Office Paper Recycling Guide

How your office can complete the recycling loop.
Buy recycled paper products and collect recyclable office paper.
Recycling at Work

Recycling at Work, a campaign of the National Office Recycling Project, is a joint effort by private companies and public interest groups to promote a national office paper recycling strategy. The goal of the project is to maximize the recycling of office paper and to minimize its disposal. This guide to office recycling is intended to provide information on the importance of buying recycled products and collecting recyclable office paper.
What is Recycling?

Recycling involves three distinct steps:
(1) collecting and processing recyclable materials, (2) manufacturing these materials into new products, and (3) purchasing and using recycled-content products. These steps are represented by the three arrows of the traditional recycling symbol.

Why Recycle?

Paper and paperboard make up the largest component of solid waste by weight. In the U.S., nearly 40% of municipal solid waste is paper - 81.3 million tons each year. Recycling office paper helps to reduce solid waste which makes economic and environmental sense.

A few good reasons to recycle in your office:
- Recycling office paper saves landfill space - 3 cubic yards for every ton of paper recycled - and extends the lives of our landfills, thereby reducing the need to build new and expensive landfills.
- Throwing away paper is a careless waste of a valuable forest resource.
- Recycling fosters goodwill among employees and the community - and allows employees to extend their recycling efforts at home into the workplace.
- Your state law or local ordinance may require businesses to recycle office paper.
- An office paper recycling program will help your community meet its recycling goals.
- You may also save money on disposal costs depending on the local markets for recovered fiber.
Before You Begin...

All office paper collection programs have one common element - the separation of recyclable office paper from waste materials and contaminants at the source. Program options range from sorting multiple grades of paper, to a simple mixed paper system. Some programs concentrate on sorting out the higher value grades of paper, such as white ledger and computer paper. Other offices prefer a mixed paper program, which diverts a greater volume of the office waste stream. The character of the paper generated, the location and size of your office, the willingness of employees to participate, the capacity of storage areas and accessibility of pickup locations, and - most importantly - the availability of end markets are factors that will determine the structure of the program most suitable for your office. Design a program that works best for your office.

Cost of Recycling

Recycling involves additional collection and processing services for which a fee is customarily charged. However, some or all of this added cost may be offset by the sale of the recovered paper or by the avoided disposal costs.

Paper Grades

One of the first things you need to consider is the types of paper used in your office. If you are unfamiliar with some of the terms, definitions of common office paper grades can be found on the following page. Definitions may vary based on your market. Please check with your recycler.
Quality is important. Make sure employees are fully versed on what materials are acceptable and unacceptable with your collection program. Doing so will help to avoid contamination. If a load is contaminated, your recycler may reject the load and you may have to pay to have the material disposed. Furthermore, your recyclable paper is worth more when contaminants have been minimized.

A central storage area is required to collect and store your paper between pickups. It should be easily accessible to both your recycling service (so material can be transported to the recycling facility) and to those responsible for transferring paper from the intermediate collection bins. This area must meet local fire codes. (Note: 400 pounds of paper will fill two 90-gallon drums).

Working with Your Building Manager and Custodial Staff

Your building manager will be familiar with the waste disposal contracts and can assist you in the logistics of recycling. If you are in a multi-tenant building they can also advise you as to whether other tenants participate in recycling or assist you in approaching them about a cooperative recycling effort.

The custodial staff is also vital in planning your program because they will play a critical role in eliminating contamination and transporting your recyclables.

Some businesses provide the custodial staff with collection carts that have two compartments - one for trash and one for recyclables. Others use existing equipment to collect trash and recyclables on alternate days. The custodial staff may simply assist with transferring recyclables from intermediate sites to the central collection point. Some offices do not involve the custodial staff at all; office employees are responsible for transporting recyclables to central areas where the recycler regularly picks up the materials.

