

solutions

for successful recycling

www.recycleacrossamerica.org
www.eco-schoolsusa.org
www.nwf.org



RECYCLING IS WORTH IT! When the U.S. reaches recycling levels of 75%, it will be the environmental equivalent of removing 50 million cars from U.S. roads each year and it will generate 1.5 million new jobs. Currently less than 35% of households and less than 10% of businesses in the U.S. recycle. (EPA 2011)

BINS & LINERS



Choose bins that are durable and manufactured from recycled materials. Preferably choose blue bins for all of your recyclable materials and black bins for landfill/trash materials. If you compost or send food to farms, choose liners that are clearly marked "100% compostable". Even if you aren't composting, consider using compostable liners because they are manufactured without petroleum products and are likely to decompose more quickly. Look for cooperative purchasing opportunities in your industry for better prices.

LABEL YOUR BINS



A society-wide standardized labeling system has been created for recycling bins through non-profit Recycle Across America™. Choose the standardized labels that suit your sorting needs at www.RecycleAcrossAmerica.org. In recent studies, a school district increased its recyclable capture rates more than 47% when it began using consistent labeling throughout all of its 15 school buildings and the amount of trash thrown into the recycling bins decreased significantly. Now imagine the impact when students and the public begin seeing consistent labeling throughout society.

PROPER BIN PLACEMENT



Always keep trash bins, recycling bins, and if applicable compost bins, along side each other. Whenever possible, have a recycling bin with every trash bin and use the standardized labeling system. In food areas such as cafeterias and restaurants, provide a way for people to empty their containers before they put them in the recycling bins. (*In theory* the idea of making the trash bin smaller or more difficult to reach should mean less trash, *but in reality* it means more trash enters the recycling bin and valuable recyclables will be thrown in the trash bin.)

AUDIT WASTE & REQUEST HAULER HELP



Eco-Schools USA has links to waste awareness and reduction tools for schools i.e., **Waste Audit, Waste Action Plan**, and **Waste Reduction Resources & Curriculum** on page 3 of this document. Also, ask your waste and recycling hauler to help evaluate your school's waste and recycling volumes. Your hauler should help measure how much waste is leaving your buildings versus your volume of recyclables. Ask them to provide a complete report including itemized expenses and taxes related to your landfill and recycling. It is up to YOUR organization to request this audit for savings.

MONITOR FOR MONEY



Once you've done a baseline audit of your landfill vs recycling volumes and fees, look for every opportunity to decrease landfill waste and increase recycling volumes going forward to win the financial benefits of recycling. When possible, begin reducing the size of your landfill dumpsters and reducing the frequency of the trash hauling. Contact your city's solid waste coordinator and ask them if your landfill/trash hauling services are taxed and if so, how much (by state, county, city?). And ask if your recycling hauling services are taxed. In many communities, there are multiple taxes related to landfill dumpsters, services and hauling (sometimes exceeding 75%), whereas there are usually no taxes on dumpsters, services and hauling for recycling. For example in Minneapolis, MN, cumulative state, county and city tax on trash hauling is more than 75%. Therefore if you have a \$100 dumpster and hauling charge for trash, your bill will be more than \$175. But in Mpls, there are no taxes on dumpsters, services and hauling for recyclables. Therefore every organization should increase its recycling levels and dumpster and hauling needs, and respectively decrease their dumpster and hauling services for landfills. This can equate to thousands of dollars a year in savings for your organization. Keep in mind, it's up to **your** organization to monitor and request the changes and savings in your billing. **CONTINUE TO MONITOR YOUR VOLUMES!** Also, if your organization is generating considerable amounts of cardboard, office paper, aluminum cans, and other materials, you might be able to sell your recyclables directly to a processor and make money!!

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RECYCLING OFTEN SAVES ORGANIZATIONS MONEY! Recycling and composting can often save organizations thousands of dollars a year. Contact your city solid waste coordinator to learn about the taxes you might be paying on trash hauling, which you could save if you begin increasing your recycling and composting volumes. And ask them about other financial incentives available to your organization for diverting valuable materials away from the landfill.

