Recycling for a greener future

Circular economy and plans for a greener future

As the urgency of climate change becomes apparent, many governments and governing bodies are implementing action plans to combat the harmful effects of greenhouse gases on the planet.

Setting their sights on creating circular economies, aiming to extend the life cycle of materials by encouraging recycling and repurposing, Europe, Australia, Canada, and many others build on their plans for a more sustainable future.*

With an ambition to minimise waste, retain, recover and reprocess materials, achieve carbon neutrality and encourage sustainability, their ambitious plans will implement multiple strategies to aid the transitions from linear economies.*

The importance of recycling

Recycling, at any level, household or in the workplace, has a positive impact on the planet and this process of separating waste into streams is important for numerous reasons.

Raw Materials

Recycling and repurposing materials reduces the demand for raw materials and resources. In so doing, it protects natural habitats by eliminating the need to mine new resources. Reducing the extraction of raw materials also lowers energy emissions and pollutions.

Landfill

Landfills produce a significant amount of greenhouse gases. In contrast to sending items to landfills, recycling materials reduces greenhouse gas emissions and aids the fight against climate change.

Energy

With waste management responsible for 3.32% of the total emissions in Europe and landfills accounting for 20% of Canada's national methane emissions, recycling and repurposing materials to make new products uses considerably less energy than producing new products from raw materials.*

Financial

By saving energy, recycling has monetary benefits for the economy.

Advantages of recycling for workplaces and businesses

We know how recycling is important for the planet, but what are the advantages of introducing or improving a recycling programme for businesses and organisations?

Reduces costs

By recycling, a workplace can lower costs by reducing landfill waste, thus lowering the amount of landfill tax payable. Improved efficiency can also present possible cost decreases.

Increases brand image

With increasing social consciousness, implementing schemes to promote and encourage environmental responsibility, such as workplace recycling programmes and other green initiatives, can enhance company standing, heighten reputation and attract customers.

Saves energy and protects the environment

Recycling lessens the demand for raw materials, which, in turn, protects the environment by decreasing the need to mine and refine natural resources. It also helps lower a workplace's carbon footprint, which aids in achieving company environmental targets and, by demonstrating corporate social responsibility, may attract customers.

Recycling myths and faqs

Misinformation and misunderstanding surrounding recycling can create confusion when implementing or improving a recycling programme, but how true are recycling myths, and what are the answers to those frequently asked questions?

Where does the waste go?

As each waste facility has differing recycling capabilities, where the waste goes will depend on the location of the workplace and the type of waste collected.

It also depends on which waste collection company a business or workplace employs, as many have their own recycling facilities for certain materials.

Broadly, each waste stream will transfer to facilities capable of recycling those materials before they are processed and ready to create other products.

Doesn't it all end up in a landfill anyway?

Recyclable waste goes to recycling centres for processing or, in the case of mixed recycling, to other facilities for further sorting.

The only instance recyclable materials may end up in landfills is if cross-contamination occurs—either by disposing of non-recyclable waste in the recycling container or disposing of non-recyclable food waste.

If cross-contamination occurs, all the materials in the container would be considered contaminated, and the materials would revert to a landfill rather than a recycling facility. Segregation at the source is an important method to prevent cross-contamination as it filters waste into separate recyclable waste streams and, for non-recyclable materials, general waste containers.

Why should I recycle?

Does it really make a difference to global warming?

Recycling, among other strategies, plays a big role in lowering the harmful effects of global warming.

As climate experts reveal the negative implications of global warming exceeding 1.5 degrees, governments and organisations are implementing methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

By reducing the demand for natural materials, eliminating the need to mine resources, and saving energy, recycling offers a sustainable and cost-effective alternative to landfill waste. It also emits less CO2 than the processes required for residual waste.

What can I recycle? – The recycling index

Not sure what is recyclable and what isn't?

You're not alone.

Knowing what can go in a recycling bin is a fundamental part of correctly segregating waste.

For a business or workplace, a waste contractor can provide a list of waste collection services available.

Aerosols

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

Batteries

Yes. Batteries are recyclable. Check with your waste disposal contractor. Due to their classification as hazardous waste, batteries are often collected separately from other recyclable materials and MUST NOT be placed in the general waste as they can cause fires.

Books

No. Books aren't recyclable now due to the binding glue used. Consider donating or starting a book swapping initiative.

Cans

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

Cardboard

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

Carpet

Yes. Consider specialist carpet recycling firms or check with your local waste disposal contractor.

Carrier Bags

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

Clothes and Textiles

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

E-waste

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

Food

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

Food and Drink Cartons

Many food and drinks cartons are recyclable. However, this varies depending on location, so check individual packaging.

