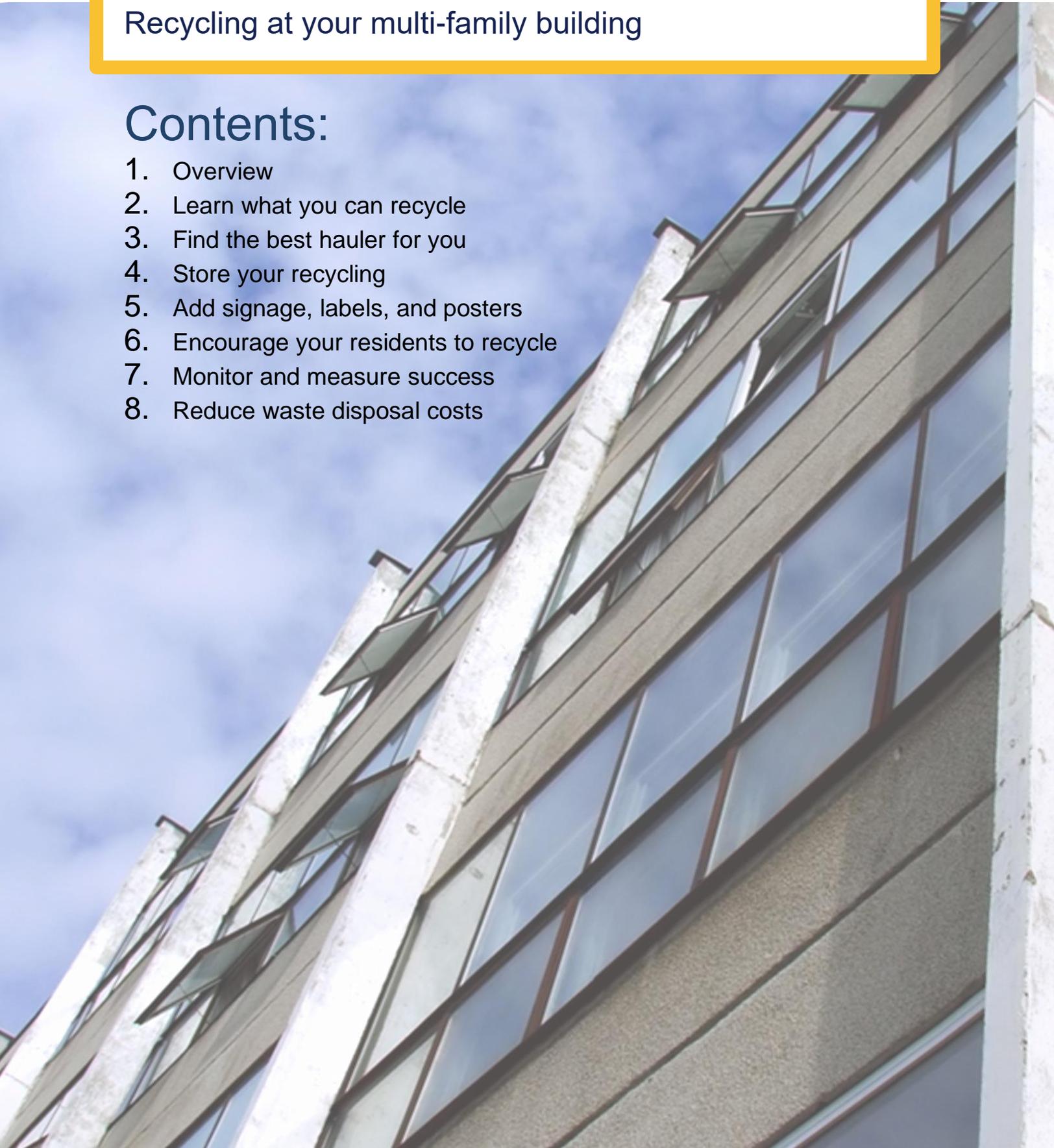


How-to Guide

Recycling at your multi-family building

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1. Overview

In the RDOS, multi-family building complexes are responsible for providing an on-site recycling program for their residents. This includes:

- Providing on-site storage for recyclables
- Having enough storage to hold all of your complex's recycling
- Accepting all materials that are required by regional bylaws
- Arranging for the material to be collected for recycling

Additionally, it is strongly recommended to provide educational materials to residents so they can use the recycling program effectively.

What is “multi-family” housing?

Any complex with five or more residential units on a single parcel of land.

