

RECYCLING IN THE RETAIL 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.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.



CHALLENGES TO RECYCLING IN THE RETAIL SECTOR

This fact sheet provides useful information to help retail stores keep corrugated cardboard out of the landfill and overcome typical recycling challenges, including: managing space needed for recycling bins, increasing employee and mall retailer training and buy-in, and including customers in recycling efforts.

VALUE OF RETAIL RECYCLING

- **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](#).
- **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 RETAIL

- **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.
- **Contact Management.** Let management know about the upcoming corrugated cardboard disposal ban and that you are interested in establishing or improving your recycling program. For retail stores located in malls, consider contacting the mall manager or owner to advocate for a multi-store garbage reduction plan. You may also need their assistance in identifying

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.)

restrictions for garbage and recycling collection services, dumpster placement, or purchasing policies.

- **Inspect Your Garbage.** Assess your garbage and make a list of recyclables, organic and landfill items that are being generated. If you have a recycling program in place, 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.
- **Work with Suppliers to Reduce Garbage at the Source.** If possible, contact your suppliers and ask them to avoid shipping individual items as much as possible by shipping in bulk. Also ask if they have a packing-return system, or if they would be willing to develop one with you. Reusing packaging helps reduce costs for both parties.
- **Determine Indoor Recycling Bin Needs.** Walk through your business, both back-of-house and front-of-house areas, 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.
- **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. Recycling bins in your store, offices, bathrooms, and staff rooms 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 customers 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 store, and comes in a variety of sizes.
- **Assess Your Outdoor Dumpsters.** Your retail location should have separate dumpsters for garbage and recycling. Ensure they are clearly labeled so that staff know what can be discarded where. Check your outdoor dumpsters to make sure they are handling the volume your store generates and that they are being pulled with the right frequency. Talk to your garbage/recycling collector to make necessary adjustments. Consult a [Guide to Selecting / Contracting for Garbage and Recycling Collection](#) to determine whether your current garbage/recycling collector will meet your needs.



Ensure that indoor (left) and outdoor (right) recycling containers are clearly labeled.

- **Consider Shared Collection Services.** With limited space for dumpsters, consider collaborating with adjacent business and your garbage collector to implement a shared garbage collection system. Using this method, businesses can share dumpsters and split the costs of more frequent pickups to save money and space. Refer to the [Nebraska Recycling Council's Shared Recycling & Hauling Systems Case Study](#) for examples of this collaboration in Lincoln.
- **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](#).
- **Start a Green Team.** Develop a Green Team in your retail facility that consists of employees and managers. They can help monitor and strengthen your recycling program. This team can take on the responsibilities of promoting your efforts, educating staff, reporting issues, etc. Refer to the [Guide to Commercial Green Teams](#) for more information.
- **Monitor and Measure.** Check your recycling and garbage bins periodically to make sure the right materials are going in the right places. If not, talk to your employees again. Check your outdoor dumpsters to make sure they are being pulled with the right frequency. Talk to your garbage/recycling collector to make adjustments as necessary.
- **Educate, Communicate and Repeat.** Inform employees of your new recycling program. Distribute and discuss the [Recycling Guidelines by Material](#) and the [Corrugated Cardboard Disposal Ban FAQ](#). Take time to train each employee on which materials are recyclable, which are not, and where each should go. Continue to educate and report about your recycling program's success at regular staff meetings and in conversations with management so that all involved understand its importance to your business. Put signs where customers have access to bins directing them how and what to recycle.
- **Set a Goal.** Set a goal to increase your retail store'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 this handy [Waste Diversion Rate Calculator](#).
- **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 employees, vendors and customers. 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>
- **Nebraska Recycling Council**
<http://www.nrcne.org>
- **Nebraska Recycling Council's Materials Management for the Retail and Merchandise Sector**
<http://nrcne.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Retail-BMPs-Guide-Final.pdf>
- **Nebraska Recycling Council's Shared Recycling & Hauling Services Case Study**
http://nrcne.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Shared_Hauling_Case_Study.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/wrrap/recognition.htm>
- **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/>
- **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.