

"GRADE SPECIFIC COLLECTION PROGRAMS"

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ABSTRACT

Prior to developing collection programs for various grades of recovered paper (recyclables) many elements need to be considered.

First and most important, the availability of an end market for the grades of recovered material collected needs to be verified. Next, an audit needs to be conducted to determine whether or not a viable collection program can be implemented. Elements of such an audit would include quantity of material generated, collection method to be utilized, quality requirements, role of dealer/processor and any special transportation requirements needed to ship to the end market.

DISCUSSION

Most states have now passed comprehensive solid waste management legislation which calls for reduction of solid waste going into landfills through reduction or recycling goals. The primary reason for this type of legislation is not only the high cost of handling solid waste, but also the growing lack of landfill space. For most of the local governments implementing this legislation, they have found that in addition to reduction/reuse efforts, composting operations and residential recycling, commercial recycling must also be established in order to reach their goals.

While the collection process is the obvious first step in recycling, the true first step and MOST IMPORTANT is to make sure a market is available for the recovered materials (recyclables) that are going to be collected in any recycling program -- residential or commercial.

Securing a Recycling Dealer-Processor/Vendor

Residential collections programs abound and are fairly easily established since local governments usually utilize existing waste haulers and simply add on recycling services in addition to solid waste collection service. Basic materials collected in the residential programs generally include newspaper (ONP), aluminum/steel cans, glass containers and PETE and HDPE plastics. Collection equipment and sorting/processing equipment are readily available for these materials.

In some instances, a local recycling dealer-processor or a local hauler can and will assist in either the design,

collection, processing, marketing of a recycling program or can possibly offer a complete turn-key operation of all the recycling components. It is important that any business deciding on a recycling company (dealer - processor/vendor) insures that all aspects of their recycling and documentation destruction needs can be met.

Implementing the Recycling Program

Two major factors in the success of a recycling program are management commitment and employee education. Written "Outlines" explaining the purpose and guidelines of the program should be distributed to all employees. One "program monitor or coordinator" may be assigned and may be sufficient in a smaller company; larger companies may need to establish a "Recycling Task Force." Custodial staff and the recycling company should be involved in organization and "kick-off" meetings. Employees should be kept informed of progress and success of recycling programs.

Determination of Materials to be Recycled and Market Specification

An audit of materials generated should be done in order to establish what materials should be collected in a recycling program, whether or not there is an available market for these materials and the market specifications for these materials. A recycling company or hauler should be able to assist a company in establishing this criteria. Purchase requisitions/orders can be reviewed to give an approximate amount of tonnage that is generated. Since there are so many paper grades and most need to be kept separate by grade it is often recommended only one to three grades be collected. Again, a basic knowledge of paper grades, market specifications, and understanding contaminants to each grade is extremely important.

Separating Materials for Collection

The most efficient method of extracting recyclables is to separate the materials where they are generated. Locating recycling containers either desk-side or near the work station usually work best. Custodial staff can then "service" the recycling containers and remove the materials to a "designated" storage area. Locating recycling equipment in close proximity to the points where material is generated minimizes handling and minimizes the likelihood of contaminants. When allocating space for a storage area keep in mind: space limitations, local codes, equipment needs, easy access for recycling company to service unless the company plans to deliver directly to recycling company.

Evaluating Program Success and Keeping Program Alive

For continued success of a recycling program communication in the form of posters or memos is important. Information such as tons of material recycled, landfill space and energy saved can be included in these communication vehicles. Incentives or other forms of recognition can be given to employees and/or departments.

SUMMARY

The following steps need to be implemented prior to developing any grade specific collection program:

1. Secure a recycling company (dealer-processor or hauler)
2. Establish availability of an end market for materials collected
3. Decide on materials to be collected and collection method to be used
4. Understand grades, market specifications and contaminants
5. Educate and employ continual follow-up of everyone involved