



Waste Reduction & Recycling ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



Business Recycling Toolkit May 2021



City of Fort Collins
Waste Reduction and Recycling

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS WRAP?

The City's Waste Reduction and Recycling Team works directly with businesses and multifamily complexes looking to start or increase recycling services through the Waste Reduction and Recycling Assistance Program (WRAP). We offer a wide variety of resources to support successful recycling and can even offer one-on-one assessments of your current waste program. All resources and assessments are provided free of charge.



Waste Reduction & Recycling
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

PURPOSE OF THIS TOOLKIT

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide information to businesses looking to start or improve their recycling systems. This toolkit includes best practices for successful recycling, along with information about rightsizing your service, tips for educating your employees about recycling and more.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

Each section of the toolkit includes "Take Action" boxes to highlight how you can implement best practices in the toolkit. The actions are color coded based on the amount of time and resources each action takes to implement:

TAKE ACTION	
BASELINE	These actions are a must to help your recycling program succeed.
NEXT STEPS	These, along with the Green actions will help ensure employees and customers understand your recycling program and recycle the right way.
GOING FURTHER	These actions will help your recycling program be more efficient, cost-effective and successful.

We strongly suggest that you at least implement the **BASELINE** actions to help set up the best chance of success for your recycling program. To further improve your program and better educate staff and customers, you can also implement the **NEXT STEPS** and **GOING FURTHER** Actions.

As you work through this guide, identify which actions work best for your business and implement them before or soon after beginning recycling service. Summary checklists of actions are included at the end of the toolkit.

Knowing what you can and cannot recycle is key to a successful recycling program.

RECYCLING GUIDELINES

- ## GET THESE GUIDELINES

- Business Recycling Toolkit

TOP 10 RECYCLING TIPS

- 1. Do not bag recyclables.** Recyclable items should be placed loose in the bin. Bagged recyclables will not be recycled since they cannot be sorted and cause issues at the recycling sorting plant.
- 2. Batteries and “sharps” DO NOT go in recycling.** These items are hazardous and can lead to recyclables being rejected from the sorting plant and sent to the landfill instead. Lithium batteries have even caused fires at the recycling plant!.
- 3. No Plastic Bags.** Do not put plastic bags in recycling. Plastic bags cause major issues at recycling sorting plants, tangling in recycling equipment and causing it to jam and break. Plastic bags can be recycled at the Timberline Recycling Center or many grocery / retail stores.
[Learn more >](#)
- 4. Know your plastics.** The only plastic items recyclable through curbside recycling in Fort Collins are plastic bottles, tubs and jugs. Learn more at plastics recycling at fcgov.com/plastics. *The presence of the recycling symbol on a plastic item does not mean it is locally recyclable.*
[Learn more about the meaning of the chasing arrows on plastics >](#)
- 5. No single-use items.** Coffee cups, paper plates, straws, paper towels, paper cups, plastic utensils, plastic takeout containers etc. are not recyclable. They must be thrown away. When you can, choose reusable.
[Learn more >](#)
- 6. When in doubt, check it out.** If you aren't sure if an item is recyclable, check the City's A-Z Recycling Tool, email recycling@fcgov.com, or call us at 970-221-6600. If you can't figure it out, it is better to throw it away in the trash rather than potentially contaminating the recycling.
- 7. Empty and clean.** Be sure to empty and rinse cans, bottles and other containers before recycling.
- 8. Recycle cardboard.** In Fort Collins, clean, recyclable cardboard is banned from the trash.
[Learn more >](#)
- 9. Keep out food and liquid.** These cause major issues in the recycling process and can lead to loads of recyclables being rejected.
- 10. Composting is not the same as recycling.** Keep food waste, yard trimmings and compostable cups, straws and other dishes out of your recycling bin.

