

# Recycling and Waste Reduction at Work

## Hotel and Motel Factsheet

The information in this factsheet is designed to help hotel and motel owners and employees in Gaston County understand the importance of recycling and waste reduction in their business, and to provide guidance on beginning a recycling and waste reduction program.



### How Does Waste Reduction and Recycling Benefit Us?

**Improves Public Image.** The public appreciates businesses that are making an effort to be environmentally friendly. In fact, having a waste reduction and recycling program can help increase your business.

**Improves the Bottom Line.** Depending on your contract with your waste hauler, a recycling program may save you money by decreasing tipping fees or pickup fees at your facility. Plus, the revenue that you receive from the sale of recyclables may help offset the cost of implementing the program.

**Keeps You Legal.** NC General Statutes ban a number of items from the landfill, and more will be banned in 2008 and 2009. Plus, if your hotel or motel has a full-service restaurant, the new ABC Permit Holder Recycling Legislation may apply to you.

### How Do We Get Started?

- 1. Get Committed.** To be effective, a waste reduction and recycling program must have support from management. If management embraces the program, they will help ensure that recycling bins and other materials are available. Management can also lead by example – if they actively support the program, other employees will follow their lead. It is a good idea to set up a “Green Team” to work on implementing the program.
- 2. Know Your Waste.** Perform a waste assessment so that you can really see how much you are throwing away. Examine the contents of dumpsters and trash cans and talk to janitorial staff about the materials that they see. Determine which materials make up the largest percentage of your waste stream, and which materials would be easiest to divert. Contact the Gaston County Solid Waste and Recycling Division at 704-922-7729 for more information or assistance with waste assessments.

- 3. Determine Your Collection Options.** There are a number of ways to implement a recycling program, but the major factors that you will need to consider are the recycling facilities in your area, the amount of space that you have for storage, the amount of time needed for collections, and the amount of money available. In the Gaston County area, there are a number of local recycling companies, and there are six County-run drop-off recycling centers located around the County for your convenience.

- a. Recycling Facilities and Services.** Refer back to the results of your waste assessment. Are there companies in the area that can recycle the waste materials that you have? Can they pick up your materials, or will you have to transport your recyclables to them? Do they pay for recyclables, or is it simply free disposal? Do your materials need to be sorted a specific way before they can be recycled at that facility? Do materials need to be baled, or will the company accept materials loose or in bags? At this point, you might also want to check on your current waste hauling contract. Can you add recyclable hauling and recycling containers to your current service contract? All of these questions will have an impact on the way you implement recycling at your facility.

**TIP:** Always include your employees in the planning process – especially the ones that will have an active role in collecting or sorting the materials. This will improve participation and morale since they will feel that it is “their” program rather than something they are being required to do.

- b. **Storage Space.** Many recycling companies are willing to pick up your recycling...if you have enough of it. Do you have enough space outside for a roll-off container (these are usually about 8 feet wide by 22 feet long)? If so, you might be able to have a company provide a container for your recycling. If space is not available outside, is there storage space inside your facility? Will you be able to store enough material for a company to pick up your recycling, or is your storage space small enough that you will need to take the materials yourself?
- c. **Time Considerations.** Who will be collecting the recycling? Will the duty be added on for existing staff, will you need another position just for recycling, or will everyone be required to take their own recycling to a certain place? Will your staff need to spend any time preparing materials for the recycling company (i.e. sorting materials or emptying bags)?
- d. **Funding Considerations.** Do you have enough money to purchase recycling bins for every room, or can you only buy a few for public areas? Do the bins need to match a certain décor, or have a certain style? Will you need to purchase a baler or some other piece of equipment? If your staff will be doing collections, do you have containers that they can use to transport collected materials from one area to another?
4. **Set Goals.** Decide which waste reduction and recycling practices you will use, and come up with a plan for implementation. What are you trying to accomplish? Do you want to reduce a certain amount of waste, or decrease costs by a certain amount? How will you determine whether or not your program is a success? You will also need to determine how you will track weight and cost information. Can you get weights from your hauler or from the recycling company, or do you need to estimate weights or count the number of full containers? Will you track the cost savings or the environmental impacts of your program? Have a clear idea of the information that you want or need to track. That way, when you implement your program, you can be sure of getting the information that you need.
5. **Develop a Plan and Educate Your Employees.** Once you have decided which recycling options will work best for you, develop those ideas into a recycling plan. Provide education sessions for your employees. Let your employees know where recycling bins will be located, and what materials are acceptable in the bins. Anyone that will be collecting and/or sorting materials needs to know how the materials should be separated, how materials will be transported to the recycling company, and where and how materials will be stored. Remember that education is an on-going process – you will need to provide education sessions on a regular basis for all employees, just to remind them of the program and acceptable materials. If the recycling program is available to guests, you will also need to let them know what can be recycled. You may want to include table tents in rooms as well as information in registration packets.
6. **Implement Your Program.** Place containers, and begin recycling. Just remember that your recycling program is a work in progress, and you may end up having to change collection methods or procedures. As you add more materials, and get more comfortable with the program, you will find more efficient ways to do things. Make sure that you take the time to evaluate your recycling program and gauge whether or not you are meeting your goals.

