



# Multi-Family Recycling Guidelines for Multi-Family Property Owners and Managers



City of San Antonio - Solid Waste Management Department

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**SWMD**  
CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
**SOLID WASTE  
MANAGEMENT**

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# Introduction

## Message to Property Managers

### **Dear Multi-Family Property Owners and Managers,**

If you are reading this pamphlet, you are well on your way towards helping the City of San Antonio recycle, dispose of less waste, and protect the environment!

In June 2010, City Council adopted the 2020 Recycling and Resource Recovery Plan, which establishes a set of key components for increasing recycling and waste diversion over the next ten years in the City of San Antonio.

Were you aware that the City currently provides weekly curbside recycling services to 338,000 residential homes? However, approximately 30% of San Antonio residents live in apartment complexes that do not receive recycling collection services.

In order to increase recycling and waste diversion in the City of San Antonio, City Council directed the Solid Waste Management Department (SWMD) to develop a policy to ensure City of San Antonio residents living in apartment complexes also have access to convenient recycling services. Consequently, on December 9, 2010, City Council passed policy that requires all apartment complexes in the City of San Antonio to provide recycling to their occupants.

The City is asking you to **MAKE THE PLEDGE** to recycle by providing your occupants with convenient access to recycling opportunities.

This guide has been designed to assist you, the property owner or manager, in implementing a recycling program consistent with the requirements outlined in the City's Multi-Family Recycling Ordinance.

Use this guide as a reference tool to meet program requirements, and remember that the City's Solid Waste Management Department can help with any question or concerns.

# Why Recycle?

Did you know that more than 50% of the national waste stream is made up of paper, plastics, metals, and glass — all easily recyclable materials!

Over the last ten years, City of San Antonio single-family homes generated about 8.6 to 9.2 pounds of waste per day. During FY 2010, SWMD collected approximately 557,927 tons of material from single-family residences. Of those materials collected in FY 2010:

- 81% or 452,339 tons of material collected were not recycled and sent to an area landfill.
- 13% or 70,013 tons of material were collected at the curbside, recycled, and sent to the City's contracted recycling processor.
- 6% or 35,507 tons of material collected were recycled by the City's household hazardous waste collection program and brush recycling center.

Additionally, there is a large segment of the San Antonio population that dwells in multi-family properties.

While single-family homes strive to increase recycling efforts throughout San Antonio, the majority of multi-family properties do not provide onsite recycling opportunities. For this reason, the City of San Antonio developed a flexible policy that requires all multi-family properties to provide their occupants with convenient recycling opportunities.



# Benefits of Recycling

By recycling rather than discarding waste, materials are diverted from landfills. Although burying waste in landfills has been a common practice for many years, landfilling is not a sustainable solution. With large amounts of the City's waste ending up in landfills, available landfill space is diminishing, and as space availability becomes limited, disposal costs will continue to rise.

Moreover, when these materials are disposed of in a landfill, they cannot be easily recovered, recycled, and reused; therefore, they are no longer reusable resources.

By implementing a recycling program, reusable resources are recovered rather than buried in a landfill. By implementing recycling programs, multi-family properties will have a positive local and global impact both environmentally and economically.

## Environmental Benefits

- **Conservation of raw resources** - *Creating products from recycled material helps reduce the consumption of natural resources.*
- **Pollution reduction** - *In most cases, mining and harvesting of raw material produces more pollution from manufacturing than recovering and recycling used material.*
- **Less damage to biological habitats and water quality** - *In most cases, mining and harvesting of raw material interrupts and harms biological habitats and water quality.*
- **Reduction of by-products that form in landfills** - *Less use of landfills will reduce the formation of by-products, such as methane or leachate, that can form in landfills and can potentially contaminate groundwater and harm human and animal habitats.*

## Economic Benefits

- **Decrease in waste disposal costs** - *By depending less on landfills, the rising costs of solid waste disposal at landfills can potentially be avoided. With a higher number of occupants recycling, less trash is produced requiring fewer waste receptacles and a lower frequency of collection. This may potentially result in a decrease in waste disposal costs, which then reduces or may possibly offset the costs of a recycling program. In some cases the overall cost could decrease.*
- **Cost effective** - *It is much more cost effective to process recycled material than it is to harvest raw resources.*

# Recycling Plan

## Recycling Plan Timeline

Property owners or managers must fill out and submit the “Multi-Family Recycling Plan for Property Owners and Managers: Registration Form” to be approved by the Solid Waste Management Department (SWMD). Recycling services must start by the dates specified in the table below.

