



Recycling – A Sustainable Choice

(Information provided by Sustainable East Oklahoma County, www.seastok.org)

Overview

Recycling is a series of activities that includes collecting recyclable materials that would otherwise be considered waste, sorting and processing recyclables into raw materials such as fibers, and manufacturing raw materials into new products.

The Recycling Process¹

Collecting and processing secondary materials, manufacturing recycled-content products, and then purchasing recycled products creates a loop that ensures the overall success and value of recycling.



Step 1 - Collection and Processing

Collecting recyclables varies from community to community, but there are four primary methods: curbside, drop-off centers, buy-back centers, and deposit/refund programs. Regardless of the method used to collect the recyclables, the next leg of their journey is usually the same. Recyclables are sent to a materials recovery facility to be sorted and prepared into marketable commodities for manufacturing. Recyclables are bought and sold just like any other commodity, and prices for the materials change and fluctuate with the market.

Step 2 - Manufacturing

Once cleaned and separated, the recyclables are ready to undergo the second part of the recycling loop. More and more of today's products are being manufactured with total or partial recycled content. Common household items that contain recycled materials include newspapers and paper towels; aluminum, plastic, and glass soft drink containers; steel cans; and plastic laundry detergent bottles. Recycled materials also are used in applications such as recovered plastic in carpeting, park benches, and pedestrian bridges.

Step 3 - Purchasing Recycled Products

Purchasing recycled products completes the recycling loop. By "buying recycled," governments, as well as businesses and individual consumers, each play an important

¹ Information provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

role in making the recycling process a success. As consumers demand more environmentally sound products, manufacturers will continue to meet that demand by producing high-quality recycled products.

Buying Recycled

Overview

Creating a strong market for recycled products is key to completing the recycling process or "closing the loop." Consumers close the loop when they purchase products made from recycled materials. Governments can promote buying recycled products through their own purchasing programs and guidelines. Manufacturers can participate as well by using recycled materials in their products.

Identifying Recycled-Content Products

Product labels can be confusing to consumers interested in buying recycled because of the different recycling terminology used. The following definitions might help clarify any uncertainty regarding manufacturers' claims.

- Recycled-content products are made from materials that would otherwise have been discarded. Items in this category are made totally or partially from material destined for disposal or recovered from industrial activities-like aluminum soda cans or newspaper. Recycled-content products also can be items that are rebuilt or remanufactured from used products such as toner cartridges or computers.
- Postconsumer content refers to material from products that were used by consumers or businesses and would otherwise be discarded as waste. If a product is labeled "recycled content," the rest of the product material might have come from excess or damaged items generated during normal manufacturing processes-not collected through a local recycling program.
- Recyclable products can be collected and remanufactured into new products after they've been used. These products do not necessarily contain recycled materials and only benefit the environment if people recycle them after use. Check with your local recycling program to determine which items are recyclable in your community.

DOs AND DON'Ts OF RECYCLING²

Every community has its own guidelines for what should and should not be recycled, and how the process should take place. Take a few moments to find out these details. Call your local public works department or recycling organization. That way you can be sure you're doing your part, and doing it right. Information and contacts for local communities is provided below.

In general, here are a few things to keep in mind:

Cleanliness counts

Rinsing cans and keeping boxes out of the weather makes them easier to process. That keeps costs down.

If supplied with a bin, pay attention to what goes in

Take it upon yourself to be an accurate recycler. A cereal box is probably great, but a greasy pizza box may not be. Maybe milk jugs are good, but not the caps. Check the lid of your recycling bin for guidelines, or make a call or visit your municipal Web site to find out the rules. Then, follow them.

Good bets

Steel cans, aluminum cans, newspapers, magazines, catalogs, junk mail, plastic beverage bottles, milk jugs, glass bottles and jars, cereal boxes, other clean and dry cardboard boxes.

Probably not

Plastic grocery bags, Styrofoam, light bulbs, food-soiled paper, wax paper, ceramics.

DO Recycle Electronics

Recycle your old computers and cell phones. Check out [Dell](http://www.dell.com/earth) (www.dell.com/earth), [Staples](http://www.staples.com), and Waste Management/Recycle America (www.recycleamerica.com) for information on how you can recycle these items.

Hazardous wastes have their place

Household hazardous wastes like paint cans, motor oil, antifreeze, car batteries, pesticides, pool chemicals, etc., usually need to be disposed of separately. Again, check your community resources and guidelines.