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Selecting a Program Coordinator

A successful recycling program requires an enthusiastic coordinator who can foster a sense of teamwork and enlist the support of all the employees. Recycling experience isn’t necessary, but the coordinator should have organizational experience and good communication skills. The coordinator’s commitment and enthusiasm will be strengthened if he or she is brought into the planning process as early as possible. Depending on the number of employees in your office, several monitors may be needed to keep the program running smoothly. Monitors need to have a good rapport with other staff and a thorough understanding of how the program works.

Coordinator:
The responsibilities of the coordinator may include selecting a recycler, developing the collection system, educating fellow employees, and tracking the success of the program. The coordinator also may be the point of contact for the recycler or the building manager and should work with the purchasing department to establish a “buy recycled” program.

Monitors:
Monitors may be given various responsibilities, including keeping containers contaminant-free, ensuring the containers are emptied periodically, and encouraging employees to participate.

Your recycling team also should include upper management, maintenance staff, department heads, and purchasing agents. Their support will help make the most of your program - in terms of both collection of recyclable waste paper and the use of recycled products.
Staff Participation

Continual promotion is key to a successful program. Your fellow office workers will participate if they are well-informed about the program and its benefits. Explain the recycling process and how they can participate by collecting recyclables and by using products made from recycled materials. The support of your CEO or senior management is vitally important!

An effective promotional campaign includes:

**Kick-off memo:**
A memorandum signed by your CEO and directed to all employees, highlighting the benefits of recycling and describing the program, is a good way to start your program.

**Education and Promotion:**
The kick-off memo should be supplemented by brief presentations to all employees. The “dos and don’ts” of the program and its benefits should be explained and questions answered. (Stickers with lists of what goes into each bin may be available from your recycler and are helpful informational tools.)

*Remember: Information on your recycling program should be included as part of the orientation of new employees.*

Special events like Clean Your Files Day, a Recycling at Work event, are an excellent way to raise staff awareness about the recycling program and the overall need to recycle. For more information on how to plan and conduct Clean Your Files Day, call the National Office Paper Recycling Project at 202-223-3088 and request the Clean Your Files Day Manual.

**Reinforcement and Follow-up:**
It is important to reinforce the new recycling habit. Keep employees informed of your company’s recycling efforts, highlight new recycled products that are purchased, participation rates, quantities of waste paper that are collected, revenue earned, disposal cost savings, and any problems encountered and/or solved in company memos or newsletters. Seek suggestions for program improvement.

A successful program requires time and effort to familiarize the employees and the custodial staff with the recycling program’s objectives and requirements. Employees won’t participate if they don’t know how the program works.

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Close the loop - Buy Recycled and Recyclable Products

Office paper collection is not enough. Remember the third arrow in the recycling symbol: the purchase of recycled content products. Quite simply, recycling is the process of remanufacturing one end product (that would otherwise be thrown away) into another useful product. If the demand for these products is reliable and significant, more competitively priced recycled products will be produced and you will have played your part in creating markets for the paper you’ve collected.

Every business, individual and government office must take an active role in buying products made with recycled content. This means standard business papers like stationery, envelopes, newsletters and publications, copy paper, fax paper, corrugated boxes, tissue products, toner cartridges...and many more! When making purchases for your office, it is also important to ensure that the paper you purchase can be recycled. Example: To purchase yellow legal pads when you have a white paper collection program is inappropriate.

If you collect recyclable paper, but do not purchase recycled products, you discourage manufacturers of recycled products and contribute to the flooding of the recovered fiber market which discourages office paper recycling in the long run. Conversely, to purchase recycled paper products, but not to collect recyclable paper can cause recycled products to be more expensive than necessary. We must all work on closing the loop on recycling by committing to both the collection of office paper and the procurement of recyclable paper and recycled paper products.

By buying recycled paper products for your office, you join a growing number of businesses, institutions and government agencies who are helping complete the recycling loop. The more organizations that are willing to Buy Recycled, the more recycled products will be manufactured.

You can be proud to know that every time you buy recycled paper products you demonstrate your commitment to the environment, save landfill space and set an example for other institutions to Buy Recycled, too.
Available Recycled Paper Products

Recycled paper products have come a long way since the 1970s. Today, top quality products are available:

Cellulose Insulation - for office construction projects

Computer Paper - carbonless, continuous bond, form bond, and greenbar

Office Papers - lines pads, loose leaf, note pads, spiral bound notebooks, telephone message pads, wrapping paper, etc.

