



# How to Set Up a Hotel Recycling Program

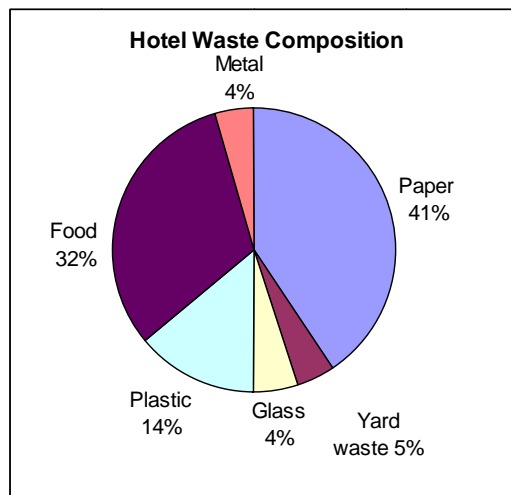


Florida's tourism industry serves an estimated 85 million visitors annually. More than 50% of these visitors are hotel guests during some or all of their stay. The waste generated by these guests constitutes a large portion of the state's commercial waste stream. Reducing materials at their source, coupled with recovery, reuse, and recycling prevents pollution and reduces or eliminates treatment and disposal costs. Recycling program must be specifically designed to accommodate the hotel's operating procedures. Resource management efforts such as waste reduction, waste minimization, and recycling can represent an important potential savings in terms of solid waste management.

Recycling should be incorporated into daily operations along with staff training. Each hotel recycling program must be specifically designed to accommodate the hotel's procedures of operation, hotel activities and structural design. A large property can generate as much as 8 tons of waste per day. Up to 60% of this waste is recyclable.

## Typical Waste Composition of a Hotel

Paper	35-47%
Food	18-46%
Plastic	6-22%
Glass	1-8%
Yard waste	3-7%
Metal	3-6%



Educating guests about recycling through guest books, media boards, and in-house television is a great public relations tool that is received favorably by guests. Many

guests are familiar with recycling from home or work and are glad to continue the process when in a hotel.

In designing a recycling program for your hotel, consider the following list of commonly recycled materials:

Aluminum cans	Landscape waste
Antifreeze	Magazines
Appliances	Motor oil
Batteries	Newspapers
Building materials	Office supplies
Cardboard	Paint
Carpet	Plastic bottles
Cell phones	Plastic buckets
Cooking grease	Radios
Computers	Scrap metal
Fluorescent bulbs	Steel containers
Food waste	Telephone books
Freon	Televisions
Furniture	Wood
Glass jars	

Also, consider the life cycle cost of products. Life cycle cost includes factoring the initial cost, repair and maintenance and disposal costs. You pay twice for products; delivery and disposal.

### **How to Get Started**

A little research will go a long way. First assess - What are you already doing to reduce, reuse and recycle?

To know this, it is recommended that your homework include the following:

- 1. Set up a waste reduction committee made up of staff members from each operational area**

Explain your team goals and what you are trying to accomplish. Ask what procedures they are using for disposal, cleaning and training of personnel. This committee will gather the preliminary information which will help formulate recommendations and procedures. Appoint a waste reduction coordinator to provide a central point for leadership for this initiative. Reach out to all employees in the early stages of the recycling program and include on-going training. Some of the best ideas will come from your employees.

2. **Conduct a waste audit of each operational area**

Do a walk through of each area. Identify the recyclable material, source of material and the quantity of the recyclable materials currently being collected or thrown away. This audit will help identify opportunities to reduce waste, conserve water and electricity. Consideration should be given to:

- Who collects the waste?
- What type of waste is generated?
- When is the waste collected?
- Where is the waste stored until collection?
- How is the waste collected at the source and diverted to recycling?

This analysis of the composition of waste from a hotel will serve as a valuable planning tool for its waste reduction program.

3. **Conduct a waste evaluation**

Learn about your waste and do a waste evaluation, which includes examining current and perspective purchasing and disposal cost records. Research your waste disposal costs, options, and alternatives.

4. **Determine the composition of your waste stream**

Classify materials for recycling and initiate other waste reduction activities by determining the composition of your waste stream. Selection of materials disposal method is one of the key considerations before designing a recycling program.

5. **Find out what materials are recycled in your area**

Most communities have a recycling coordinator that is available to assist or contact FDEP for a list of recyclers. Contact information for your county's recycling coordinator can be found at:

[http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/categories/recycling/pages/contact\\_counties.htm](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/categories/recycling/pages/contact_counties.htm)

6. **Negotiate contract with waste and recycling provider**

Have more than just verbal agreements, do written contracts. Some items to consider for the service:

- What material do you collect?
- What size container is needed?
- Do you supply containers?
- Is there a charge for these containers?

- Is there a minimum volume or weight requirement for pickup frequency?
- What are the charges for collection?
- How frequent is collection?

Most recyclers base charges on operational cost and require a minimum quantity of material. This can create storage issues for back of the house operation. Consider storage when deciding what materials to collect and how materials are collected. Also consider that when fees for recycling and landfilling are low, incentives to recycle and practice waste reduction may decrease, whereas increased tipping fees promote waste reduction and recycling.