CHOOSING COMPOSTABLE PRODUCTS



Composting your organization's food waste and compostable products can save your organization money by diverting significant amounts of material away from landfills while providing nutrient soil supplements to farmers (or your own garden). Remember to always use 'well marked' compostable liners in your bins and keep your compost bins conveniently placed alongside your recycling bin and trash bin. Also keep in mind when providing compostable dishware in your cafeteria or food serving areas to be certain that ALL of your disposable dishware is fully compostable and well marked as compostable. Make certain that it is collected in a bin dedicated and specifically labeled to collect food and compostable products for compost processing. Avoid offering compostable plastic cups and non-compostable plastics dishware because it will confuse your employees, students, customers and cleaning crew, AND if non-compostable dishware enters your compost bin it will cause problems for your compost processors and if compostable dishware enters your recycling bins it will cause problems for your recycling processors. Strive to use all compostable products in your food serving areas and choose compostable products that are "clearly" marked as compostable. Remember, compostable plastics need to be truly composted in order to break down quickly and thoroughly. Throwing compostable materials in the trash does not result in rapid decomposing.

ANNOUNCE IT & ENGAGE OTHERS



Send out announcements, newsletters and videos to let all of your custodians, cleaning crew, employees, students, visitors, and stakeholders know that you're ramping up your recycling efforts and you need their help to do it right! It is CRITICAL to make recycling easy and consistent ... and to make it "top of mind for the people in your building". Measure your progress and share your progress with them at 3 month intervals! Here is a link to a video to share: <http://www.recycleacrossamerica.org/StandardizedLabelsWeb.mov>

RECYCLE IT ALL



Have recycling drives for all types of materials. Visit <http://search.earth911.com/> to learn where to recycle: batteries, ink cartridges, furniture, paint, cell phones, construction materials, electronics, etc. With companies such as www.terracycle.com, you can recycle materials thought to be 'unrecyclable' such as wrappers, toothbrushes, flip-flop sandals, etc. and even generate money for you or your organization!

BUY RECYCLED & REDUCE WASTE



Always look for opportunities to close the loop by buying products that are made from recycled materials: paper products, clothing, uniforms, furniture, carpet, ink cartridges, construction materials, etc. Support manufacturers that are using recycled materials in their manufacturing. Recycling is only half of the equation ... buying products made from recyclables is the other half. And above all ... always look for ways to reduce waste. Resources are precious & limited!

SHARE YOUR EFFORTS

eco-profiles®

The audience of your organization i.e., your customers, your employees, your students, your vendors, your stakeholders, want to know what your organization is doing environmentally. Create an Eco-Profile® to show that your organization is recycling and doing other 'green' actions. Attach your organization's Eco-Profile® to your website, social sites and display your eco-profile label on your entrances. Your Eco Profile actually lists the green actions of your organization. Eco-Profiles® are free for individuals and schools to complete. (www.eco-profiles.org)

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Here are additional links to waste awareness and reduction resources from Eco Schools USA:

Consumption and Waste Audit

<http://www.nwf.org/Global-Warming/School-Solutions/Eco-Schools-USA/Become-an-Eco-School/Pathways/Consumption-and-Waste/Audit.aspx>

Consumption and Waste Sample Action Plan

<http://www.nwf.org/Global-Warming/School-Solutions/Eco-Schools-USA/Become-an-Eco-School/Pathways/Consumption-and-Waste/Action-Plan.aspx>

Curriculum Connections

<http://www.nwf.org/Global-Warming/School-Solutions/Eco-Schools-USA/Become-an-Eco-School/Pathways/Consumption-and-Waste/Curriculum.aspx>

Schools can connect globally through Wrigley's Eco-Schools Connect Litterless Campaign

<http://www.eco-schools-wrigley.org/register-school.html>

ECO SCHOOLS USA
RESOURCES FOR YOU!

SHARE YOUR
PICTURES, VIDEOS
AND STORIES!



flickr YouTube

Part of the excitement about progress is being able to witness success stories and momentum with national or global participation. We would love to know how your recycling program is going, so please share photos, videos and stories about your recycling efforts at the following Eco Schools USA and Recycle Across America's social sites!

National Wildlife Federation's Eco Schools USA

FB - Eco-Schools USA

Twitter - @ecoschoolsusa

Flickr - <http://www.flickr.com/groups/ecoschoolsusa/>

Recycle Across America

FB - Recycle Across America

Twitter - @recycleacrossam

Linkedin - Recycle Across America

Flickr - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/recycleacrossamerica>

Youtube - <http://www.youtube.com/user/recycleacrossamerica>

Here's to progress ... here's to YOU!