CREATE A BIN OF CONFUSION

Support your employees in continuing to learn about which materials can be recycled. Create a small bin (can be a simple cardboard box or other bin) and label it “Bin of Confusion.” Encourage employees to place items in the bin they're not sure whether can be recycled. Check with the City's [A-Z recycling tool](#) or contact [Waste Reduction and Recycling staff](#) about any items you're unsure of. Share back information at staff meetings or via email updates regarding whether materials found in the bin of confusion can be recycled and enable conversation about how to determine if an item is locally recyclable.

TAKE ACTION: What you can Recycle

Post the recycling guidelines above or on each recycling bin at your business. [Request recycling guidelines >](#)

Share the recycling guidelines and recycling tips with your employees. Share information about your recycling system as a part of employee onboarding.

Set up a Recycling 101 Training for your employees (request by emailing WWR@fcgov.com). During the training, clarify how to properly dispose of common waste items your business produces. Repeat this training with staff annually.

Set up a “bin of confusion” where employees can place items they are unsure of whether to recycle or throw away. Periodically share clarifications about materials in the bin with all staff.






ESTABLISH BEST PRACTICES FOR RECYCLING




Establishing best practices for recycling at your business:

- ✓ Helps ensure that employees and customers recycle
- ✓ Can increase the amount employees recycle
- ✓ Decreases the amount of contamination in your recycling

BINS

Best Practice	Details	Example
Place trash and recycle bins next to each other	<p>It is generally best to place trash and recycling bins together for convenient sorting, unless only trash or recycling is generated in the space (such as trash only in the bathroom).</p> <p>If a location only has a trash or recycling bin, people will generally place whatever material they need to dispose of at that moment in that bin, meaning a solo trash bin will receive recyclables, and a solo recycling bin will be contaminated with trash.</p>	
Place bins where the material is generated	<p>Provide recycling bins where recyclables are generated. This will make it easier for employees to dispose of recyclable waste conveniently.</p> <p>Set up recycling bins near desks, at the copier, in the break room, and at any other location where recyclables are generated in your business.</p>	
Properly size trash and recycling bins to reflect usage	<p>Match the size of your bins to the amount of that type of waste that is generated at that location.</p> <p>For example, copier rooms typically need a large recycle bin and a small trash bin. Deskside bins are often a small trash and a small recycle bin. Break rooms often need a large recycle and a large trash bin.</p>	

LABELS AND SIGNAGE

Best Practice	Details	Example
Clearly differentiate trash and recycle bins	Clearly label each recycle and trash bin so it is easy for employees and customers to quickly know which is which. It also helps to have uniform colors for recycling vs. trash.	General standard: All trash bins or lids are black/grey All recycling bins or lids are blue
Consistently label both trash and recycling	Signage on recycling and trash bins should be consistent throughout your business. Use the same signage / symbol to mark each recycling bin so it is easy for employees and customers to identify bins throughout your business.	Each recycling bin has the recycling symbol on it and is labeled with the recycling guidelines:  Each trash bin is labeled with a trash can icon: 
Place recycling guidelines on or near recycling bins	Recycling guidelines (what can and cannot be recycled) should be placed above recycling bins on the wall (only if the bin never is moved around), or on the front/top of the bin (the same thing is true of dumpsters). This will allow residents to quickly reference the guidelines to know what belongs in the bin. Recycling guidelines and other signage can be requested from the City of Fort Collins WRAP program by contacting WRR@fcgov.com .	

DIY WASTE ASSESSMENT

When looking to start or improve recycling service at your business it is important to start with a walk-through assessment to get a of “snapshot” of your business’ waste stream, which will allow you to identify:

- Waste materials generated by your business
- Opportunities for more waste diversion and recycling
- Ways to make recycling easier
- Cost-saving possibilities for your business

Assessment Overview

1. Look in your Bins
2. Examine Bin Locations
3. Check for Signage
4. Investigate Dumpster Usage

At each step, the assessment will help identify potential solutions and improvements to your recycling program.

Detailed directions for the assessment process can be found at the end of this toolkit in the appendix.

