

RECYCLING IN MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING

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.¹ 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.



MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING RECYCLING CHALLENGES

This fact sheet provides useful information to help multi-family housing companies keep corrugated cardboard out of the landfill and overcome typical recycling challenges, including: storing cardboard containers in an already tight living area, managing subscription and recycling container costs, training employees and tenants on how and what to recycle, how to reach multilingual audiences and how to reduce dumping garbage in recycling containers.

VALUE OF MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING RECYCLING

- **Impact Lincoln.** Approximately 22% of Lancaster County's population live in multi-family dwelling units.² It is estimated that each person in Lincoln creates about 3.6 pounds of garbage every day.³ Much of this material — plastic bottles, metal cans, newspapers, junk mail and cardboard — is readily recyclable.
- **Enhance Property Desirability and Public Image.** Many potential tenants are seeking apartment complexes that offer a recycling 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.
- **Foster Community Pride.** As more residents recycle, it causes a chain reaction, which develops into a community effort that brings everyone together toward a common good.

¹ 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.)

² U.S. Census Bureau's America Community Survey 2015 One year estimate. Lincoln and Lancaster County Planning Department.

³ SWMP2040 Residential Recycling and Diversion Technical Report, p.5. October 2013.
<http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/pworks/waste/sldwaste/solidwasteplan2040/pdf/ac-20121009-handout5.pdf>

OVERCOMING RECYCLING CHALLENGES IN MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING

- **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. Hear from local landlords that discussed recycling at a [Lunch-n-Learn](#).
- **Make a Plan with Your Collector.** A number of factors impact the type of recycling collection system best implemented at a multi-family housing complex. Consider phasing your recycling program. Start with corrugated cardboard. Once this is well established, consider expanding to single stream recycling. Research multiple garbage and recycling collectors for collection services. Companies offering concierge recycling services provide door-to-door collection for large, multi-family housing units. Refer to the [Guide on Selecting / Contracting for Garbage and Recycling Collection](#).
- **Place the Right Kind of Containers.** It should be just as easy for residents to recycle as it is for them to throw items away. This means placing recycling containers next to or near all common areas where garbage is currently collected. On the exterior of the building, consider placing clearly marked 90-gallon wheeled recycling carts in convenient locations.
- **Label Containers.** Use clear signage for collection containers that have images of the materials that go inside the containers - images will communicate across languages. Communicate using color - make sure recycling containers are a different color than garbage containers. Blue is recommended for recycling containers, and black or brown for garbage. [Recycle Across America](#) is a non-profit that offers effective, standardized signage.



Bin options include 65- and 95-gallon wheeled recycling carts (left) and recycling-only dumpsters with cutouts (right).

- **Reduce Contamination.** If garbage contamination is an issue, consider recycling dumpsters that have special cut-outs for cardboard (see images below).
- **Use Space-saving Techniques.** To save living space, encourage tenants to collect their recyclables in cloth bags that can be hung from a doorknob. If space is tight on the exterior of your building, consider using carts instead of dumpsters for recyclables.

- **Communicate Regularly with Your Tenants.** Announce your new recycling program to your tenants, perhaps with a special event. Be sure to understand recycling guidelines from your recycling collector. Distribute the [Recycling Guidelines by Materials](#) to tenants so they know which materials are recyclable and which are not. Distribute the [Corrugated Cardboard Disposal Ban FAQ](#) to educate residents. Consider providing cloth bags that tenants can use to collect recyclables in their apartments. Continue regular communication about recycling to reinforce its importance.
- **Get Financial Assistance.** Take advantage of the City of Lincoln's [Waste Reduction and Recycling Assistance Program \(WRRAP\)](#), which provides rebates of up to \$750 to start a recycling program.
- **Start a Green Team** in your building to help publicize, monitor and strengthen your recycling program. For details, see the [Guide to Commercial Green Teams](#).
- **Write it into Your Lease.** Add language in your lease agreement that specifies that all tenants are expected to participate in your recycling program.
- **Comply with Local Codes.** Storage areas for recycling bins must be easily accessible to building maintenance staff, tenants and recycling collectors. These areas must also comply with fire codes.
- **Use Multilingual Resources.** A campaign flyer is available in Arabic, Spanish and Vietnamese. Tenants requiring additional language translations should contact their cultural center. Download [Multilingual Resources here](#).
- **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 and tenants. 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 Commercial Green Teams**
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/commercial/fact-sheets/pdf/green-teams.pdf>
- **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>
- **Lunch-n-Learn: How to Set Up a Successful Recycling Program in Multifamily Housing Complexes (video)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTVzkLuKKts&feature=youtu.be>

- **Multilingual Resources**
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/multilingual-resources.htm>
- **Nebraska Recycling Council**
<http://www.nrcne.org/>
- **Recycle Across America**
<http://www.recycleacrossamerica.org/>
- **Recycling Guidelines by Material**
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/pdf/guidelines-by-material.pdf>
- **Recycling Processing Centers**
 - Firstar 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/>
- **Recycling Program Toolkit for Apartment Managers and Owners**
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/apartment/toolkit.htm>
- **Recycle Lincoln Leadership Recognition Program**
<http://recycle.lincoln.ne.gov/wrrap/recognition.htm>
- **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, email recycle@lincoln.ne.gov or call the Recycling Office at 402-441-8215.