

Information sheet

Offices

A recycling guide for offices

Why should you recycle?

Recycling at work makes good business sense because:

- It's easy to set up and run
- It feels good to be involved
- It saves space and can reduce clutter
- It's cost effective and could save you money
- It helps to protect the environment
- On average 60-80% of office waste is paper

What can you recycle?

You are probably producing the following wastes, which can be recycled:

- Paper, including;
 - Office Paper (white high grade paper)
 - Mixed Paper (coloured paper, leaflets, envelopes, newspapers, magazines etc)
 - Confidential Paper (confidential shredding is offered by some recycling service providers whereby secured containers are provided and the waste is shredded on or off site and then recycled)
 - Shredded Paper (some offices shred paper themselves but you will need to check with the recycling service provider if they accept shredded paper as it may depend upon how they handle the waste or who their end markets are)
- Cardboard

You may also be producing some:

- Printer cartridges
- Plastic bottles
- Food and drink cans
- Electrical equipment

How easy it is to get them recycled will depend on what services are offered in your area, and how much you produce.

Key facts

We use 12.5 million tonnes of paper and cardboard every year in the UK.

Source: Confederation of Paper Industries

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We produce a lot of waste paper, and we really wanted to find a simple and convenient recycling solution.

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Alison Marland,
Caret.



A full case study for Caret can be found at:
http://www.wrap.org.uk/businesses/start_recycling_at_work/case_studies.html

How do you find a recycling waste contractor?

WRAP has developed www.recycleatwork.org.uk, a web-based tool for businesses like yours. The tool allows you to identify recycling waste contractors in your area by the service type you require or the material type that you need collecting.

You should consider the following key questions to find a recycling waste contractor suitable for your business's recycling needs:

- What materials could you recycle?
- Are the materials that you have identified for recycling to be collected by the waste contractor, or do you need to drop them off at a recycling drop off facility?
- Does the recycling service provider cater for the size of your business? i.e. is the service offered on an 'on demand basis' or are collections scheduled?
- How much storage space for recycling containers/bins does your business have?
- How are the collections charged for? Is there an annual charge or a fee each time the container/bin is emptied?
- What types of paper can be collected? Office paper only or mixed paper also? Is shredded paper acceptable or is a confidential recycling service offered?

When considering which service to adopt please remember you are legally obliged to comply with your 'Duty of Care' requirements (see Duty of Care section) for the waste you produce and pass on.

How do you set up a recycling scheme?

Once you have found a suitable recycling waste contractor, the next step is to consider the design of the internal recycling scheme and how the material will be managed.

This includes:

- **Setting up regular collections** – There are two aspects of the recycling scheme that you need to discuss with the recycling waste contractor:

1. **The service contract** – Find out what contract period is required and the service details i.e. the frequency of the collection and whether containers/bins are supplied. There may be an opportunity to negotiate the frequency of collections in the contract as the recycling scheme develops. Check that the recycling waste contractor has a waste carriers licence and can comply with your Duty of Care requirements (see Duty of Care section).
2. **Service logistics** – The recycling waste contractor may request a visit to your premises to review their needs i.e. that the material identified for recycling is appropriate, what containers/bins will be used and if there are any issues with collection access. This initial assessment will determine what type of service can be provided for your business needs.
 - **The location of recycling containers** – It is important to consider the locations of both external and internal recycling containers on your premises. A well placed recycling container will increase capture of requested material and minimise contamination. Think of where the recyclable material will be generated, for example at the photocopier or desk. Also consider the health and safety implications of where the containers will be placed. The external container will require good access for the recycling waste contractor.
 - **Managing a general waste and recyclable material collection** – Dependent on service provision, the general waste and recyclable materials can be collected by separate waste contractors and on different days. The waste management for your business and key personnel (i.e. maintenance and cleaning staff) needs to be co-ordinated to meet the requirements of the recycling waste carriers. To ensure that the segregation of requested recyclable material is efficient, recycling containers/bins must be clearly labelled.
 - **Staff involvement and training** – A successful recycling scheme requires support from all staff. Staff will be receptive to a recycling scheme that is convenient and easy to use. Training staff on the recycling scheme will benefit the service. Staff members need to understand what materials are being requested and where they should put them. Incorporating a general overview of recycling (i.e. what happens to the material once it is collected) will complement the training. Also providing inductions on the recycling scheme for new members of staff will benefit the service.

- **Launch and promotion** – The recycling scheme will require a launch so staff are clear about when to start using the service. This can include training sessions or demonstrations of the service. You should use existing communication channels to promote the recycling scheme such as emails and staff information boards. WRAP has developed some Recycle at Work promotional material (such as posters and container stickers) to complement recycling schemes and can be accessed from www.recyclenowpartners.org.uk/industry_commerce/index.html. It is important that staff receive regular updates on the achievements of the recycling scheme to aid motivation.

What is Duty of Care and what are my legal responsibilities?

- The term Duty of Care refers to a law which requires businesses who produce waste to take reasonable care to store waste safely and securely and prevent it from causing pollution or harming anyone.
- It is a requirement under Duty of Care that anyone transporting, recycling or disposing of a third party's waste must have a Waste Carriers Licence. The recycling waste contractor must be authorised by the Environment Agency or the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency to carry out these activities. You should ask to see a copy of their certificate of registration or check with the relevant regulator that they have one.
- When the waste is collected it must be described in writing and a record of the waste being collected (a Waste Transfer Note) should be obtained and stored for at least two years for every recycling or waste contract. Repeated transfers of the same kind of waste between the same parties can be covered by one Waste Transfer Note for up to one year.
- Businesses can transport their own waste to a licensed disposal site (drop off facility), without being registered as a waste carrier. The waste can only be taken to a site authorised to accept commercial waste and the requirement for a waste transfer note still applies.
- More information about Environmental Legislation including Duty of Care can be obtained from the Environment Agency Netregs site www.netregs.gov.uk
- Please note that Electrical items will need to be dealt with in compliance with the WEEE Regulations (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment). More information about the WEEE Regulations can be found at Netregs www.netregs.gov.uk



How important is recycling at work?

- Materials collected for recycling are used in the manufacture of new products. In a landfill many types of waste generate harmful greenhouse gasses. Methane is produced from biodegradable wastes in a landfill and is 23 times as potent a greenhouse gas as carbon dioxide.
- Making new products from recycled materials requires less energy than producing products from virgin materials e.g. recycling aluminium cans into new cans requires 95% less energy than processing bauxite ore into aluminium.
- Recycling one tonne of aluminium saves seven tonnes of CO₂ being emitted into the atmosphere. One tonne of CO₂ is equivalent to emissions produced from driving 2800 miles.

What do other businesses think?

- Over a quarter of companies who recycle at work say they have saved space by having designated areas and clearly labeled containers/bins for specific materials.
- Over a third of businesses that recycle say it has improved their reputation within the local community.
- Recycling is a cost-effective method of dealing with your waste, simply because it is often cheaper or a comparable price to general waste disposal. In many cases, businesses have saved money on general waste services by introducing a paper recycling scheme. If you are recycling materials then you are reducing the amount of waste that needs to be sent to landfill, as a result you may be able to renegotiate your waste disposal contract, so that you receive less general waste collections and therefore save money.
- 97% of businesses are satisfied with their Recycle at Work scheme.
- Details on how other businesses are recycling at work can be found at http://www.wrap.org.uk/businesses/start_recycling_at_work/case_studies.html

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