

# RECYCLING CORRUGATED CARDBOARD IN COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION

## FACT SHEET

### CORRUGATED CARDBOARD DISPOSAL BAN

Corrugated cardboard is not garbage. Starting **April 1, 2018**, the landfill will **not accept** clean and dry corrugated cardboard.<sup>1</sup> It must be reused or recycled. Corrugated cardboard (pictured below) is defined as three or more layers of paper with the middle layer rippled or corrugated.



### CHALLENGES TO RECYCLING IN COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION

This fact sheet provides useful information to help commercial construction and demolition companies keep corrugated cardboard out of the landfill and overcome typical recycling challenges, including: storing cardboard in an already tight work area, where to take it, how to keep it dry, managing the service of recycling containers, and how to reduce dumping in recycling containers.

### VALUE OF COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION RECYCLING

- **Cost Savings.** For every ton of garbage diverted from the landfill, \$34.75 in disposal costs is avoided. Collection fees must still be paid when recycling, but the tipping fee is often less than landfilling or non-existent. Sometimes recycling high-value, clean materials, such as cardboard and metal, earn businesses extra revenue.
- **Efficiency.** If materials are wasted on the job, you pay twice: for purchase and for disposal. Managing a recycling program at your workplace helps you understand what is being discarded and how efficiently your employees are using materials that affect your bottom line.
- **Reputation.** Recycling is a visible way companies can show their commitment to environmental stewardship. In Lincoln, companies can earn public recognition for their recycling leadership through the [Recycle Lincoln Leadership Recognition Program](#).

<sup>1</sup> LMC 8.32.040, Sect. C / Recyclable cardboard\* shall not be accepted by the City for disposal in the City's public sanitary landfills effective April 1, 2018. (\*Clean and dry corrugated cardboard.)

- **Save Energy and Protect the Environment.** The energy spent to recycle materials like aluminum, plastics and paper is far lower than the amount of energy it takes to produce these products from raw materials.

## OVERCOMING RECYCLING CHALLENGES IN COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION

- **Develop a Plan for Cardboard.** If your business does not currently recycle corrugated cardboard, begin planning as soon as possible (corrugated cardboard disposal ban effective as of April 1, 2018). Discuss convenient options to contract on-site recycling with your current garbage or recycling collector, or search for better services by contracting a new collector. Every [garbage collector](#) is required to offer recycling services to their commercial customers at least twice per year. You may also choose to self-haul cardboard to a recycling processor (see Links & Resources below). Public recycling sites are provided for **residential** use and should not be used by commercial establishments.
- **Designate Responsibility.** Designate an employee for the implementation of on-site diversion of recyclables and subcontractor personnel training. The site supervisor is a good candidate for this role. Duties might include managing waste generated on site, ensuring placement of adequate containers, scheduling pick-up or delivery of corrugated cardboard containers, and ensuring correct signage and procedures are followed.
- **Make a Construction Waste Management Plan.** Identify the types of waste that will be generated during the project and any [local organizations that use or recycle the material](#) rather than sending it to the landfill. Local garbage and recycling collectors provide a menu of services. They can discuss what system is best implemented at your construction site, including regular pick-ups and container availability ranging from a two cubic yard dumpster to a 40 cubic yard roll-off box.
- **Place Containers.** Determine where to place dumpsters on site, how many, what types are needed, and when. Use a designated dumpster to collect cardboard. Make sure garbage containers are near corrugated cardboard containers to reduce mingling of garbage and cardboard. Recycling processors will refuse a load of corrugated cardboard if it is contaminated (mixed with other waste, soiled or wet).



One option for collecting cardboard on site is to designate a dumpster for cardboard only (left). This dumpster could be as large as a roll-off box (right).

- **Keep Corrugated Cardboard Clean and Dry.** If you use a dumpster, make sure it has a lid so the corrugated cardboard stays dry. Use a lock to minimize neighborhood dumping.
- **Save Space.** Remove all packing materials and flatten cardboard to save space on site and in the collection container.
- **Educate Your staff.** Discuss the recycling separation policy with staff and subcontractors. Reiterate procedures at every job site meeting. If problems arise, find the people responsible and instruct them on proper corrugated cardboard management.
- **Monitor.** It is important that the designated recycling supervisor periodically check garbage and recycling containers to ensure corrugated cardboard is being properly recycled.
- **Expand Your Recycling Program.** Once you've mastered corrugated cardboard, expand your construction site recycling to include metal, brick, fixtures, wood, ceiling tile or other materials. Refer to the Nebraska Recycling Council's [Construction and Demolition Waste Management and Recycling Guide](#) to get started.
- **Celebrate Your Success.** Create an atmosphere of pride by continually promoting the success of your recycling program. Report the amount of recyclables diverted from the landfill to staff, managers, subcontractors, clients and the public. Apply to the [Recycle Lincoln Leadership Recognition Program](#) and earn public recognition for your efforts.
- **Get Financial Assistance.** Take advantage of the City's [Waste Reduction and Recycling Assistance Program \(WRRAP\)](#), which provides rebates of up to \$750 to start a recycling program.

## LINKS & RESOURCES

- **Commercial Recycling Self-Assessment and Waste Diversion Rate Calculator**  
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/commercial/self-assessment.htm>  
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/commercial/waste-diversion-calculator.htm>
- **Corrugated Cardboard Disposal Ban FAQ**  
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/corrugated-cardboard.htm>
- **Guide to Selecting / Contracting for Garbage and Recycling Collection**  
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/commercial/fact-sheets/pdf/collection-contracting.pdf>
- **Local Firm Listing for Construction Material Diversions**  
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/commercial/fact-sheets/pdf/const-demo-recycling-resources.pdf>
- **Local Garbage and Recycling Collectors**  
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/collectors.htm>
- **Nebraska Recycling Council**  
<http://www.nrcne.org/>
- **Nebraska Recycling Council's Construction and Demolition Waste Management and Recycling Case Study**  
<http://nrcne.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Meridian-Park-Case-Study.pdf>

- **Nebraska Recycling Council's Construction and Demolition Waste Management and Recycling Guide**  
<http://nrcne.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/CD-Recycling-Guide-Revised-2017.pdf>
- **Recycle Lincoln Leadership Recognition Program**  
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/wrrap/recognition.htm>
- **Recycling Processing Centers**
  - Firststar Fiber, 402-894-0003, <https://firststarrecycling.com/>
  - Mid-America Recycling, 402-476-8502, <http://www.midamericarecycling.com>
  - Recycling Enterprises, 402-421-6655, <http://www.recyclelincoln.com/>
- **Waste Reduction and Recycling Assistance Program (WRRAP)**  
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/wrrap/>
- **10 Steps to Setting Up a Construction and Demolition Recycling Program**  
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/commercial/fact-sheets/pdf/const-demo-recycling.pdf>

For more information about recycling and Lincoln's corrugated cardboard diversion efforts, visit [recycle.lincoln.ne.gov](http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov), email [recycle@lincoln.ne.gov](mailto:recycle@lincoln.ne.gov) or call the Recycling Office at 402-441-8215.