



## WASTE MANAGEMENT AT WORK A DO IT YOURSELF OFFICE RECYCLING POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

Most people naturally recycle their waste at home but find it difficult to apply this habit at work. Even though employees generally understand the values of recycling, waste management in the office needs to be planned very carefully.

In the context of making your company carbon neutral, the Carbon Reduction Institute (CRI) sees it as its responsibility to make recycling at work easier for you. This guide shows how a recycling policy can be implemented in the office in just a few simple steps.

## WHY SHOULD YOU RECYCLE AT WORK?



### RECYCLING YOUR OFFICE WASTE HAS MANY BENEFITS:

- It enhances your business's marketplace image - and its reputation
- It increases staff morale & supports team building
- It enhances resource efficiency
- It helps combat climate change



### RECYCLING SAVES RESOURCES AND HELPS THE ENVIRONMENT:

Recycling one tonne of paper or cardboard saves:

- Approximately 13 Trees
- 2.5 Barrels of Oil
- 4100 kWh of Electricity
- 4 Cubic Meters of Landfill
- 31,780 Litres of Water

**RECYCLING  
OFFICE WASTE  
WILL MAKE YOU  
FEEL GOOD  
ABOUT GOING  
TO WORK!**



### RECYCLING ALSO BRINGS FINANCIAL SAVINGS:

- Recycling office paper reduces the amount of waste disposal collections needed and therefore reduces cost
- 70% of office waste is office paper; so the savings might be significant
- Recycling reduces the amount of renewable resources going to landfill.



**STEP 2****ANALYSIS AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT PHASE**

The second stage should be devoted to analysing the current waste management situation in the office and identifying areas for improvement. A crucial procedure of this step is a waste audit that determines the current amounts and kinds of waste produced in your office. This task is an unattractive one because it requires someone to literally separate and analyse the waste in the bins, but it will pay itself off in the later planning stage.

Set a target to monitor the waste habits in your office over a period of time, one week for example. That will help you identify possible areas of waste reduction and recycling. Ask yourself specifically what different kinds of waste are being produced and in what quantities over that period of time and keep a chart with your results.

Further questions that need to be asked are:

- What do we currently recycle?
- How many bins do we use?
- What size of bins? Where are they located?
- Who is emptying the bins and picking up the garbage?
- Is it worth shopping around for other collector firms or should we stick to our current ones? (Cost-benefit-analysis)

Answering those questions will give you a good overview of the waste situation in your office. It is important that you know as much as possible about the current system in order to uncover its strengths and weaknesses. Be clear about where you are going and set realistic goals at this phase!

## STEP 3



## SYSTEM DESIGN

The third step should be committed to laying out the changes and making sure that they are converted into a working system.

The overruling question while designing this system should be: How can this new recycling policy be communicated and how can we get everybody to comply, including the cleaners? As mentioned above, changing all your employees' waste habits may be a difficult yet rewarding task!

These tips might be helpful in setting up the new system:

- Be very clear about what you want to recycle. Common categories are:
  - o Paper
  - o Cardboard
  - o Mixed recyclables (Glass, Cans, Plastics)
  - o Food scraps
  - o Other non-recyclables

Note: Councils throughout Australia have different recycling policies. For example, one council might recycle glass and plastics together as mixed recyclables whereas another one offers to recycle them separately. Check with your local council about what can be recycled prior to making decisions about the categories.

- Make bins easily accessible and make sure everybody knows where to find them. Rule of thumb: if you're not sure about the number of bins you should provide, always go for the higher number. People don't like to get up from their desk if they don't really have to! Every desk usually needs its own paper collection tray. All bins should be placed in appropriate places. Accommodate for high-waste areas like kitchens and printer vicinities.
- Think about an effective labelling system. We have included some stickers for bins and a poster in this pack. More sticker designs can for example be downloaded here: [www.ronz.org.nz](http://www.ronz.org.nz).
- Are new bins required? They need to be ordered / purchased.
- Communicate with the cleaners to make sure they are informed about and comply with the new policy. Type reminders and hang up notes for cleaners if necessary. Remember: Recycling should not increase the time the cleaner spends in your office, it should make it easier!
- Make some phone calls and get some quotes from collectors for difficult waste.