² Information from America Recycles Day (<http://nrc-recycle.org/americanrecycles.aspx>)

EAST OK COUNTY SOLID WASTE INFORMATION

| Municipality | Point of Contact | Contact # | Cost to Resident | Contractor or City | Pickup Frequency |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Choctaw | Bernie Nauheimer | 390-8191 | \$2.51 | Waste Mgmt. | 1 per wk |
| Del City | | | | | |
| Harrah | Karen Effey | 454-3875 | \$14.00 | Harrah Disposal | 1 per week |
| Jones | Mary Kubicek | 399-5301 | \$5.15 | Allied Waste | 1 per week |
| MWC | James Long | 739-1371 | \$8.75 | MWC | 1 per wk |
| Nicoma Park | | | | | |
| Norman | Steve Womack | 366.5406 | | | |
| Oklahoma City | Chris Gary (Waste Mgmt.) | 949-2121 | \$15.31 | OKC/Waste Mgmt. | 1/wk; 1/mo(bulk) |
| Spencer | | | | | |
| Tinker AFB | Kim Kline | 734-4586 | | | |

RECYCLING QUESTIONNAIRE

| Municipality | Recycling fee | Recycling Available | Collection Type | Who Executes P/U | Where does it go? | Recycled Materials |
|--------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|--|---------------------|
| Choctaw | \$2.75/mo. | YES | Curbside | Waste Mgmt. | Materials Recovery Facility, 5519 NW 4th St. | A, G, N, (1,2), S |
| Del City | | | | | | |
| Harrah | | No | | | | |
| Jones | | No | | | | |
| MWC | NONE | YES | Drop-off Center | Self Service | Corrugated Services | A, C, G, N, (1,2,3) |
| Nicoma Park | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|------------------------|-----|---------------------------------|-----------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Norman | \$3.00/mo | | Curbside, urban area only | Recycle America | Materials Recovery Facility, 5519 NW 4th St. | |
| Oklahoma City | \$1.80 - \$2.00/mo. | YES | Curbside | Waste Mgmt. | Materials Recovery Facility, 5519 NW 4th St. | A,G, N, (1,2,3,4,5,6,&7), S |
| Spencer | | | | | | |
| Tinker AFB | | | | | | |

| WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTACTS | | | | RECYCLE LEGEND | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Operation improvements manager | Mike Sowdal | 949-2121 | | A= Aluminum | |
| Sales Manager for Recycling | Heather Schmuki | 520-0880 | hschmuki@wm.com | C= Cardboard | Cardboard is bailed and sent to Lawton |
| Sales Manager | Chris Williams | 949-7527 | | G= Glass | Glass is separated by color & sent to Okmulgee |
| | | | | N= Newspaper | Newspaper goes to mills all around OK |
| | | | | P= Paper | |
| | | | | 1,2,3,4,5,6,&7= Plastic Types | Plastic bailed and sent to the East Coast |
| | | | | S= Steel Cans | |

| ALLIED WASTE CONTACTS | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Sales Manager | Dean Matts 606-8606 ext. 106 |
| Manager of Municipal Services | Traci Crawford 745-4141 ext. 123 |

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| <u>Proposals for curbside recycling:</u> Nichols Hills Nicoma Park | <u>Community convenience centers:</u> Nichols Hills Moore Midwest City Clinton Weatherford |
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Recycle America is a subsidiary of Waste Management.

COMPOST/VERMICULTURE

Squirmy Wormy Composters by Kalman & Schaub, Age Level: 4-8

Wonderful Worms by Linda Glaser, Age Level: 4-8

The Magic School Bus Meets the Rot Squads by Scholastic, Age Level: 5-9

Compost Critters by Bianca Lavies, Age Level: 9-12

Earthworms by Partick Merrick, Age Level: 9-12

Earthworms, Underground Farmers by P. Lauber, Age Level: 9-12

Gardens from Garbage: How to Grow Indoor Plants from Recycled Kitchen Scraps by Judith Handelsman, Age Level: 9-12

Let It Rot: The Gardener's Guide to Composting by Stu Campbell, Age Level: Adult

The Worm Book: The Complete Guide to Worms in your Garden by Loren Nancarrow, Age Level: Adult

The Worm Cafe: Mid-Scale Vermicomposting of Lunchroom Wastes by Binet Payne, Age Level: Adult

Worms Eat My Garbage: How to set up and maintain a worm composting system by Mary Appelhoff, Age Level: Adult