

Business Recycling Requirements Fact Sheet

History

For the last eight years, Metro and local governments have provided a free education and technical assistance program called Recycle at Work. Through the Recycle at Work program, Metro and local jurisdictions send recycling specialists to businesses to help them with recycling efforts. Clear progress has been made as a result of this program, but businesses still dispose of more than 100,000 tons of recyclable paper and containers annually.

Metro explored options for increasing business recycling by convening public and private work groups and through stakeholder outreach conducted from 2003 to 2006. More than 1,000 people provided advice on approaches to increase business recycling. The Metro Council, after considering the costs and benefits of potential approaches, they directed staff to develop a required business recycling program.

Between February and May 2008, Metro met with local business groups and elected officials for their input on a possible business recycling requirement. The summary of the stakeholder input is provided in the report below. The program and stakeholder feedback was presented to the Metro Policy Advisory Committee and the Solid Waste Advisory Committee between May and July 2008. Both advisory committees voted in favor of adopting the program. Metro Council formally adopted the Business Recycling Requirements in September 2008.

The new program

The new program, Business Recycling Requirements, requires local businesses to recycle all types of paper and certain containers such as plastic bottles, aluminum cans and glass. Because most businesses already recycle, this requirement simply formalizes such practices. For those businesses that do not currently recycle, the requirement asks that they recycle the same items residents already recycle at home. And to help businesses recycle, local governments will continue providing education and technical assistance through the Recycle at Work program. All local governments in the region are responsible for adopting the recycling requirements by Feb. 27, 2009.

How does a business comply?

Generally, a business or property manager would comply with the recycling requirements by doing the following:

1. Separating their paper, cardboard and containers (aluminum cans, plastic bottles and glass) for recycling.
2. Ensuring there are containers for collection of these recyclables.
3. Posting signs at collection areas, indicating which materials should be recycled.

Metro will collaborate with local governments to identify challenges and opportunities for improvement in complying with the Business Recycling Requirements, rather than focus on a penalty approach. To help businesses recycle, local governments will continue providing education and technical assistance through the [Recycle at Work](#) program.

Why should businesses be required to recycle paper and containers?

While many businesses already recycle, an estimated 14 percent recycle nothing or cardboard only. As a result, businesses dispose of more than 100,000 tons of trash that could otherwise be recycled.

Metro's business recycling requirements are expected to divert at least 80,000 tons of that material from the landfill to recycling, which would result in an estimated \$10.22 million in net environmental benefits. For example, recycling 80,000 tons of paper and containers each year will result in greenhouse gas emission reductions equivalent to not driving nearly 42,000 cars for one year.

The increase in paper recycling would also support Oregon paper mills. Currently, paper collected in the Metro region provides less than 11 percent of total paper mill needs; the rest of the paper must be shipped in from outside our region.

How will increased recycling impact businesses?

For most businesses, the program would only require employees to recycle additional items in current recycling containers. Some businesses may require additional recycling containers.

Is there assistance available to businesses?

Recycle At Work provides free education and assistance to help businesses set up or improve their recycling programs. Get help by visiting www.recycleatwork.org or call (503) 234-3000.

Are any businesses exempt from this requirement?

Metro is proposing to exempt some local governments from the business recycling requirement. The original ordinance requires local businesses to recycle the same items residents already recycle at home. A proposed amendment would exempt local jurisdictions with fewer than 25 businesses and fewer than 100 people employed by those businesses. The amendment will relieve the administrative burden of enacting an ordinance for small cities that have very few businesses. The businesses in these communities will continue to have access to commercial recycling collection services.

In accordance with Metro Code 5.10.080(c), Metro's Chief Operating Officer intends to amend Metro Solid Waste Administrative Procedures for the Business Recycling Requirement by adding the following provision:

2.3.2 A local government is exempted from the Business Recycling Requirement if there are fewer than 25 businesses and fewer than 100 individuals employed by businesses within the government's jurisdiction. Business and employee counts will be determined from State of Oregon employment data. Business is defined in section 5.10.010(b) of the Metro Code.

Comments on the proposed amendment are due to Metro by 5 p.m. on Monday, October 26, 2009. They should be sent via email to Jennifer.erickson@oregonmetro.gov or by mail to Jennifer Erickson, Metro, 600 NE Grand Avenue, Portland, OR 97232.