**7. Design a materials flow plan**

A materials flow plan identifies materials, collection, container size and placement, recycling, reuse and disposal. It is very important that you label your recycling bins stating to the guests exactly what can be placed in the recycling bins. Be sure to co-locate all recycling bins beside garbage cans.

**8. Have an auditor evaluate your facility if necessary**

Solicit help from the city or county recycling coordinator or contact the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Waste Reduction or Pollution Prevention Program in Tallahassee to have an auditor come out to evaluate your facility.

**9. Practice eco-purchasing**

Examine the current buying practices. Are you just buying a product because that is the way it has always been done? Ecopurchasing involves evaluating practices and products not only on price and quality but also on durability, reusability, recyclability and content. This strategy calls for business consumers to think first before purchasing any material or service. It may require changing the way things are done or how a product is packaged. Work with your vendors to get the best value.

**10. Inform hotel owners and/or corporate management of your recycling initiative**

Keep owners and corporate management informed about your waste stream and recycling opportunities that will save time and money. Let them know what you are trying to achieve and ask for their support.

**11. Establish an accounting system that reflects monthly waste management costs**

Formulate a monthly report for tracking waste disposal and reduction information.

**12. Set goals and objectives based on a realistic time line**

Working with the committee, set goals and objectives based on a realistic time line. Map out action plans to reach these goals and objectives and assign responsible parties. Practical reduction programs must be periodically evaluated in relationship to the overall economic benefits and impacts to time and manpower usage. Consider sharing recycling with neighboring facilities. Monitor, measure and report progress.

### 13. Target areas for waste reduction

Areas that should be included are office areas, food and beverage outlets, guest rooms, swimming pool and spa, convention/meeting rooms, housekeeping/laundry, landscaping, maintenance and purchasing.

#### Training & Communication

Staff training is one of the most important keys to making it all work. You have to train current staff and new staff on the overall program. Short frequent refresher training programs are encouraged. Monitoring is necessary and receiving feed back from personnel is also important to find out what is working and what is not. Quality education and clear communication will result in higher participation.

1. **Appoint a person responsible for separating waste for recycling**

For general waste disposal, appoint a responsible person to make sure items are separated as they go into dumpsters or main collection containers. This monitoring will help with a load not being rejected due to contamination and incurring a higher disposal cost. It has been demonstrated that the closer the waste generation was monitored, the less the hotels paid for disposal.

2. **Provide opportunities for regular feedback**

Communication is the key and regular feedback will be necessary to keep a program going. Consider using a newsletter which can get information out to more than one employee at a time. Include how much and what materials are being recovered as well as information on any new efforts to reduce waste further.

3. **Determine collection areas**

Many hotels have implemented recycling programs, which include collection in the guest room as well as containers in the pool area, lobby, meeting rooms, and other common areas.

4. **Communicate to your guests**

Communication is the key for a successful guest recycling program. Consider using signage, letters in the room information guides, hotel TV channel, posters, key packets, receipts, etc. to get information out to the guests.

#### Electronic Waste (E-Waste)

E-Waste is waste generated from electronic equipment. New technology is making E-waste the fastest growing waste stream in the country. Most items that we have today will be obsolete in three to five years. Some of the items that fall in to this category are land-line telephones, PDAs, cellular phones, computers, keyboards, monitors, hand-held video games, calculators, TVs, VCRs, DVD players, tape recording machines,

cameras, video cameras, two-way radios, fax machines, copiers and printers. The following are opportunities and methods for reducing your e-waste:

**1. Develop a waste reduction plan for electronics**

Electronics are potentially recyclable but contain lead, which can be harmful to the environment if disposed of improperly. All motels and hotels have at least one television in each guest room and many have two. There are additional televisions in lobbies, guest and employee lounges, laundry rooms, bars, restaurants and in-house gyms. Many of the facilities lease their televisions and phone systems that may be connected to providing the cable, satellite service or internet service. This option takes the burden from the hotel and shifts it back to the leasing company. The leasing company recycles these items to other properties or they are sold at the end of the lease (three to five years). Beach hotels may have to replace televisions more often because the salt air tends to corrode the internal components.

**2. Recycle or donate used electronics**

Most electronics that are placed with the garbage are collected by local junkmen before the collector arrives. Many properties have a system to sell items to their own employees or local residents. Others donate to local charities.

**3. Find out about e-waste recycling opportunities in your area**

Several stores have recycling opportunities for cell phones. Many counties and cities also have electronic recycling days for their communities. For large quantity recycling, contact your local recycling coordinator to find out what is being done in your area.

For more information on local recycling opportunities, contact your county's recycling coordinator. Information for your county's recycling coordinator can be found at:

[http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/categories/recycling/pages/contact\\_counties.htm](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/categories/recycling/pages/contact_counties.htm)

Or contact Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Recycling Program at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/categories/recycling/pages/recyclingstaff.htm>