Office Supplies - adding machine rolls, binders, dividers, files, folders, report covers, etc.

Packaging Materials - boxes, cushioning, kraft envelopes, mailing tubes, and other packing materials

Paperboard - indexes, hanging files, kraft files, linerboard, corrugating medium, pressboard, and tube stock

Paper Products - absorbents, paper refuse bags, books/journals, calendars, coloring books, file boxes, office recycling containers, food service containers such as bowls, trays and plates

Printing Papers - bond, book, coated offset, copy/xerographic, cotton fiber, cover stock, envelopes, business cards, label, mimeo, newsprint, offset, and text paper

Tissue Papers - industrial wipers, napkins, bath tissue, facial tissue, and paper towels
Strengthen Your Purchasing Policy

The first step in buying recycled paper products is for executive management to make a commitment to buy recycled paper products. Once a commitment is made, gather information about how your organization can do its share to protect the environment, without sacrificing cost effectiveness or quality. A good place to start is by reviewing your current purchasing programs:

1. Determine the types and quantities of paper products now being used and consider using a variety of recycled paper products. If you are already purchasing some recycled products, consider expanding your program to include additional products.

2. Investigate what recycled products are now available for your needs. Sources of information about recycled paper products include:
   - Your present suppliers, including paper vendors and printers. Tell your suppliers you wish to buy recycled paper and other recycled paper products and ask to be kept informed about future recycled paper products, which will become available as demand grows.
   - Your state and local solid waste agencies that often maintain information on recycled paper manufacturers and suppliers.
   - The Recycled Products Guide (RPG)*, which lists over 5,000 manufacturers and vendors.

3. Maintain quality. With recent technological improvements, there’s no need to sacrifice quality when buying recycled products.

4. Review existing specifications and standards to eliminate prohibitions or limitations against recycled products. Look for clauses that restrict the use of recycled materials such as “virgin only” or “recycled materials prohibited.” It is not necessary to establish new standards for recycled paper products.

5. Search out more subtle obstacles to using recycled products, such as:
   - Brightness requirements or dirt counts. These restrictions are often overly stringent, relating only to aesthetics and not to performance. Note pads, for example, do not need the same brightness levels as bond paper.
All-or-nothing clauses. Allow vendors of recycled products to offer one or more of the items covered by a solicitation rather than requiring them to submit a bid on every product. An all-or-nothing clause may prevent them from bidding.

Quantity and availability. Recycled paper products may not be available in the quantities needed within short time frames. Therefore, allow reasonable lead time.

Color matching. A paper-matching requirement that requires recycled papers to be the same shade as existing papers may prevent recycled paper vendors from bidding.

6. Use common definitions when possible. Commonly defined products are less expensive to produce and to purchase than custom-made items. Because there are currently no nationally accepted definitions for recycled paper products, many purchasing agents use definitions and minimum content standards established by the EPA and President Clinton’s Executive Order 12873. (see page 20). Check to see whether your state has labeling or emblem standards that establish definitions and minimum content standards.

7. Test recycled paper for a wide range of uses to determine how well it works in your equipment and fits your needs. Be fair. For example, do not expect recycled paper to meet higher quality standards than virgin products. Consider using a blind test so that recycled and virgin paper products can be compared without bias.

8. Most purchasing officers require vendors to certify minimum recycled content. You may wish to use a certification clause provided by the manufacturer or the sample certification included on page 21.

9. Boost the effect of your commitment to buy recycled by requiring your contractors, printers and other suppliers to use recycled paper and paper products.
Many recycled paper products are no more expensive than non-recycled, virgin products. Recycled paper, particularly printing and writing paper, may cost more than comparable virgin paper, with cost differentials varying from grade to grade, and from region to region, depending on the prevailing economic conditions.

