

Recycling in Pennsylvania Hotels and Motels

Recycling at hotels and motels throughout Pennsylvania can make a positive impact on our environment and our local communities due to their large-scale resource consumption potential. Owners, operators, and guests of these establishments, working together with their local municipality, can implement and maintain a successful and impactful recycling program.

Recycling is local in Pennsylvania - The Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling, and Waste Reduction Act of 1988 (Act 101) requires commercial, institutional, and municipal establishments located in Pennsylvania's mandated municipalities to recycle high-grade office paper, corrugated paper, aluminum, and leaf waste. In addition, establishments must recycle any other materials included in the municipality's recycling ordinance or regulations, which may include glass, newsprint, plastics, and/or steel and bimetallic cans. Businesses and institutions with facilities located within mandated municipalities must implement recycling programs according to local requirements, those not, are encouraged to recycle.

General municipal recycling requirements are as follows:

- All commercial, institutional, and municipal establishments must source separate the following materials:
 - High grade office paper;
 - Corrugated cardboard;
 - Aluminum cans;
 - Leaf waste; and
 - Any other recyclables that may be designated by the municipality.
- These establishments must arrange for the collection and recycling of all designated materials.
- All commercial, institutional, and municipal entities must provide written documentation as to the type and weight of materials recycled annually. Reports are due to the municipality by January 31 of each year on a form provided by the municipality.

Hotels and motels, in many instances, must manage a waste stream that includes dry materials received through their offices and guest rooms, and wet materials received through restaurants and bars. This makes recycling more of a challenge than for a typical office setting. For hotels and motels that have restaurants and bars associated with their facilities, please refer to the Recycling in Pennsylvania Restaurants and Taverns fact sheet for additional recycling information specific to these establishments.

Steps for Successful Recycling in Hotels and Motels

1. Perform a waste assessment. Walk through your hotel or motel noting what type of waste is discarded in each area. A walk-through will help you determine which types of containers are needed. Typical programs are likely to involve some of the following:
 - **Administrative and office areas** - office paper, corrugated cardboard, other paper, cans, bottles, toner cartridges.
 - **Food service areas/laundry** - glass, metal, cans, plastic containers, corrugated cardboard (make sure that food waste is separated from recyclables).
 - **Public areas/guest rooms** - newspaper, magazines, bottles, cans.
2. Based on the results of the waste assessment, set up appropriate recycling programs in all areas.
3. Make sure that all collection containers are well-marked. For public areas, it is best to choose containers with specialized openings, such as a hole for cans or a slot for newspapers. It is also important to place containers where the materials are generated to make recycling convenient.
4. Inform employees about proper recycling procedures by issuing a memo and reviewing procedures at staff meetings or at the beginning of shifts. Make sure to follow up to ensure that procedures are being followed and further educate employees as necessary.
5. Set up a log book or a receipt system to record the volume of recyclables leaving the premises. This will enable you to receive proper compensation for your materials and to take appropriate action if volumes change.

6. Include recycling information in your orientation for new employees and in guest information packets.
7. As you establish policies, explain the recycling program goals to your housekeeping staff for they will be very important to the success of your program and may provide you with key information helpful when finalizing your recycling policies. Train them by showing them what to do with new containers, how to collect waste separately, and where to take separated materials. For a 24-hour operation, plan pick-ups on appropriate shifts so that you do not have a problem with overflowing containers.
8. Ask for assistance from your housekeeping staff in monitoring the program. Have them inform you of areas with major contamination problems or where employees are not participating and follow up with improved recycling education in these areas.
9. If appropriate, make sure that your grounds crew knows to keep yard waste separate from other waste.
10. Ask your waste hauler for advice about keeping recyclables and wet waste separate. Depending on the company's trucks and equipment, your hauler may want to give you separate containers for trash and recyclables.
11. Remind employees to keep food waste out of recycling containers and trash. Food waste should be handled separately from trash and recyclables.
12. Hotels and motels that have establishments in multiple locations need to coordinate their recycling efforts with each local municipality where they operate. Each municipality may have different recycling processes – remember, recycling is local in Pennsylvania.

Many wastes generated at hotels and motels can be recycled. It is important that owners, operators, and guests and the local municipality all work together to implement and maintain a recycling program at their lodging and social gathering establishments.

Hotels and motels, offices, restaurants, schools, retail operations, manufacturers, hospitals, and other establishments each generate various types and amounts of wastes and have their own unique recycling opportunities. To learn more on how different types of establishments can implement a recycling program, please refer to our other Recycling Fact Sheets available at: <http://www.depgreenport.state.pa.us/elibrary/> (select Publications and then Waste Management). Though each workplace may have differences in the waste they produce and what they can recycle, all have the capability of significantly reducing what and how much waste is disposed in our landfills. By recycling they can also save energy and reduce carbon emissions, save natural resources, and limit operational costs. It is important that we all work together with our employers and local municipalities to implement and maintain a recycling program at our places of work and lodging.

For more detailed information about recycling in Pennsylvania, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Waste Management, Recycling in Pennsylvania website at: <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Land/Waste/Recycling>.