TAKE ACTION: Best Practices for Recycling

Pair waste and recycling bins. Label all recycling bins with recycling guidelines. [Request recycling guidelines >](#)

Place bins where waste is generated and properly size them. Clearly label all trash and recycling bins.

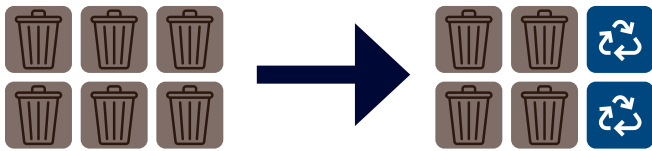
Complete a DIY Waste Assessment of your business. Assessment overview is above, and full directions can be found in the appendix.



RIGHT SIZE YOUR SERVICE

Under the **Community Recycling Ordinance**, a minimum of 33% of your business' total waste service volume must be recycling.

For example, if a location currently has 6 cubic yards of trash service per week and no recycling, it will need to redistribute service to 4 cubic yards per week of trash service and at least 2 cubic yards per week of recycling service (2 cubic yards is 33% of the 6 cubic yard overall service volume).



You can meet your needs and the requirements of the ordinance by “right sizing” your service. You might reduce your level of trash service because recyclables that were previously in the trash can now be placed in recycling containers.

Businesses that already have recycling service can also see cost savings by evaluating their service level and adjusting it to match the amount of waste produced – there’s no need to pay for recycling or trash service beyond the amount your location generates.

Remember that you can call your hauler for an extra pickup or change your service frequency during times of higher trash generation. Plan your trash and recycling service around your baseline usage and call for extra pickups when needed rather than planning for your peak level of service and paying for unneeded service most of the year.

TAKE ACTION: Right Size Your Service

Reduce your trash bin size or service frequency when adding recycling service to avoid paying for unnecessary service (materials now in the recycling bin no longer need space in the trash bin).

For a few weeks, monitor how full your waste dumpsters are just before being serviced.

- If your dumpsters are consistently very full or overflowing before pickup, additional pickups or a larger dumpster is needed.
- If your dumpsters are consistently not full before pickup, fewer pickups or a smaller dumpster may be needed.
- Make service adjustments with your hauler and verify that these adjustments are still in compliance with the Community Recycling Ordinance (1/3 of overall service level is recycling).

Plan your service level to match the amount of material your location generates on an ongoing basis and call for extra pickups during times of high material generation rather than subscribing to your peak service needs year-round and paying for more service than you generally need.

ADDITIONAL TIPS AND RESOURCES

MORE WASTE REDUCTION IDEAS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Check out these additional ways to reduce waste at your business!

- Stop using disposable dishes in breakrooms and at staff meetings or events. Instead, use reusable plates, bowls, cups and cutlery that can be washed and reused.
- Set printer defaults to double-sided, and print only the documents that you need.
- Support the recycling system by purchasing products. Look for office paper, tissues, bath tissue or other items made from post-consumer recycled material.
- Order products with minimal or recyclable or even reusable packaging. Contact manufacturers directly to request products with minimal, recyclable packaging or explore options for packaging that can be reused.
- Shred documents only when necessary and recycle the shred at the Timberline Recycling Center or with a shredding service. Shredding paper decreases its value. Shredded paper put in curbside recycling literally falls through the cracks at the recycling sorting facility and ends up in the landfill.
- Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, household waste increases by more than 25%!
[Learn how to reduce and recycle your extra holiday waste with the City of Fort Collins' Holiday Recycling Guide >](#)
- In Colorado, paint can be recycled for free! Check out drop-off locations at [Paintcare.org](https://www.paintcare.org).
- Disposing of electronics in the trash or in your curbside recycle bin is illegal in Colorado due to the toxicity of their components.
[Find out where to safely dispose of household electronics here >](#)
- The City of Fort Collins Timberline Recycling Center accepts hard-to-recycle materials such as plastic bags, electronics, batteries, and paint. If your business produces these materials you can collect them and bring them to the Timberline Recycling Center [Hard-to-Recycle Yard](#) for recycling (fees apply for certain items).
- In Fort Collins, food waste makes up nearly 25% of what residents throw in their trash! You can save money, water, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by planning your meals, buying only what you need, and eating what you buy.
[Learn more food-saving tips here >](#)

NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT?