**Table 1: Recycling Plan and Program Implementation Timeline**

Property Size	Submit Plan By	Implement Plan By
300+ dwelling units	April 1, 2011	July 1, 2011
200-299 dwelling units	July 1, 2011	October 1, 2011
100-199 dwelling units	October 1, 2011	January 1, 2012
3-99 dwelling units	January 1, 2012	April 1, 2012

## Small Multi-Family Properties

Owners or managers of multi-family properties with eight (8) or less units may apply to receive and pay for the City’s curbside recycling and garbage service.

## New Multi-Family Properties

Owners or managers of new multi-family properties occupied after their respective recycling plan due date or after April 1, 2012 must submit a recycling plan within thirty (30) days from having received a Certificate of Occupancy.



## **Unaccepted Multi-Family Recycling Plans**

If the recycling plan is denied, the owner or manager of the property has thirty (30) days from notification of the denial to submit a revised plan for approval. A rejected plan will not constitute an acceptable excuse to delay recycling program implementation by the date prescribed in Table 1.

## **Resubmitting Plan for Review**

Owners or managers of multi-family properties must resubmit a recycling plan for review when the multi-family property has a change in property ownership or management, when there is a change in recycling collector services, or when the method of collection has changed (i.e., change in type of collection container).

## **Extensions**

Existing multi-family properties unable to provide on-site recycling to occupants by the required date (see Table 1 on previous page) must provide the Solid Waste Management Department with valid justification for non-compliance and must provide legitimate evidence to validate the request for an extension.

Extensions will be provided by the Director or his designee to the property owner or manager in writing. If an application for extension is denied, SWMD will notify the applicant in writing of the reasons for the denial.

# Getting Started

## Steps for Multi-Family Property Owners and Managers

### Step 1

*Begin by contacting the current waste hauler and find out if they offer recycling collection services to multi-family properties. If the current hauler does not provide recycling collection services, contact other haulers in the area to obtain information about available services. Skip this step if you would rather meet with Solid Waste staff before conducting this step.*

### Step 2

*Visit the Solid Waste Management website at [www.sanantonio.gov/swmd](http://www.sanantonio.gov/swmd) and access the "Multi-Family Recycling Plan: Registration Form".*

### Step 3

*Fill out the form and submit online or print and mail to the department. City staff will contact you within a week from having submitted your form. If you are not contacted by staff within this timeframe, please contact the department.*

### Step 4

*Upon submittal of the Multi-Family Recycling Plan: Registration Form, City staff will contact the multi-family property owners/managers to schedule a meeting in which additional information and educational materials will be provided to the property owner/manager. If the multi-family property owner/manager has contracted with a recycling collector, the City recommends the recycling collector be present during this visit.*

### Step 5

*If the property owner/manager has not yet contracted with a recycling collector, contract with a hauler for the collection of recycling material.*

### Step 6

*City staff will assess Plan. If the Plan is denied by City, the property owner/manager has thirty (30) days from time of denial notification to resubmit the Plan to the department.*

## TIP

*An informative and helpful list of commonly asked questions and answers pertaining to the multi-family recycling plan and implementation can be found at [www.sanantonio.gov/swmd](http://www.sanantonio.gov/swmd). Select Multi-Family Recycling Project.*

# Designing Your Onsite Recycling Program

An effective and well-run onsite recycling program depends heavily on the involvement and expert knowledge of the multi-family property program manager and the efforts of supporting staff members. The Department understands that each multi-family property's onsite recycling program will be managed differently. For that reason, the next few sections have been designed to assist multi-family property owners and managers in considering and planning for the different facets of a multi-family recycling program.

## Identify a Program Leader

The program leader will oversee all program elements. This individual is responsible for leading the implementation of the recycling program, monitoring service from the waste hauler, keeping occupants informed, and providing reporting information as required by SWMD.

The program leader should continually assess the progress of the program in order to identify areas that may need reconfiguring or areas where additional staff support may be needed.

## Enlist Support from Staff

Because there are several components to developing and maintaining a recycling program, enlisting support from other team members is critical to the sustainability and effectiveness of an onsite recycling program.

Staff may need to assist with communicating program details to new and existing occupants, developing informational material, disseminating literature, motivating occupants, and increasing program awareness.