Recycled printing and writing paper, often produced by small paper mills, costs more to manufacture than virgin paper produced at larger, fully integrated mills. Other factors, such as the supply of clean source-separated paper, the cost of raw materials, fluctuations in the international paper market, and the demand for finished products, also affect pricing.

One effective way to reduce costs is through cooperative purchasing. Cooperative purchasing increases the volume of recycled products purchased, helps ensure availability, establishes common definitions and percentages, and lowers the cost of producing and purchasing recycled products.

Even with higher costs, many businesses, institutions and government agencies recognize the need to purchase recycled paper products and do so via preferential purchasing mechanisms, including:

1. Price preferences, which allow the purchase of recycled paper products even if they are more expensive than comparable virgin items. In general, price preferences are in the 5-10 percent range.

2. Set-aside programs that set specific percentage goals for the amount of recycled paper products to be purchased. These goals are often met by purchasing a variety of recycled products, including corrugated, tissue products, packaging, and office products.

3. Dual track bids, which allow bids from both vendors offering recycled paper products and those offering virgin products. This system is particularly applicable to governmental bodies and larger, multi-department businesses where preferred vendors are established by bid. Approved vendors of both recycled and virgin products allow individual departments and offices a choice in meeting their paper product needs.
Make a Commitment

A commitment by executive management to purchase and use recycled products is a positive statement of policy, sets an example for other organizations and sends a clear message to manufacturers to invest in recycling equipment and make more recycled products available.

This commitment may be expressed through executive orders or corporate management directives for purchase of recycled, reusable and recyclable paper products. State and local governments may express their commitment through ordinances and resolutions requiring their agencies and departments to purchase recycled paper products. Each employee should also make a commitment to buy recycled paper products for his or her needs.

Others have...

By the close of 1996, Bank of America decreased their paper consumption by 26%, purchased 17,273 tons of paper of which 81% had recycled content equal to or higher than 10% post-consumer content, and 45% of that paper had post-consumer content of 25% or more.

Southern California Edison established a program called WASTE NOT. In 1996, 90% of paper purchases, an estimated 1682 tons, contained recycled content. The company also recycled 85% of their total purchase. Southern California Edison receives all their every day office paper products from one source to facilitate monitoring of their buy recycled purchases. A wide range of materials are tracked by the Property Services Division of Southern California Edison, and an up-to-date report by location, tonnage, and date of pickup can be retrieved at any time from their computer based tracking program.

The President’s Executive Order requires that federal agencies purchase recycled paper. (See page 20.) The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established guidelines on the purchase of recycled paper products for federal agencies, as well as agencies and contractors using federal funds. In addition, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and more than 200 local governments now have laws, executive orders, or programs favoring the purchase and use of recycled paper. Many businesses, industries and non-profit organizations also have policies to purchase and use recycled paper products.

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Phase In Your Purchasing Effort

Many recycled paper products, such as packaging materials and tissue, are widely available and can be ordered in volume to suit your needs right away.

Printing and writing paper, on the other hand, may be in varying supply.

If products are not available or inadequate supplies block you from meeting all your recycled paper needs all at once, don’t be discouraged! The best approach is to maintain a regular dialogue with your suppliers so you can purchase recycled products as they become available.

Keep insisting on recycled paper products from your suppliers. A consistent, long-term demand will persuade manufacturers that a strong market for recycled paper products exists and warrants their investment in equipment and facilities to produce recycled paper and paper products.
Promote Your Program

Tell prospective vendors that you are committed to buying recycled, and if they want your business, they must be prepared to provide an increasing variety of recycled paper products on an established time schedule. Vendors will respond and, importantly, they will let paper products manufacturers know what is happening in the consumer marketplace. As demand increases, so will the quality and range of available products, and, correspondingly, prices will decrease.

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Buying recycled and collecting are nothing to hide! Be sure all employees are aware, and let your customers know that your organization is committed to closing the loop by buying recycled and collecting office paper. It is good business and will encourage others to join you. Include statements such as “Printed on Recycled Paper” where appropriate. Put announcements on the bulletin boards and office newsletters. Include references to your organization’s buy recycled program in media advertising, and consider sponsoring a public service announcement.