WRAP (Waste Reduction and Recycling Assistance Program) provides a variety of educational materials and signage free of charge. These materials can be requested by contacting WRR@fcgov.com.

For businesses who have already leveraged this toolkit and are still facing recycling challenges, WRAP can also provide direct support starting a new recycling program or improving an existing one through phone consultations or on-site assessments. Consultations and assessments include custom recommendations for how to set up a successful program, educate staff on recycling and help customers recycle right. Sign up by contacting WRR@fcgov.com.



Waste Reduction & Recycling
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

BASELINE

Category	Action	Done?
What You Can Recycle	Post the recycling guidelines above or on each recycling bin at your business. Request recycling guidelines >	
Best Practices for Recycling	Pair waste and recycling bins. Label all recycling bins with recycling guidelines. Request recycling guidelines >	
Right Size Your Service	Reduce your trash bin size or service frequency when adding recycling service to avoid paying for unnecessary service (materials now in the recycling bin no longer need space in the trash bin).	

NEXT STEPS

In addition to actions above

Category	Action	Done?
What You Can Recycle	1. Share the recycling guidelines and recycling tips with your employees.	
	2. Share information about your recycling system as a part of employee onboarding.	
Best Practices for Recycling	1. Place bins where waste is generated.	
	2. Properly size trash and recycling bins.	
	3. Clearly label all trash and recycling bins	
Right Size Your Service	For a few weeks, monitor how full your waste dumpsters are just before being serviced. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If your dumpsters are consistently very full or overflowing before pickup, additional pickups or a larger dumpster is needed. If your dumpsters are consistently not full before pickup, fewer pickups or a smaller dumpster may be needed. 	
	Make service adjustments with your hauler and verify that these adjustments are still in compliance with the Community Recycling Ordinance (1/3 of overall service level is recycling).	

GOING FURTHER

In addition to BASELINE and NEXT STEPS Actions:

Category	Action	Done?
What You Can Recycle	1. Set up a Recycling 101 Training for your employees (request by emailing WWR@fcgov.com). During the training, clarify how to properly dispose of common waste items your business produces. Repeat this training with staff annually.	
	2. Set up a “bin of confusion” where employees can place items they are unsure of whether to recycle or throw away. Periodically share clarifications about materials in the bin with all staff.	
Best Practices for Recycling	Complete a DIY Waste Assessment of your business. Full directions can be found at the end of this document in the appendix.	
Right Size Your Service	Plan your service level to match the amount of material your location generates on an ongoing basis and call for extra pickups during times of high material generation rather than subscribing to your peak service needs year-round and paying for more service than you generally need.	

TAKE ACTION: Create your custom plan

Category	Action	Done?
What You Can Recycle		
Best Practices for Recycling		
Right Size Your Service		

APPENDIX

DIY WASTE ASSESSMENT

When looking to start or improve recycling service at your business it is important to start with a walk-through assessment to get a of “snapshot” of your business’ waste stream, which will allow you to identify:

- Waste materials generated by your business
- Opportunities for more waste diversion and recycling
- Ways to make recycling easier
- Cost-saving possibilities for your business