# Contracting with a Recycling Collector

Collection services for recyclable materials can be provided by the current waste hauler, by a separate recycling hauler, or multi-family property owners and managers can opt to self-haul recyclables. Each complex will be responsible for obtaining a contract with a recycling hauler or providing documentation of self-hauling.

## Acquiring Recycling Service from the Current Provider

To get started, contact the current waste hauler and find out if they offer recycling collection to multi-family properties. Investigate how fees will be affected upon requesting a recycling service along with the current trash service.

## Current Provider Does Not Offer Recycling Collection Service

Contact waste hauler service providers in the area. Discuss recycling options and determine the costs associated with obtaining the services. Check with SWMD staff for names of recycling service providers.

## Self-Haul

Multi-family property owners or managers may opt to self-haul recyclable materials to a certified materials recovery facility. Owners or managers of a multi-family property that elect to self-haul recyclable materials will be required to submit an annual report which documents the following:

- Total number of living units served
- Total number of tons of recyclable material collected
- Name and address of the recycling facility to which the recyclable materials collected within the City were delivered for recycling

Self-haulers may opt to submit their annual report through their materials recovery facility.

## TIP

*If your current waste hauler does not provide recycling services, consider acquiring both waste and recycling services from a single-contract upon termination of your current contract.*

# Outreach

An effective multi-family recycling program is one that draws and sustains high levels of participation. Participation is best promoted through regular learning opportunities. Outreach efforts must be continual for multi-family residents due to their high turnover rate. Several methods can be used to encourage occupants to recycle consistently. Some examples are provided below:

- Informative meetings
- Training sessions with small resident groups
- Newsletter, brochures, or flyers
- Door hangers
- Door-to-door outreach
- Promotional items
- Surveys (understand concerns or low participation rates)
- E-mail address for occupants to communicate concerns and questions to property management
- Website
- Contact SWMD Resource Recovery staff
- Encourage occupants to serve as recycling advocates by having them volunteer to communicate recycling information to other occupants



# Education for Staff

Begin planning for the program rollout by educating staff. The more informed staff is, the better they can inform occupants about the program and recycling.

Before instructing staff to commit and execute their roles as conveyors of information and program advocates, make sure every staff member understands the requirements of the program and feels competent to carry out their expected roles.

SWMD's Resource Recovery Team can assist property owners and managers in educating staff about all things relating to recycling free of charge. The Department can provide property staff information through onsite presentations, literature, and are only a phone call away to address any questions or concerns.

For more information or to schedule a training session, please call the Resource Recovery Team at 210-207-6410.



# Education for Residents

Recycling program information and instructions should be provided to all existing occupants at program start and to new occupants upon move-in. This step is extremely important, especially if a mandatory recycling requirement is included on the lease agreement. Additionally, all occupants must be given information and instruction if any change is made to the property's recycling program.

Information should be easy to understand and should clearly explain all aspects of the program.

In general, occupants should be informed about the following topics:

- Basics of the recycling program
- Benefits of recycling
- What materials are accepted and not accepted
- How to prepare recyclables
- Where recycling receptacles are placed throughout the complex
- Where additional information can be located
- Who to contact in case of questions

Educational materials should be posted in common areas such as laundry rooms, mail areas, and the main lobby or leasing office.

Upon request, the Solid Waste Management Department will provide, in printed form or electronic format, educational materials (e.g., posters, introductory letters to occupants, and signage) to multi-family property owners or managers upon submittal and approval of the recycling plan.

# Recycling Containers

## Exterior

Multi-family property owners or managers are responsible for supplying recycling containers of appropriate size and number to accommodate for anticipated recyclables. Containers may be acquired through private contracts with their recycling collector or through other appropriate means.

### Calculating Number of Exterior Recycling Containers

The number of recycling containers should be based on the estimated pounds of recyclable materials that will be generated and recycled by occupants on a weekly basis.

Determine the size and number of recycling containers to be placed throughout the property by using any of the following options:

- Waste haulers may conduct an on-site waste assessment to evaluate the amount of recyclable materials generated and determine the size of containers required, the number of exterior recycling containers needed, and level of service necessary.
- SWMD staff is available to assist property owners and managers in conducting a waste assessment and property inspection to determine the best location for containers.

### Signage

Owners or managers of multi-family properties must provide clear and visible signage on containers indicating the container is for the collection of recyclables only and list the type of recyclable materials accepted.