Glass

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

Hazardous Materials

Some hazardous materials are recyclable. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

Lightbulbs

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

Paper

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

Plastic

Some plastics are recyclable, but not all. It is always best to check with your waste disposal contractor.

PPE

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

Printer Ink Cartridges

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

Soft Plastics

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

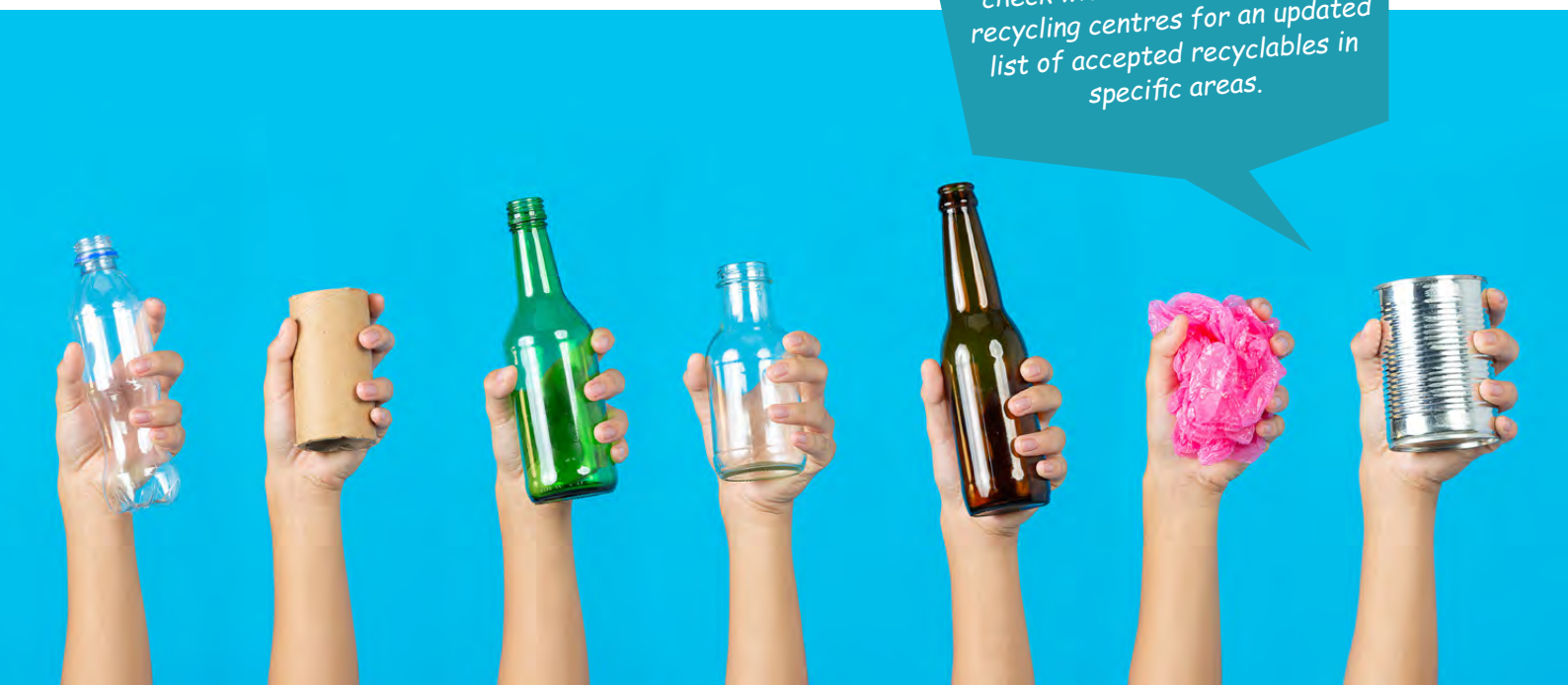
Tyres

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

Wood

Yes. Check with your waste disposal contractor.

As facilities differ, always check with local collectors and recycling centres for an updated list of accepted recyclables in specific areas.



Common workplace waste streams

As the digital age continues to expand, e-waste is rapidly becoming the fast-growing waste stream globally.* Alongside this, recycling stream staples, such as paper, cans, plastics and glass, remain a frequent choice for workplace waste programmes.

Niche workplace waste streams

Whether you're an office with a high consumption of coffee pods and cups, a school with a constant use of pens, a healthcare facility with a large supply of PPE or anything in between, for many workplaces and businesses, adapting a recycling container to collect niche waste streams is more suitable.

- **Nespresso Coffee Pods**
- **Used Pens**
- **Plastic Bottle Tops**
- **PPE**
- **Batteries**
- **Crisp Packets**