

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 CO₂ 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

