



Recycling at Work: *Working with Janitorial Service Companies*

Janitorial service companies are valuable partners in the success of your recycling program. Your janitorial staff is responsible for pickup from tenants and often accountable for proper separation of trash from recyclables before collection by your recycling vendor.

Janitorial labor is among your highest expenses. With their help, involvement and commitment to the recycling process, you can have a successful and cost-effective recycling program.

This sheet contains tips on working with your janitorial service company to create a simple, easy to use recycling program that works for everyone. It also contains sample language for your janitorial contract or next janitorial bid.

Planning Your Recycling Program – Your Choice

Work with your recycling company to minimize sorting of recyclables (e.g., collect all paper types together rather than separate colored from white). A simply designed and convenient recycling program is likely to improve participation and work efficiently. Here are three possible collection options:

1. Have your janitorial service staff empty tenant desk-side recycling bins and larger centrally located recycling bins.
2. Have your tenants empty their own recycling bins into larger, centrally located recycling bins on their office floors (usually located near photocopiers or printers). Janitorial staff is only responsible for emptying these larger bins.
3. Set up desk-side bins as recycling only for janitors to empty. Have tenants take wet trash to central locations (usually kitchen areas).

Tips for Working with Janitorial Staff

Whatever collection option you choose, the following tips will help you work with your janitorial service company to make any method work effectively.

- Include in your written contract the type of recycling service needed (e.g., empty desk-side recycling bins nightly, empty centrally located bins, what materials to collect, where they are to be taken, how often to collect materials). Sample language is included at the end of this Tip Sheet.
- Make it easy for janitors to identify recycling bins by having bins all the same style or color-coded.
- Place labels on all recycling bins to clearly identify them. Check with your janitorial company to find out if labels should be in another language. Include pictures of acceptable materials.

- Discuss with janitorial staff the best location for the larger bins to increase service efficiency.
- Post a floor plan map indicating central recycling areas and location of recycling bins in a convenient reference area for janitors.
- Ask janitorial staff to report when recyclables are improperly sorted or found in the garbage so building management can communicate problems and solutions with tenant contacts.
- Direct janitorial staff to pick up extra recycling items only if they are clearly labeled for “Recycling.”
- Work with janitorial staff to ensure they have the equipment they need to service the program efficiently (e.g., having carts with three collection bags – one for paper recyclables, one for beverage containers and one for trash).
- Remind everyone to keep contaminants out of recycling. Janitors will not sort garbage.

Tips for Educating Janitorial Staff

Divert more material and have lower contamination levels in your program with proper education and communication. These tips will make it simple and easy.

- Supply your janitorial service company with an information sheet on how the recycling program works in your building. Include a list of what is and is not acceptable for recycling. This will help the company to educate staff members. Again, make sure that information is in the proper language.
- Encourage sharing of ideas, concerns and comments to improve the recycling program. Address any questions or feedback janitors have about the recycling program (e.g., contamination issues, tenants not participating in the program).
- Offer periodic training sessions to educate new and existing janitorial staff about the program. These training sessions also offer a great opportunity for feedback and the exchange of information.

Office Paper Cleanouts

Are your tenants cleaning out large amounts of paper (e.g., tenants moving offices, file purges)? Here are some tips to help janitorial staff cope with these cleanouts:

- Give your janitorial service company advance notice of a paper cleanout so extra help can be scheduled, if necessary.
- Supply additional recycling bins – overloaded centralized recycling bins are difficult and often too heavy for janitorial staff to empty.
- Provide wheeled bins to make it easier to transport large amounts of paper safely. Ask janitorial staff to inform you of any noticeable increase in contamination during a cleanout, so you can quickly address this issue with the tenant.
- Remind janitorial staff and tenants about the importance of flattening cardboard boxes to make the best use of space in recycling bins.

Sample Language for Janitorial Service Bid or Contract

For contract language or bid specifications, be sure to distinguish between trash removal and recycling pick-up. Determine if recycling pick-up is daily or “as needed”. “As needed” can be helpful in saving labor costs, and dry recyclables like paper may not need to be picked up as frequently as wet recyclables like bottles and cans. See below for sample bid or contract language:

Trash/Recycling Pickup

1. Collect and remove all trash from the entire facility daily. “Entire facility” means the lobby, the indoor and outdoor public areas, the hallways, the conference rooms, the restrooms, the lunchrooms and kitchens, and the office areas. (*Other areas?*)
2. Empty trash receptacles and replace plastic liner only if soiled with wet garbage.
3. Deliver emptied trash to the loading dock area and place properly in compactor. (*Or whatever location and containers are provided for trash collection*)
4. Maintain loading dock area (*or other areas*) free of debris and trash.
5. Collect, remove and keep separate all recyclables from the entire facility twice weekly, or more frequently if receptacle is full. Recyclables include white paper; newspaper; mixed office paper; cardboard; and glass, aluminum and plastic bottles and cans (*specify*). If applicable, return emptied totes to original locations, or replace an empty tote for the full tote when removing and taking to the loading dock for emptying.
6. Empty recycling receptacles for glass, aluminum and plastic bottles and cans and replace plastic liner.
7. Deliver collected and separated recyclables to the loading dock area (*or other*).
8. Place all mixed paper in dumpster, tote or other container located in the loading dock area labeled for mixed paper recycling. Place all cans and bottles in dumpster, tote or other container located in the loading dock area labeled for glass, aluminum and plastic container recycling. (*Specify whatever location and containers are provided for recycling collection for each material sort.*)
9. On designated floors or offices, empty recycling receptacles at each desk into separate container for recycling and deliver separated recyclables to proper dumpster, tote or other designated container in the loading dock area.
10. Remove any cardboard boxes placed next to recycling containers located in central locations (*or other*) daily or more frequently during times of higher volumes such as a tenant (*or new employee*) moving in.
11. Breakdown, flatten and place all cardboard in dumpster, tote or other container labeled for cardboard recycling.

12. Modify trash and recycling collection procedures as directed by building management. Changes will be made by building management in coordination with the janitorial service and the trash and recycling collection service. Attend training as directed.
13. Revise schedule, location for loading and unloading, sorting or other trash and recycling collection procedures as directed by building management.

Note: If janitorial paper products, plastic bag liners, and cleaning supplies will be supplied through the Janitorial Service contract, specifications for environmentally preferable products are available from StopWaste.Org. Visit www.StopWaste.Org/EPP or contact Rachel Balsley at rbalsley@stopwaste.org for information.

This tip sheet was developed by the StopWaste Partnership, a program of StopWaste.Org, in April, 2006. For more information on the Partnership, visit www.StopWaste.Org/Partnership.