DIY Assessment Steps

1. LOOK IN YOUR BINS

IF YOU DON'T YET HAVE RECYCLING		IF YOU ALREADY HAVE RECYCLING	
Directions: Look in the trash bins around your business and identify what materials in the bin are recyclable. For easy reference, photograph the bin contents.		Directions: Look at what is in each trash and recycle bin. For easy reference, photograph the bin contents.	
QUESTION	RESULTS	QUESTION	RESULTS
What materials in the bins are recyclable?	Ex.) Plastic bottles and aluminum cans in trash can in break room	Do the trash bins contain recyclables?	Ex.) Plastic bottles and aluminum cans in trash can in break room.
How much of each bin is recyclable?	Ex.) Break room trash cans: 50% recyclable	How much in each trash bin is recyclable?	Ex.) Break room trash cans: 50% recyclable
		Are your recycling bins contaminated with trash?	Ex.) plastic bags in recycling bin
		How much in each recycling bin is trash?	Ex.) recycle dumpster: 25% trash

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

IF YOU DON'T YET HAVE RECYCLING

Put recycling bins in the areas where you see recyclables in your trash bins.

IF YOU ALREADY HAVE RECYCLING

Make sure there are recycling bins next to your trash bins.

For trash bins that have quite a bit of recycling in them:

- Be sure the bin is clearly labeled as being for trash
- Put a clearly labeled recycle bin next to the trash bin with recyclables in it
- Remind employees not to put recyclables into the trash

For recycling bins contaminated with trash:

- Be sure the bin is clearly labeled as being for recycling, and has recycling guidelines posted above or on the bin
- Put a clearly labeled trash bin next to the contaminated recycle bin
- Remind employees not to put trash in the recycling bin, and that recyclables will be thrown away if too contaminated
- Set up a “bin of confusion” (see pg. 5)



Recycling dumpster contaminated with trash



Trash bin that contains recyclables

2. EXAMINE BIN LOCATIONS

IF YOU DON'T YET HAVE RECYCLING		IF YOU ALREADY HAVE RECYCLING	
Directions: Look where your trash bins are currently located.		Directions: Look at where your trash and recycle bins are currently located.	
QUESTION	RESULTS	QUESTION	RESULTS
Are trash bins placed where waste is generated at your business?	Ex.) There is a trash bin where inventory is received and unboxed.	Are the trash and recycling bins near each other?	Ex.) Our desks only have trash bins next to them
		Are there bins where your business' waste is generated?	Ex.) There is only a trash bin where inventory is received and unboxed.
Where are recyclables generated that need a recycling bin?	Ex.) Need recycling bins at each desk, in copier room and in break room	Are there recycle bins where recyclable items are generated?	Ex.) There is a recycle bin in the copier room, but not in the break room where employees dispose of bottles and cans.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

IF YOU DON'T YET HAVE RECYCLING
Add recycling and trash bins where waste and/or recyclables are generated.
Place recycling bins next to trash bins.

IF YOU ALREADY HAVE RECYCLING
Pair trash and recycling bins next to each other.
Add recycling and trash bins where waste and/or recyclables are generated.

3. CHECK FOR SIGNAGE

IF YOU DON'T YET HAVE RECYCLING		IF YOU ALREADY HAVE RECYCLING	
Directions: Examine how your trash bins are labeled.		Directions: Examine how your trash and recycling bins are labeled.	
QUESTION	RESULTS	QUESTION	RESULTS
Is it clear the bins are for trash?	Ex.) The trash bins are labeled with a trash icon and the bins are all the same color.	Is it clear which bins are for trash and which are for recycling?	Ex.) The trash bins are all grey and the recycle bins are all blue.
How will you make it clear which bins are for trash and which are for recycling after you add recycling service? HINT: Signage! Check out the Best Practices section for info about how to clearly label your trash and recycling bins.		Is signage on the bins consistent throughout your business and easy to read?	Ex.) Each recycle bin has a laminated Recycling Guidelines poster hanging above it.
		Is recycling signage on or near the bins?	Ex.) Recycling guidelines on some of the bins, but some bins have been moved away from where they originally were (leaving orphaned recycling guidelines hanging where the bins were)

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

IF YOU DON'T YET HAVE RECYCLING
Clearly label which bins are for trash and which are for recycling.
Post recycling guidelines above or on each recycling bin.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you need additional signage for your bins visit fcgov.com/WRAP to view and request materials.
IF YOU ALREADY HAVE RECYCLING
Clearly label which bins are for trash and which are for recycling.
Post recycling guidelines above or on each recycling bin.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you need additional signage for your bins visit fcgov.com/WRAP to view and request materials.
Make sure that signage and labeling is consistent on each bin throughout your business.