This can include:

- Apartments
- Condos
- Townhouses
- Mobile home parks
- Housing co-operatives
- Developments serviced by private roads

Most multi-family buildings in the RDOS are already recycling, but some are not yet. This How-to Guide is intended to help those who are already recycling to enhance their current recycling programs, and to help those who are not yet recycling to start an effective recycling program.

This How-to Guide will walk you through three important steps to ensure your multi-family recycling program is successful: who will collect your recyclables, what materials you accept, and where and how to store your recyclables. Following the steps in this guide will help you to be compliant with local bylaws.

2. Learn what you can recycle

Understand what materials your program must accept to be compliant with regional bylaws.

Start by finding your municipal or regional recycling guidelines by calling your municipality or visiting their website.

According to regional bylaws, the following materials must be recycled or disposed safely (not put in the garbage):

<p>Mixed paper</p> 	<p>Cardboard & Boxboard</p> 	<p>Plastic containers</p> 
<p>Food cans and foil</p> 	<p>Paper cups</p> 	<p>Drink cartons</p> 
<p>Frozen Food Packaging</p> 	<p>Hazardous materials</p> 	<p>Any material covered under an EPR program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beverage Containers ▪ Electronics and Electrical ▪ Lead-Acid Batteries ▪ Packaging and Printed Paper ▪ Paints Solvents, Pesticides & Gasoline ▪ Pharmaceuticals ▪ Tires ▪ Used Oil & Antifreeze
<p>And more! See regional solid waste bylaws for full list</p>		

Ensure that recycled materials are kept clean and uncontaminated, otherwise the likelihood that they will actually be recycled will be reduced.

4. Store your recycling

Decide where and how to store recyclables (indoors and outdoors)

You will need to find an on-site location to store your complex's recyclables. The more convenient the location, the more likely that your residents will use it. Aim to make sure that recycling is easy and accessible for all residents. Keep your containers in good condition and ensure there are enough that they are not overflowing between collection days.

There is a wide range of building layouts, so the look of this space will vary between different buildings and complexes. Here are a few ideas:

- If you currently have multiple garbage containers, consider switching out one or more for recycling containers.
- If you have one garbage container but a little extra space in your garbage area, you may be able to set up some smaller bins to collect recyclables.
- If you have a large waste container you could downsize to create space for a recycling bin.
- Recycling storage doesn't have to be all in one place, although it is highly recommended. It is okay to have several smaller storage areas such as one on each floor of the building, in each building in the complex, or even in each unit. However, you'll greatly reduce contamination if all options are available in each storage location.
- As a last resort, if two neighbouring buildings agree to work together, one could use their garbage enclosure for recyclables and the other for garbage. All residents would need to be able to easily access both areas. Be careful with this option as it is less convenient for residents and they may get confused.



Indoors:

- Be safe and follow fire codes. Don't block hallways, stairwells, doorways, or fire exits. Do not store excessive amounts of recycling or use utility/service rooms for storage.
- Position recycling points as close to the source of waste as possible e.g. place a paper recycling bin next to the mail room.
- Put recycling and garbage bins next to each other so that no extra effort is required to recycle.
- Note that some recycling haulers are requesting source separation of materials instead of accepting recycling that is mixed together. Check with your hauler for sorting guidelines. Keep recycling clean and uncontaminated to ensure it ends up being recycled!

Don't allow "stand-alone" garbage bins. A garbage bin should always be accompanied by a recycling bin at the very least, and ideally all waste streams diverted at your building.

Outdoors:

- Place bins in a secure area, and not under eaves or carports or too close to your building (in case of fire).
- Schedule regular pick-up or call for pickup when the bins are full.
- Ensure your recycling bins do not pose a hazard to users or impede traffic flow in your parking area.

5. Add signage, labels, and posters

Label recycling points to make recycling easy and convenient.

- It is very important to label recycling points clearly, so that everyone knows where they are and what should go in them.
- Use the materials provided in this toolkit to support your recycling program, including signage and colour schemes.
- You can download and print the signs in the toolkit for free (there is no copyright), or you can make your own following the guidelines for [Signage & Colour Scheme Best Practices](#)

Recycling Sign Examples – Using icons (left) and photographs (right)



Click image to return to website and download

6. Encourage your residents to recycle

Make your recycling area easy for residents to use

- Place bins in convenient areas for your residents. Work with your recycling provider to find an area that is close to the dwelling units or near a common area where residents frequently travel.
- If the waste and recycling bins are not located in the same area, place a waste container next to the recycling bins. This helps reduce contamination as residents have an opportunity to make proper disposal choices.
- Make the recycling area prominent and visible. Make sure residents can recognize the recycling area at a distance.
- Ensure the area is well lit and tidy.
- Use similar types of bins for storing recyclables. Consistency between the bins reduces confusion about where recyclables belong.
- If applicable, use different coloured bins for different recycling streams.