Most importantly, now that your recycling plans are complete, it is time to officially become a part of the

Recycling at Work Campaign!

For information, call (202)223-3088.
Tell the rest of your organization about your commitment to buy recycled so that using recycled paper products becomes a healthy habit. You may wish to:

- Survey your office to identify and overcome any problems with quality, delivery, etc.

- Record purchases, keeping accurate records of recycled product purchases to identify program successes and failures.

- Survey market developments, staying in contact with your suppliers, state and local purchasing and recycling agencies, and trade publications to keep abreast of the latest in recycled paper and paper products. You may also wish to conduct or attend vendor shows on a regular basis to give your buyers and vendors a chance to discuss the latest innovations in recycled products.

Train buyers and staff about the latest products on the market and any changes in regulations and specifications.

Conduct annual program reviews of your buy recycled program, including information on purchases by grade, volume, price and availability. You may also wish to reassess goals for the coming year, reviewing products that could not be purchased before that may have become available.

Let other organizations know about your success and encourage them to establish similar programs.
Reduce Waste

You can support your office recycling efforts by promoting activities that reduce, avoid, or eliminate the generation of unnecessary waste. Less waste means lower waste collection and disposal costs and significant savings on future purchases. Here are some ideas:

- Make double-sided copies
- Place information on announcement boards and circulate memos rather than making multiple copies
- Share reports and periodicals instead of duplicating or purchasing multiple copies
- Update distribution/mailing lists periodically and remove those who no longer need the information
- Use scrap paper for notes and message pads
- Request reduced packaging in shipments
- Use non-glossy fax paper that does not require copying
- Use electronic mail
- Buy products that can be recycled in your office recycling program. (Check with your hauler to determine what is appropriate.)
- Remove your name from mailing lists of unwanted material.
To address the complexity of all the contradicting information about recycled content paper, the federal government devised a method of guidance called RMAN, Recovered Materials Advisory Notices. The RMAN recommends recovered materials content ranges within which the designated items are currently available. The RMAN also recommends appropriate specifications and mechanisms for purchasing the designated items.

The Paper RMAN was issued on May 1, 1996 and recommends that agencies purchase papers that contain both recovered fiber and postconsumer fiber, where appropriate. It is important to note here the terminology of recovered fiber vs. postconsumer fiber. EPA says that postconsumer fiber does not include fiber derived from printers' overruns, converters' scrap, or over-issue publications. Postconsumer fiber is a subset of recovered fiber content. In addition, EPA has clarified that recovered and postconsumer fiber content should be measured as a percentage of the weight of all fiber in the paper, not as a percentage of the total weight of the sheet since dyes, inorganic fillers, and water can comprise a significant portion of the paper's total weight.

Additionally, the RMAN stresses the buyers consider recyclability in their paper procurement decision making. When you decide to buy a certain type of paper, consider whether it can be collected for recycling in existing collection programs. For example, coated papers, groundwood papers, and papers dyed with deep or neon colors cannot be collected in many office paper collection programs. The point is, purchasers should speak to their recycling coordinators to understand the impact of a paper purchase.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 12873

Executive Order 12873, Federal Acquisition, Recycling, and Waste Prevention was signed by President Clinton in October 1993 to accentuate the importance of using the government purchasing power to stimulate markets for recovered products and reduce the need to dispose of waste materials by:

- Requiring all federal purchases of paper products to contain a minimum of 20 percent post-consumer recycled content until December 1998 at which time it will increase to a minimum of 30 percent post-consumer content.
- Streamlining the process by which EPA designates recycled and environmentally preferable products.
- Mandating aggressive federal procurement of products manufactured with recycled content materials.

The Executive Order also established the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive and mandates Agency Environmental Executives to carry out the order.
Sample Certification

Certification: The offeror shall certify that all paper supplied under any contract resulting from this solicitation, will meet or exceed the minimum percentage of recovered materials indicated below.