### Placement of Exterior Recycling Containers

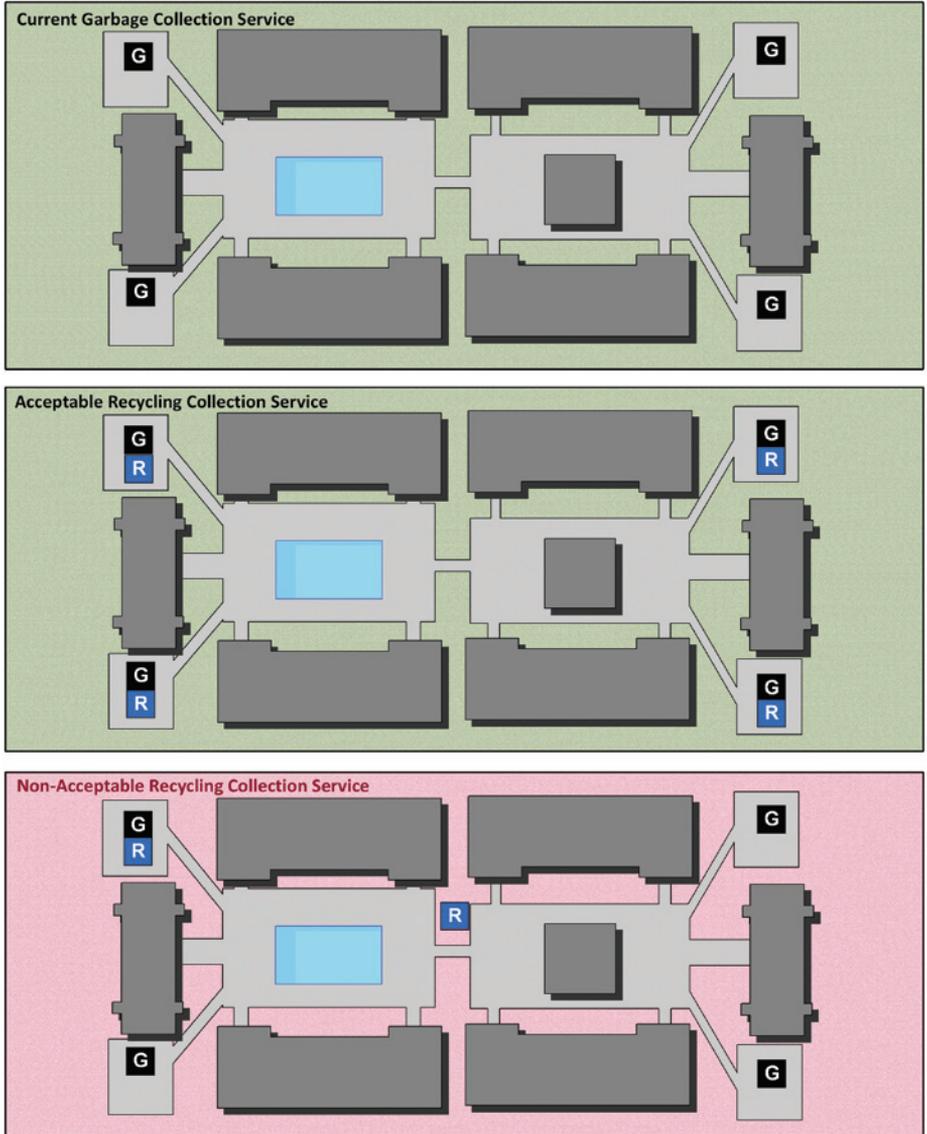
Recycling containers must be placed in a location that will allow for the disposal of recyclable materials to be as convenient as garbage materials; therefore, recycling containers must be placed as close as possible to the garbage containers. A diagram illustrating what is meant by “convenient placement of recycling containers” has been provided on the following page.

### Convenience

It is recommended that recycling containers be placed in close proximity to trash containers to increase convenience to occupants. Recycling containers set far apart from trash containers may increase the likelihood of occupants

disposing of their trash in the recycling containers if the recycling container is closer than the trash container. Make certain that the placement of outdoor containers for recyclable material are in areas that allow for easy, quick, and convenient access.

### Recycling Containers Placement Example



**G** = Garbage Containers    **R** = Recycling Containers

Garbage & recycling containers not necessarily to scale

# Recycling Containers

## Interior

### Interior Recycling Containers

The Department recommends that property owners or managers provide occupants with in-unit containers to store recyclables. If occupants will not be provided with an in-unit container, it is highly suggested that property owners or managers inform their occupants of the various ways recyclables can be stored in their living unit (e.g., bins of various sizes, cloth bags, boxes, laundry nets/bags, baskets, etc.).