Tell your residents about the recycling program

- Provide each unit with a recycling information package that explains the following:
 - What items can be recycled
 - How the items should be prepared and sorted
 - Where the recycling bins are located
 - How to get rid of common items (e.g. furniture, electronics, motor oil, household chemicals) not accepted in your regular collection
 - Why it is important to recycle
- Post a copy of the information package in a common area.
 - Download the appropriate [Recycling Program Letter example](#):
 - [For new recycling programs](#)
 - [For enhanced or improved recycling programs](#)
 - Download the [Recycling Guide for Residents example](#)
 - Download the [Quick Reference Recycling Guide 1-pager](#)
- Provide this information periodically throughout the year to residents as a reminder.
- Hold an optional training session that residents can sign up for. Invite your hauler to participate in the session.

Recycling Guide for Residents & Quick Reference Recycling Guide



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Encourage new residents to recycle

- Provide new residents with the recycling information package.
- Offer a move-in tour to walk them through your collection areas and show them how your collection system works.
- Consider giving residents a reusable tote bag or small recycling container to make recycling more convenient and easy to do.

Train your on-site staff about your program

- If you have on-site staff such as maintenance staff or a property manager, ensure they are knowledgeable about the recycling program so they can help answer questions from residents and point out problems.

Key information to pass along to on-site staff may include:

- Where recycling bins are located
- What can and cannot be recycled
- How residents should prepare materials for recycling
- How to resolve common problems
- Contact details for your recycling provider (hauler)
- Where to get more information

7. Monitor and measure progress

- Visit your recycling area regularly to identify any issues that need to be addressed.
 - Look for contamination in the recycling bins and identify common items that are unacceptable.
 - Educate residents about these common mistakes with signage in the recycling area.
 - Check that the signs and bin labels are easy to read. Replace signage/labels that are damaged or ripped.
 - Check that the recycling area is clean and tidy. Clear out any obstacles that make it difficult to access the recycling bins.
- Three months into your new or enhanced recycling program, check in to see what's really ending up in each waste stream at your building.
 - **Option 1:** Do a quick and simple visual assessment.
 - **Option 2:** Conduct a waste audit yourself.
 - **Option 3:** Hire a third party to conduct a waste audit for you.

- Use the results to focus your efforts on improving even further.
- Don't let your efforts go to waste (pun intended!). Schedule a regular time, such as monthly or quarterly, to check in on your waste progress.

Looking for help with your **Waste Audit**? Contact GreenStep Solutions to learn more and get a quote today!

1-800-469-7830
info@greenstep.ca

- Ask for feedback from your recycling hauler on how the recycling program is going.
 - Feedback might include: tonnes recycled, comments on contamination, damage to bins, and reasons for missed collection.
 - Feedback to residents will further support recycling in your building.
 - Ask your hauler to offer guidance and support. They may also offer additional resource materials that can be given to residents.

8. Reduce waste disposal costs

- Reduce waste
 - Educate your residents further on how to reduce and aim to eliminate single-use disposable items in their homes.
 - Repair items and equipment instead of disposing.
 - Check in with residents for their ideas on how to reduce waste further. Share these ideas with all residents.
 - Hold a swap event, where residents can get rid of old items and find new treasures! All items swapped must be clean, in good working order. Broken items should be discarded. Items left over can be taken to a charity shop.



- Recycle more
 - Explore the [Extended Producer Responsibility Programs](#) available in your region.
 - Encourage your residents to [find the nearest Recycle BC depot](#) to recycle some items not accepted in your building's recycling program.
 - Use the [RCBC Recyclepedia](#) to learn where to recycle over 120 different items.
 - Visit the [RDOS Curbside Garbage & Recycling page](#) to search for what goes where in the region.
 - Hold a recycling drive for a particular material, in collaboration with a local charity.
- “Right-size” your garbage and recycling bins. Use your recycling program to its full potential by keeping recyclables out of the garbage, and reduce unnecessary pick-ups.
 - Download the guide: [Are your waste bins the right size?](#)
- Reduce illegal dumping
 - Store your containers inside the building or in an enclosure.
 - Lock containers stored outside between collections.
 - Store containers in well-lit areas close to your building.
 - Talk to your hauler about further options they may have.