

# Small Business Recycling

**Do any of these comments sound familiar? "We don't have storage space." "Our business is too small to recycle." "Recycling will cost us more money." "We have pallets and other less common materials to recycle, but we don't generate enough for a recycler to pick-up on a regular basis."**

**If your company is a small business, don't let these challenges discourage you from finding a recycling solution. There are a number of options available. Here are some things to consider:**

## Waste Prevention

- Reducing waste is the most important strategy for managing waste. If you can double-side copies to cut down on paper use or switch to durable, reusable items like ceramic mugs instead of disposable cups, you will throw less away, conserve resources and spend less on garbage collection. The Resource Venture's fact sheet, "Preventing Waste in the First Place" has many strategies that can be used in your company.

## Recycling for Small Businesses

- Contact a small recycling company or your garbage hauler. Both Seattle commercial garbage companies can provide recycling service to small businesses for a nominal fee. Depending on how much you recycle, the potential exists for you to reduce your garbage costs, either by downsizing your container or by scheduling fewer pickups. You may see a net savings even though you pay for recycling service.
- Sign up for the City's Small Business Curbside Recycling Program. An extension of the City's residential program, this option accepts everything from mixed paper (including cardboard) to glass bottles and jars to milk cartons and juice boxes. Collection is free; however, to qualify a business must create 96 gallons (about 3 filled

plastic garbage bags) or less of solid waste per week. Businesses must also have their own garbage collection service. The City will provide no more than 2 carts and 2 glass inserts for recyclables. For more information, call Seattle Public Utilities at (206) 684-7600.

- Use the City's Recycling and Disposal Stations. Businesses can haul materials to both Stations and can recycle many items at no charge (if only recyclable items are brought in). Contact the Resource Venture for information on the Stations.
- Sell or drop-off recyclables. There are recyclers in the City that pay for separated materials when you bring them in. This revenue could go to the employee responsible for taking the materials to the recycler or might go into the company "coffee fund."
- Piggy back onto an existing program. Look around. Is there a larger company with an ongoing recycling program convenient to your location? Talk to their recycling coordinator and find out if it is possible to "piggy back" onto their program. Many companies are happy to help.
- Band together! Get several adjacent businesses to recycle with you in order to increase the volume of materials that you can offer to a commercial recycler. This is a proven tactic that can work for you. *On the reverse side of this sheet are several examples of companies that have done this!*

## Cooperative Recycling Examples

Here are just a few ways that cooperative business recycling has worked for companies in the Seattle area:

- **Joining Together for Improved Service** - Lake City Way auto body and repair businesses solved their recycling needs by working together. As a group, they approached and worked with haulers to create a recycling collection route. This gave them some leverage for better service. Many of the businesses have found that working together makes good business sense. For example, the program has saved Haury's Auto Body more than \$60 each month.
- **Sharing Containers or Space** - In Seattle's Central Area, the accounting firm of Stallworth Associates and the Welfare Rights Organization have replaced their garbage containers with a shared 90-gallon recycling toter and a 90-gallon garbage can, saving about \$30 per month.
- **Piggy backing** - Businesses along Airport Way came up with creative solutions to solve their own recycling needs. One of the businesses offered to recycle its neighbor's materials with its own load.

## How to Get Started

- Review the previous examples and determine the best course of action for your business situation.
- Talk to your neighbors about the types of materials they would like to recycle. Discuss possible storage sites.
- Call the Resource Venture at the number below for a list of recyclers that serve Seattle businesses. You can also find a list of recyclers online at [www.resourceventure.org/database.htm](http://www.resourceventure.org/database.htm).
- If you already have a recyclers list, begin to shop around for the recycler that will best fit your needs.
- Stop paying for unnecessary garbage collection. Reduce your garbage costs either by downsizing your container or by scheduling fewer pick-ups. If most of your business waste can be recycled, haul the remaining trash to one of the City's Recycling and Disposal Stations.

## At Your Service

The Resource Venture provides free environmental consulting services to Seattle-area businesses. We help companies lower their utility costs, obtain rebates, comply with regulations and receive public recognition, all while protecting the environment. Since 1990, the Resource Venture has helped thousands of businesses recycle, use less water, prevent stormwater pollution and build sustainably. We are a program of Seattle Public Utilities.



[www.resourceventure.org](http://www.resourceventure.org) / (206) 343-8505