

# RECYCLING IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

## 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 THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

This fact sheet provides useful information to help hospitality companies keep corrugated cardboard out of the landfill and overcome typical recycling challenges, including: infrastructure challenges, adequate bin labelling and capacity, training, and buy-in of staff and guests.

### VALUE OF HOSPITALITY RECYCLING

- **Reputation.** Recycling is a visible way hotels 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](#).
- **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 HOSPITALITY

- **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.
- **Inspect Your Garbage.** Assess your garbage and make a list of recyclables, organic and landfill items that are being generated at your hotel. If you have a recycling program in place,

<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.)

inspect recycling for contamination - the presence of garbage in recycling bins. Inspect all areas of your property, noting where certain types of recyclables are generated. You may uncover opportunities to reduce garbage at the source (i.e. reduce Styrofoam use).

- **Determine Indoor Bin and Labeling Needs.** Walk through your facility and assess your needs for recycling / garbage bins and labels. It is sometimes convenient to mark up a copy of your floor plan with the needed locations for bins. The best practice is to have one recycling bin for every garbage bin. It should be just as easy for someone to recycle an item as it is to throw it in the garbage. Be sure bins are available in all common areas, including the lobby, dining room, kitchen, hallways, and central locations on very floor.
- **Use Consistent Bin Colors and Labelling.** Color coding of recycling and garbage bins is important. The industry standard is that garbage bins are black and recycling bins are blue. This color coding helps people know which materials go where. Uniform bin size is also important. Deskside recycling bins in offices, staff rooms, the lobby, etc. should all be the same size. Each bin should be labeled with a color-coded sign that includes images of what is recyclable. This will assist staff and guests in putting garbage and recycling items in the correct bins. Consider signage from [Recycle Across America](#). Their signage is color-coded, includes images of what is recyclable, can be customized according to materials found at your location, and comes in a variety of sizes.
- **Consider Recycling Organics.** Hotels that serve breakfast will always have food left over each morning. Instead of throwing this food into the garbage, consider contracting with a compost collector to divert organic waste. You can also replace disposable plates, bowls, and utensils with compostable alternatives. The resulting reduction in garbage may allow you to reduce your frequency of pickups, which would help offset the cost of the new compost collection service.
- **Assess Your Outdoor Dumpsters.** Your hotel should have dumpsters for both garbage and recycling. Ensure they are clearly labeled so that staff know what should be deposited where. Check your outdoor dumpsters to make sure they are handling the volume your hotel generates and that they are being pulled with the right frequency. Talk to your garbage/recycling collector to make necessary adjustments. Consult the [Guide to Selecting / Contracting for Garbage and Recycling Collection](#) to determine whether your current garbage/recycling collector will meet your needs.



Clearly label indoor bins with images of what is recyclable (left) and outdoor dumpsters for recycling only (right).

- **Designate a Recycling Leader.** Give a staff member the responsibility for overseeing the recycling program and ensuring its success. This person should be assisted by a small team of coworkers representing all areas of the establishment.
- **Set a Goal.** Set a goal to increase your hotel's recycling rate. This is not only important for tracking purposes, but can also get the whole organization excited about recycling. In order to set a goal, it's necessary to establish your baseline waste diversion rate. Estimate your diversion rate using the handy [Waste Diversion Rate Calculator](#).
- **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. Look for local or state grants to help with additional funding if needed, such as those provided by the [Nebraska Recycling Council](#).
- **Educate, Communicate and Repeat.** Announce your new recycling program to employees in every way you can: in staff meetings, trainings, emails, and one-on-one communication. Custodians often have the most hands-on knowledge of your hotel's garbage and recycling, so ask often for their valuable feedback. Use translators if language differences are a barrier. [Multilingual resources](#) are available through the City. Distribute and discuss the [Recycling Guidelines by Material](#) and the [Corrugated Cardboard Disposal Ban FAQ](#). Put signs in guest rooms directing them on how and what to recycle.
- **Monitor and Measure.** Measuring your garbage and recycling streams is vital not only for grant reporting, but for identifying improvement opportunities in your program. If your hotel has high rates of contamination in your recycling (garbage mixed in with recyclables), your loads will be refused by the recycling processor. Work with your custodial staff and garbage/recycling collector to obtain measurements, monitor contamination and focus your educational efforts where needed.
- **Celebrate 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 employees and guests. Apply to the [Recycle Lincoln Leadership Recognition Program](#) and earn public recognition for your efforts.

## 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 Garbage and Recycling Collectors**  
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/collectors.htm>
- **Multilingual Resources**  
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/multilingual-resources.htm>

- **Nebraska Recycling Council**  
<http://www.nrcne.org>
- **Nebraska Recycling Council's Hospitality: A Best Practices Guide to Waste Reduction and Recycling**  
<http://nrcne.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Hospitality-Guide-Final.pdf>
- **Recycle Across America**  
<http://www.recycleacrossamerica.org/>
- **Recycle Lincoln Leadership Recognition Program**  
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/wrrap/recognition.htm>
- **Recycling Guidelines by Material**  
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/pdf/guidelines-by-material.pdf>
- **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/>

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.