## THESE LINKS WILL BE HELPFUL:

[www.recyclingnearyou.com.au](http://www.recyclingnearyou.com.au) - National Recycling Hotline

[www.planetark.com](http://www.planetark.com) - Planet Ark (Mixed Recyclables)

[www.visy.com.au](http://www.visy.com.au) - Visy (Mixed Recyclables)

[www.cartridgeworld.com.au](http://www.cartridgeworld.com.au) - Cartridge World (Cartridges)

[www.chemsal.com.au](http://www.chemsal.com.au) - Chemsal (Chemicals)

[www.advancedrecycling.com.au](http://www.advancedrecycling.com.au) - Advanced Recycling Australasia (Specialising in recycling mercury-containing wastes)

Things to consider:

Worm farms are increasingly popular, especially for those offices that have employees with a garden. Worm farms produce excellent fertile garden soil! Many websites offer information about worm farms, an example being: <http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/envirom/wormfarm.htm>

It has been proven supportive to design a reward system for staff. For example, you could fire up recycling competitions between different departments. This will not only increase value for the environment but also make work more fun!

Designing this system might be complex due to the number of decisions to be made. However, careful planning beforehand will make implementation easy and ensure that the system runs smoothly later on. Rule of thumb: make it challenging but achievable! That is most likely to bring the best results.

## STEP 4



## IMPLEMENTATION

It might be a good idea to implement the new system with a kick-off event: Explain the changes in a relaxed atmosphere - like a barbeque or an office breakfast. Provide drinks and snacks that come in different packaging materials and let people take a guess where to put them. Explain why these changes are necessary and how they can be achieved.

Do not just talk about it but actively SHOW people where the new bins are and what to put in them.

After the first kick-off event it is important that you put the new system in writing and constantly remind people about it. This can, for example, happen with an internal email that is being sent out the second day. The posters and stickers in the appropriate places will function as a reminder. Keep people updated about the developments and successes, failures and changes.

Don't forget to communicate the system externally as well - implementing a new recycling policy e.g. makes a great story for a newsletter! This will enhance your business image and make employees feel better about their company's ethics and environmental credentials.

## STEP 5

MONITORING  
AND EVALUATION

To ensure that the new system is a success, it is important *to keep monitoring it*.

To do so effectively, you should note down and react to any difficulties. Identify mistakes and work towards abolishing them. The new system will go through a warming period before running smoothly, so don't despair. Once it has found its own pace, minimal efforts will keep it operating.

This is how you can make sure everybody keeps recycling:

- Keep the system dynamic to avoid routine
- Keep the rewards and competitions alive
- Set up feedback mechanisms for employees

**CONCLUSION:** Always provide feedback and celebrate successes. It will increase staff morale and encourage employees to keep recycling.



## GENERAL TIPS TO REDUCE WASTE

Keep in mind: WASTE MINIMISATION COMES BEFORE RECYCLING

Apply the three R's

### REDUCE:

Use email and electronic archiving instead of printing where possible; use double-sided printing facility on printers and photocopiers. Print (where possible) in single line spacing format.

### REUSE:

All paper for notes etc

### RECYCLE:

Off ce paper in off ce recycling bins

Easy ways to reduce waste at work:

- Bring lunch to work in a lunchbox or eat out in a local café to avoid packaging waste from takeaway lunches
- Take your own mug when you go to get coffee and have some extra mugs set aside for visitors
- Order supplies in bulk to minimize packaging waste
- Reuse old binders, file folders, report covers and general off ce equipment.
- Avoid generating excess waste by using e-mail as much as possible, circulating one copy of a memo and have people sign it after reading, and editing rough drafts on computer.
- Reuse items as much as possible such as reusable containers, coffee mugs, permanent dishes and cutlery, cloth towels, reusable coffee filters, etc.

## FEEDBACK

If you have implemented a recycling policy in your off ce, we would love to hear from you. What difficulties did you have and how did you get staff to comply? What benefits has the new policy brought you?

Please direct any feedback to [info@noco2.com.au](mailto:info@noco2.com.au) or give us a call on (02) 9439 9990.