If in-unit containers will be provided, remind your occupants that interior recycling containers are the property of the multi-family complex and are to remain in their unit after they have moved out.



# Accepted and Not Accepted Items

Accepted Materials	NOT Accepted Materials
<p>These items should be placed in the recycling containers:</p> <p><b>Paper</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Advertisement circulars</li><li>✓ Carbonless paper</li><li>✓ Cardboard</li><li>✓ Catalogs and magazines</li><li>✓ Dry goods cardboard packaging (remove liners)</li><li>✓ Envelopes (with or without windows)</li><li>✓ Junk mail</li><li>✓ Newspaper (all sections)</li><li>✓ Paper bags</li><li>✓ Paperback books</li><li>✓ Phone books</li><li>✓ Wrapping paper</li></ul> <p><b>Plastics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ All plastic containers with recycling symbol labeled 1 to 7</li><li>✓ Plastic bottles, cups, jars, food trays, tubs, bowls</li></ul> <p><b>Metals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Aluminum drink cans</li><li>✓ Steel or tin food cans and lids</li><li>✓ Aerosol cans (empty and remove nozzle)</li></ul> <p><b>Glass</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Bottles (all colors)</li><li>✓ Jars (all colors)</li></ul>	<p>These items should <u>NOT</u> be placed in recycling containers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⊗ Household trash</li><li>⊗ Aluminum foil</li><li>⊗ Appliances</li><li>⊗ Auto glass</li><li>⊗ Batteries</li><li>⊗ Clothes</li><li>⊗ Clothes hangers</li><li>⊗ Dead animals</li><li>⊗ Drink boxes and straws</li><li>⊗ Garden hoses</li><li>⊗ Grass clippings and bagged leaves</li><li>⊗ Hard cover books</li><li>⊗ Light bulbs</li><li>⊗ Paper milk and juice cartons</li><li>⊗ Plastic bags</li><li>⊗ Plastic containers that held hazardous materials such as motor oil, paint, pesticide or weed killer</li><li>⊗ Plastic utensils</li><li>⊗ Propane tanks</li><li>⊗ Styrofoam® formed packing or peanuts</li><li>⊗ Toys</li><li>⊗ Wax coated paper and food containers</li></ul> <p><i>Placing non-recyclable material in the recycling container contaminates all recyclables rendering them non-recyclable.</i></p>

# Property Alterations

If structural alterations will be made to the property to make accommodations for the recycling containers, recycling areas, or recycling enclosures, visit with the City of San Antonio's Planning and Development Services Department to learn about the local building and zoning codes that apply. It is critical to follow this step to ensure that any changes are in accordance with City applicable codes.

**Planning and Development Services Department**  
**1901 South Alamo Street**  
**San Antonio, TX 78204**  
**(210) 207-1111**

## Reduction of Parking Requirement

Section 1 (b)(7) of the City of San Antonio Multi-Family Recycling Ordinance allows property owners or managers to reduce the number of parking spaces in order to provide adequate space for recycling container storage areas. In such cases the recycling container storage area shall be screened in accordance with §35-511 (c) of the City's Municipal Code.



# Sample Lease Addendum

To encourage recycling efforts and discourage noncompliant recycling behaviors, landlords may consider including a recycling requirement in new lease agreements. A suggested lease addendum for current occupants might include:

## **ADDITIONAL TERMS OF LEASE**

This addendum states the addition of the following terms and conditions to be incorporated into the original lease agreement.

Recycling Collection:

- I. Program Notification. [ENTER NAME OF PROPERTY] has instituted a recycling collection service. New and existing occupants are informed of the program availability as well as details of program.
- II. Recycling Interior and Exterior Containers. Interior containers will be provided to occupants upon moving in and are provided to all existing residents. Interior containers remain the property of [ENTER NAME OF PROPERTY] after the tenant has moved. Exterior collection containers for recyclable materials are located throughout the property. A map of container location and list of recyclable materials are provided to occupants upon move in and are also provided to all existing occupants.

This addendum is effective starting (MM/DD/YYYY) \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_.

## **TENANT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I have been notified of [ENTER NAME OF PROPERTY] recycling program.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (initial here)

I have been provided with a list of accepted and not accepted items and have been instructed on where recycling containers are located throughout the property. \_\_\_\_\_ (initial here)