### Keeping Employees Involved

- Host education sessions at least one time each year to remind employees about the program.
- If you have an orientation session for new employees, make sure to include recycling information in this training session.
- Have a reward or recognition program for employees or departments that show strong participation in the program.
- Ask for their advice! Employees often have good ideas on how to save money and increase participation or program efficiency.
- Keep them informed of how much they are recycling. This will let your employees know what they are accomplishing.

# ***Waste Reduction and Recycling...***

## **Easy Tips for Hotels and Motels**

### **In the Office and At the Front Desk:**

- Double-side copies whenever possible.
- Use e-mail to distribute information rather than printing copies.
- Maintain electronic files rather than paper files when possible.
- Convert scrap paper, outdated forms, and outdated letterhead into scratch pads.
- Reuse office supplies whenever possible. Items like paper clips, binder clips, and folders can be reused a number of times before they must be discarded.
- Offer newspapers at the front desk rather than distributing papers to every room.
- Keep up with preventive maintenance on computer equipment to make it last longer.
- Recycle your used toner and printer cartridges. Ask the company that you buy them from - many companies will take back your used cartridges when you buy a new one.
- Collect cardboard, paper, plastic bottles, and aluminum cans for recycling.

### **In Guest Rooms:**

- Use a television channel to convey information and events instead of having everything printed.
- Provide reusable mugs and cups instead of disposable ones.
- Eliminate the use of disposable plastic liners in ice buckets.
- Donate blankets and worn furniture to local shelters.
- Re-dye stained towels to use as pool towels.
- Rather than replacing carpets and sheets during remodeling, have them re-dyed to match the new décor.
- Offer guests the option of not having sheets and towels changed daily.
- Install systems in bathrooms to dispense soap, shampoo, and lotion.
- Offer recycling services for materials collected in guest rooms.
- Place recycling containers in vending areas, near elevators, and in lobby areas for easy access.
- Use worn towels and linens as cleaning rags.

**A typical occupied guest room generates 1-2 pounds of waste on non-checkout days, and twice that on checkout day.**

### **In Restaurants/Lounges:**

- Buy in bulk whenever possible to minimize packaging waste.
- Reduce the use of disposable items whenever possible.
- Donate excess edible food to a local food bank or soup kitchen.
- Whenever possible, serve drinks from bulk containers (i.e. fountain drinks) rather than single-serve containers.
- Rotate perishable items when shipments are delivered. This minimizes food spoilage by making sure that older stocks are used first.
- Make sure that grease traps are properly maintained.
- Recycle cooking oil and grease.
- Collect cardboard, glass bottles, steel cans, and aluminum cans for recycling.

### **In Meeting Rooms/Conference Areas:**

- Encourage meeting hosts to mention that recycling is available during conference orientation sessions.
- Serve beverages from bulk dispensers instead of single-serving containers whenever possible (i.e. carafes for juice, pitchers for water)
- Use reusable mugs and glasses rather than disposable cups.
- Place recycling containers at room and building exits to make recycling convenient for attendees.

### **In Housekeeping:**

- When there is minimal trash in a room, encourage housekeepers to dump trash cans into a larger container rather than changing out the liner.
- Use concentrated multi-purpose cleaners whenever possible.
- Use refillable pump-style spray bottles rather than aerosol cans.

### **In Purchasing:**

- Purchase materials that contain recycled content (paper towels, tissues, copy paper, trash bags, etc.).
- Buy materials in bulk whenever possible to reduce packaging waste.
- Purchase supplies with minimal or recyclable packaging.
- Purchase non-toxic or less toxic supplies whenever possible.

## Legal Requirements

**North Carolina General Statute 130A-309.10(f):** Bans certain items from being disposed of in landfills. The banned materials that might be generated by hotels and motels are aluminum cans and white goods (large appliances like washers and dryers). However, used motor oil, yard debris, antifreeze, whole scrap tires, and lead-acid batteries are also included under this law.

**House Bill 1518:** This bill affects only holders of on-premises malt beverage, on-premises unfortified wine, on-premises fortified wine and mixed beverages permits. The bill requires holders of these permits to separate, store and recycle all recyclable beverage containers that are sold at retail for on-premises consumption. House Bill 1518 becomes effective Jan. 1, 2008. The full text of this bill is available online at <http://www.p2pays.org/ref/38/37334.pdf>.

**House Bill 1465:** This bill expands on G.S. 130A-309.10(f) to ban additional materials from disposal in landfills. Under this bill, plastic bottles will be banned, along with oil filters and wooden pallets. House Bill 1465 becomes effective October 1, 2009. The full text of this bill is available online at <http://www.p2pays.org/ref/38/37333.pdf>.

## Where Can I Find Out More?

The North Carolina Department of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (NC DPPEA) has recycling and waste reduction information specific to hotels and motels. Find out more at [www.p2pays.org/hospitality/](http://www.p2pays.org/hospitality/).

The EPA has an informational web site on providing environmentally friendly conference and meeting facilities. Visit [www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/](http://www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/) to find out more.

**For more information on recycling in the Gaston County area, and for help developing your program, contact the Gaston County Solid Waste and Recycling Division at 704-922-7729.**

**For your convenience, Gaston County maintains six recycling drop-off centers. Recycling materials can be dropped off at these sites at no charge.**