(Offeror should only make entries that apply to this offer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum %</th>
<th>Offeror’s %</th>
<th>Weight of Paper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recycled paper content in offset and/or writing paper

Postconsumer recovered materials content in newsprint

We reserve the right to require proof of such certification prior to first delivery and thereafter as may be otherwise provided for under the provisions of the contract.

Certificate of Recycled Paper and/or Recovered Materials Content

The offeror hereby certifies that all papers proposed to be supplied under this contract will contain the percentage(s) in the column “offeror’s percentage” above.

Bidder’s Company

Bidder (type or print)

Bidder’s Signature

Title

Date

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Resources on Recycled Products

Guide to Commercial & Industrial Recycling
Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority
25 South Charles St. #2105
Baltimore, MD 21201-3330
FAX: (410) 333-2721 PHONE: (410) 333-2730

National Buy Recycled Campaign
The U.S. Conference of Mayors
1620 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006 (202) 293-7330
This EPA funded program offers local governments and interested parties technical assistance on implementing recycled product procurement programs.

National Recycling Coalition
Buy Recycled Business Alliance
1727 King Street, Ste. 105
Alexandria, VA 22314 (703) 683-9025
Technical assistance to governments and businesses on buying recycled products; summaries of state/local laws.

Recycled Products Guide
American Recycling Market, Inc.
303-32 State Street
Ogdensburg, NY 13669 (800) 267-0707
Comprehensive list of several thousand recycled products from paper products to building materials.

Recycled Products Information Clearing House
Center for Earth Resources Management
Applications
5537 Hempstead Way
Springfield, VA 22151 (703) 642-1120
Information on EPA guidelines; detailed lists of recycled paper and paperboard manufacturers, converters and distributors; recycled paper fact sheets, labeling information, trouble-shooting guide for printers; and technical assistance on buying recycled, waste reduction and collection programs.

Recycleline
National on-line computer database service listing recycled products, markets for recovered waste, and more. (800) 461-0707

SWICH/Solid Waste Information Clearinghouse
PO. Box 7219
Silver Spring, MD 29010 (301) 585-2898
SWICH is a complete database for solid waste and recycling issues. It can be accessed by modem or by voice phone.

NOTE: Your state or local solid waste department or regional EPA office may have additional resources.

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Paper Industry Publications

American Recycling Markets
P.O. Box 577
Ogdensburg, NY 13669
(800) 267-0707

Paper Recycler
525 Market Street, 5th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 278-5300

Pulp &Paper Week
Miller Freeman Publication
600 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 905-2200

Fibre Market News
G.I.E. Inc. Publishers
4012 Bridge Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44113
(800) 456-0707

The Paper Stock Report
McEntee Media Corp.
13727 Holland Road
Cleveland, OH 44142-3920
(216) 362-7979

Resource Recovery Report
5313 38th St., NW
Washington, DC 20015
FAX: (202) 398-6344 PHONE: (202) 362-6632

For information on paper markets:

PaperMatcher
MSW Resource Center
American Forest and Paper Association
1111 19th Street, NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036
(800) 878-8878

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Recycling Industry Publications

Magazines

Resource Recycling
1206 N.W. 21st Avenue
Portland, OR 97209
FAX: (503) 227-6135 PHONE: (503) 227-1319

BioCycle
PO. Box 351
Emmaus, PA 18049
(215) 967-4135

Recycling Today
G.I.E. Inc. Publishers
4012 Bridge Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44113
(216) 961-4130

Waste Age/Environmental Industry Association
4301 Connecticut Ave., NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 244-4700

PIMA Magazine
Paper Industry Management Association
1699 Wall Street, Ste. 212
Mount Prospect, IL 60056
(847) 956-0250

Newsletters/newspapers

Recycled Paper News
CERMA
5528 Hempstead Way
Springfield, VA 22151
(703) 750-1158

Recycling Times
1730 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 861-0708

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- National Recycling Coalition
- National Solid Wastes Management Association
- Solid Waste Association of North America

The United States Conference of Mayors serves as managing principal of the National Office Paper Recycling Project.
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