repel vermin.



#### Indoor Recycling Containers

Suitable for internal environments, indoor recycling containers come in various styles and sizes to match individual waste requirements and aesthetics. With capacities ranging from as little as 5-gallons to 50-gallons, interior recycling containers are available with numerous apertures to fit all waste stream requirements.



# CAPACITY

**From desktop office recycling containers to lockable outdoor containers to everything in between, there is a wide range of indoor and outdoor containers with varying capacities to choose from when selecting recycling containers.**

The placement of the container, the intended users, and the recyclable waste intended for disposal all help determine the suitable capacity for individual workplaces.

For example, if an office-based company, frequented only by staff members, produces a large number of coffee cups but not a large amount of any other specific recyclable material, they may choose to get a dedicated indoor coffee cup recycling container alongside a 13-gallon mixed recyclables recycling container.

Or, if a company produces an adequate amount of a few materials, they may opt for a Quad recycling station, which provides four 10-gallon units, to cut the cost of buying multiple containers while providing the necessary equipment to achieve their environmental goals.

A school, warehouse, retail company, or any other company with high indoor and outdoor traffic may place several larger capacity outdoor recycling stations with the addition of smaller containers indoors. This would allow for the optimization of indoor spaces and, with strategic placement where high footfall exists, the improvement of recycling programs.

**With capacities ranging from 5-gallons to 80-gallons, once the placement, users, and waste stream are determined, finding an ideally sized container has never been easier.**



*For help with choosing a recycling container, see our guide: [How do I choose a recycling container?](#)*

## APERTURES

Apertures encourage users to place suitable waste into the correct container by providing openings appropriate for specific waste streams. Optimizing recycling containers with aperture openings prevents cross-contamination and minimizes the possibility of facilities rejecting contaminated recycling waste.

**Apertures come in various colors, which enable the containers to be easily spotted while also coordinating with the signage to accentuate the function of the particular waste stations.**



## DECALS AND SIGNAGE

Decals and signage greatly contribute to the success of recycling programs. Providing clear, easily recognized signs allows for easy identification of recycling points while encouraging individuals to dispose of waste in the correct containers. By adding images or decals to recycling sign kits, the containers highlight the function of each stream, create a simplified recycling system and minimize the possibility of cross-contamination.



**They are also customizable to incorporate logos and messages. From a company crest to a full decal wraparound, recycling containers can feature personalization to fit workplace branding, corporate color schemes, and visitor or staff information.**

*See the section on niche waste streams to see how our customers have utilized personalization to create the ideal recycling solution for their organization.*

## 5 Communicate with staff

**Communicating with staff is an integral part of initiating a successful recycling program.**

Informing and discussing recycling and environmental targets with staff members allows companies to receive feedback and suggestions, which can help optimize plans. It also ensures that all staff are aware of, and adhering to, the company-wide goal and presents the opportunity to train staff to use the specific streams adopted by the workplace, which lessens the probability of cross-contamination or the disposal of recyclable materials in trash cans. Assigning responsibility or 'green' roles within a team may also help improve the success of a program.

## 6 Monitor

Measuring and monitoring waste management programs will enable workplaces to adapt and improve.

**Performing scheduled reviews and spot checks can ensure that staff members are segregating waste correctly while keeping track of the company's waste generation.**



# 4 tips to promote workplace recycling

## Set an overarching environmental goal

Implementing and communicating a green target to staff members can increase recycling rates. If all staff members strive for the same target and can see colleagues actively pursuing the same objective, it encourages participation.

## Communicate and accept feedback

Allowing staff members to comment and respond to recycling programs before and during implementation is a handy tool to discover any issues or helpful suggestions. Staff will have a good idea of what recycling streams are most beneficial for their workplace and which may not. This communication can be verbal, through newsletters, and through the company intranet, among other ways.

## Set targets to measure program success

Setting achievable targets is not only a method to measure program success but is also a handy way to encourage participation. By creating an attainable focus, staff members are more likely to adopt recycling habits to achieve goals. The targets, which are amendable, build a fun way to accomplish recycling program success while also reaffirming the overarching environmental goal.

## Install recycling points and streams

After identifying waste stream requirements, the next step to promoting a recycling program is to install easily accessible and identifiable waste streams and recycling points. These will enable staff members to recycle materials easily, lowering waste costs by preventing waste from unnecessarily going to landfill.

Waste streams can be both single and multi-stream and are often customizable to requirements. See the section on Common workplace waste streams and Niche workplace waste streams to find out more.





# OVERVIEW

The recycling infrastructure in the United States is expanding to fit the global environmental goal. As the US strives to achieve its recycling target, recycling will play a massive role in the fight for a greener, more sustainable future, continuing to provide alternative and environmentally viable alternatives to natural resource consumption.

**As workplaces and companies, we all have a role in creating a green, more sustainable planet for future generations.**

**So, what changes will your workplace make to aid the environmental targets?**

*Let's get started together.*

# RESOURCES

**Benefits of Recycling** - <https://www.epa.gov/americanrecycles/us-recycling-system#RecyclingBenefits>

**Environmental Protection Agency** - <https://www.epa.gov/>

**America Recycles Pledge** - <https://www.epa.gov/americanrecycles/forms/america-recycles-pledge>

**Recycling Basics** - <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/recycling-basics>

**Veolia** - <https://www.veolianorthamerica.com/>

**Waste Resources** - <https://wasteresources.com/>

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