4. INVESTIGATE DUMPSTER USAGE

IF YOU DON'T YET HAVE RECYCLING		IF YOU ALREADY HAVE RECYCLING	
Directions: Head out to your waste enclosure and look in your dumpster(s).		Directions: Head out to your waste enclosure and look in your dumpster(s).	
QUESTION	RESULTS	QUESTION	RESULTS
Look where your trash dumpster is located outside. Where would a recycling dumpster be placed?	Ex.) The trash dumpster could be turned sideways to allow for a recycling dumpster to also fit in the enclosure	Are both trash and recycling dumpsters easily accessible? (meaning a person carrying a bag of trash or recycling can easily access each bin)	Ex) The only way to access is via a heavy service gate; the pedestrian entrance is blocked by one of the bins
How will you make it easy for employees to know which dumpster is for trash and which is for recycling after recycling service is added?	Ex.) We will add signs above the bins in the enclosure as well as decals on the dumpsters, clearly labeling them as trash and recycling.	Is it clear which dumpsters are for trash and which are for recycling? Are they labeled on the side of the dumpster people see when walking up to it?	Ex.) Trash dumpster is grey. Recycling dumpster is green and labeled with recycling guidelines. Recycling guidelines can't be seen from the direction pedestrians access the dumpsters
Are you using the amount of trash service you are currently paying for?	Ex.) Our trash dumpster is never more than half full when it is serviced.	Look in your dumpster outside: Are recyclables loose in the bin or in bags? HINT: They should be placed loose in the bin. Bagged recyclables will not be recycled.	Ex.) Recyclables are placed in the dumpster inside plastic bags
How much of the material in your trash dumpster could be recycled?	Ex.) 75% of what is in the dumpster could be recycled.	Are you using the amount of trash service and recycling service you are currently paying for?	Ex.) Our recycle dumpster is full or overflowing 2 days before pick up. The trash dumpster is generally only half full when serviced.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

IF YOU DON'T YET HAVE RECYCLING

Determine an accessible site for your new recycling dumpster / cart(s), generally next to your trash dumpster

Clearly label which dumpster(s) are for trash and which are for recycling.

- Label your recycling dumpster with recycling guidelines on any side that may be visible when accessing the bin (i.e. if you see the short side of your bin when walking up to it, make sure that side is labeled) (your hauler may already have done this for you).
- If you need additional signage for your bins visit [fcgov.com/WRAP](https://www.fcgov.com/WRAP) to view and request materials.

Browse the Right size Your Service Section and work with your hauler to adjust your service level to be more efficient.

IF YOU ALREADY HAVE RECYCLING

Ensure trash and recycling dumpsters can both be easily accessed. If someone can't reach a bin, it's unlikely to be used, potentially resulting in materials in the wrong dumpster and paying for unused service.

Clearly label which dumpster(s) are for trash and which are for recycling.

- Label your recycling dumpster with recycling guidelines on any side that may be visible when accessing the bin (i.e. if you see the short side of your bin when walking up to it, make sure that side is labeled) (your hauler may already have done this for you).
- If you need additional signage for your bins visit [fcgov.com/WRAP](https://www.fcgov.com/WRAP) to view and request materials.

If the recyclables in your dumpster are in plastic bags, check with your janitorial service about the importance of emptying recyclables from plastic bags into the dumpsters rather than placing recyclables in bags in the dumpsters. Bagged recyclables won't get recycled.

Browse the Right size Your Service Section and work with your hauler to adjust your service level to be more efficient.

