

How-to Guide

Start and optimize a recycling program at your business

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1. Understand your business's needs.

Answer these questions and record the answers to help you get started:

- What kind of waste (and how much) is generated at your business, and where is it coming from?
 - **Option 1:** Do a quick and simple visual assessment. Look inside your garbage and recycling bins and estimate the types of recyclable materials and how much are going into each bin.
 - **Option 2:** Conduct a waste audit yourself. Download the guide on [How to Conduct a Waste Audit](#).
 - **Option 3:** Hire a third party consultant to conduct a waste audit for you.

- How is your business currently managing waste?
 - Do a walk-through to see where garbage and recycling bins are currently set up.
 - Look for and record things like colour scheme, signage, consistency, number and placement of bins, and clusters of bins.

Looking for help with your **Waste Audit**? Contact GreenStep Solutions to learn more and get a quote today!

1-800-469-7830
info@greenstep.ca

2. Involve as many people as possible

- Create a Green Team and/or designate a Leader. Download the [Green Team Starter Kit](#).
- Present the findings of Step 1.
- Brainstorm ideas for reducing waste and improving recycling.
- Give roles and responsibilities for recycling at work.

A **Green Team Leader** is a designated staff member who is responsible for your recycling program, and is vital to keep the momentum going. Their role is to monitor and improve the program and oversee people and activities across the rest of the business.

3. Learn what you can recycle

Understand what materials your program must accept to be compliant with regional bylaws.

- Start by finding your municipal or regional recycling guidelines by calling your municipality or visiting their website.
- Regional bylaws require the following materials must be recycled or disposed safely (not put in the garbage):
 - Cardboard and boxboard
 - Mixed paper products
 - Wood products
 - Yard waste
 - E-Waste and any material covered under an [EPR program](#)
 - Hazardous materials
 - And more! (See Regional bylaws for full list)

<p>Cardboard & Boxboard</p> 	<p>Mixed paper</p> 	<p>Wood products</p> 
<p>Yard Waste</p> 	<p>E-Waste</p> 	<p>Hazardous materials</p> 

- Ensure that recycled materials are kept clean and uncontaminated, otherwise the likelihood that they will actually be recycled will be reduced.

5. Store your recycling

Decide where and how to store recyclables (indoors and outdoors)

■ Indoors:

- Be safe and follow fire codes. Don't block hallways, stairwells, doorways, or fire exits. Do not store excessive amounts of recycling or use utility/service rooms for storage.
- Position recycling points as close to the source of waste as possible e.g. place a paper recycling bin next to the photocopier/printer.
- Put recycling and garbage bins next to each other so that no extra effort is required to recycle.
- Note that some recycling haulers are requesting source separation of materials instead of accepting recycling that is mixed together. Check with your hauler for sorting guidelines. Keep recycling clean and uncontaminated to ensure it ends up being recycled!

Never allow "stand-alone" garbage bins. A garbage bin should always be accompanied by a recycling bin at the very least, and ideally all waste streams diverted at your business.

■ Outdoors:

- Place bins in a secure area, and not under eaves or carports or too close to your building (in case of fire).
- Schedule regular pick-up or call for pickup when the bins are full.
- Ensure your recycling bin does not pose a hazard to users or impede traffic flow in your parking area.

6. Add signage

Label recycling points to make recycling easy and convenient.

- It is very important to label recycling points clearly, so that everyone knows where they are and what should go in them.
- Use the materials provided in this toolkit to support your recycling program, including signage and colour schemes.

- You can download and print the [Recycling Sign Examples](#) in the toolkit for free (there is no copyright), or you can make your own following the guideline for [Signage & Colour Scheme Best Practices](#)

Recycling Sign Examples



Click images to return to website and download

7. Begin your new and improved recycling program!

- Launch with a focus on raising awareness.
- Write a letter or distribute an email to your staff explaining the new recycling program and why it is important to participate. Post a copy in a common area such as a lunch room.
 - Download the [Recycling Program Letter Example](#)
- Hold a training session for staff.
- Integrate a conversation about waste minimization & recycling into staff meetings.
- Include information about your program in onboarding/orientation materials for new employees.
- Reward and praise recycling champions.
- Incorporate recycling into the company policy.

8. Monitor and measure progress

Conduct a follow-up waste audit

- Three months into your new recycling program, check in to see what's really ending up in each waste stream at your business.
- Use the same technique you used in Step 1, so results are comparable:
 - **Option 1:** Do a quick and simple visual assessment.
 - **Option 2:** Conduct a waste audit yourself. Download the guide on [How to Conduct a Waste Audit](#).
 - **Option 3:** Hire a third party to conduct a waste audit for you.
- Use the results to focus your efforts on improving even further.

Keep up the great work and don't let your efforts go to waste (pun intended)! Schedule an annual waste audit and strive for continuous improvement.

9. Reduce waste disposal costs

- Reduce waste to reduce the number of bins/pickups required from your hauler
 - Reduce and aim to eliminate single-use disposable items
 - Develop a green procurement policy
 - Repair items and equipment
 - Check in with staff and custodial services for their ideas on how to reduce waste further. Getting ideas from these groups can give your initiatives more backbone when implemented.
- Recycle more. Explore the [Extended Producer Responsibility Programs](#) available in your region.
- Get paid for your scrap metal. Check for a scrap metal company in your community and ask if they buy materials from businesses.
- “Right-size” your garbage and recycling bins. Use your recycling program to its full potential by keeping recyclables out of the garbage, and reduce unnecessary pick-ups.
 - Download the guide: [Are your waste bins the right size?](#)