

# PRO P **FACT** Sheet

## Elementary/High School Recycling

Recycling is challenging in any institutional setting. This can be especially true in elementary and high school settings, where many different areas need recycling bins. Recyclables are generated in classrooms, offices, libraries, athletic facilities and cafeterias. This fact sheet is designed to help a school establish or expand its recycling program.



### **Classrooms**

There are dozens of classrooms occupied at all times during the average school day. Each classroom should have a clearly marked recycling bin for classroom generated paper. Due to the vast array of paper generated in the classroom, a "Do's and Don'ts" poster should be displayed next to the recycling bin. The poster should clearly indicate what paper is allowable in the recycling bin and what should be discarded as waste.

Designate a specific classroom to be in charge of collecting and emptying the recycling bins into the outdoor container. This responsibility could change during the school year so that every student will share in the duty. If this is not practical, work with the custodial staff to take care of collection logistics.



Students must constantly be reminded how important recycling is. A great time to reinforce recycling is Earth Day (April 22nd) or America Recycles Day (November 15th).

Contact your local recycling agency to see if they offer free recycling presentations targeted toward students.

### **Offices**

Each office should have a paper recycling container next to each trash can and copy machine. Containers, boxes or stack trays should be within convenient reach of each desk. These boxes should be clearly marked with the recycling symbol and paper image. While many may not take the time to read labels on containers, most will take notice of prominently displayed images.

Once the initial novelty has worn off, a renewed education effort should be aimed directly at faculty and staff. This could consist of periodic reminders or special programs. Take advantage of Earth Day or America Recycles Day to reinforce the recycling message.



Recycling bins for cans and plastic bottles should also be available for office workers. Always make sure recyclables are rinsed and lids are removed before placing them in the bin. Every office is different, but it is important to place recycling bins in convenient, high traffic locations.

## **Library**

Though the library may follow many of the same procedures as classrooms and offices, there are several unique situations that may need to be addressed. Libraries are used by large numbers of students that produce high grade office paper both from their own notes as well as from copy machines.



Paper recycling containers with slotted openings should be placed in convenient spots throughout the library, especially next to trash cans or copy machines. Library offices should have stack trays or boxes within reach.

It is important to make sure that recycling bins are placed throughout the library, not in one location only. Place a poster near these containers to reduce contamination issues.

## **Athletic Facility**

Athletic facilities are breeding grounds for recyclable materials. Beverage containers, whether consumed by athletes or spectators, are generated in large quantities in a small amount of time. It is for this reason that containers of all kinds should be recycled at any athletic event or facility. Recycling receptacles must be clearly labeled with words and images of the material that belongs in the container.



It might make sense to commingle beverage containers in one receptacle. Always use lids that are specifically designed for the recyclables you're trying to capture to cut down on potential contamination from trash and other items.

Additionally, concession stands and other food service facilities should recycle their corrugated cardboard. It is important that both staff and parent volunteers understand their recycling responsibilities.

## **Cafeteria**

Food service areas may have a wide range of recyclables generated during the preparation of meals. Urge food staff to clean, prepare and separate recyclables from the waste stream. Have veteran staff educate new employees or student workers on the recycling program and how items should be prepared.

Extend your efforts to the students using the cafeteria. Provide well-labeled containers with specialized lids for beverage containers, particularly near exit doors and next to vending machines.

Due to the large amount of corrugated cardboard generated, employees should be asked to flatten and place all materials in a separate, conveniently located bin. Be sure that the custodial or kitchen staff communicate with the school's hauler/recycler so that materials are properly prepared, collected and recycled.

*This fact sheet was developed by the Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania, P.O. Box 25, Bellwood, PA 16617. For more information, visit our website, [www.proprecycles.org](http://www.proprecycles.org), or contact us by email at [prop@proprecycles.org](mailto:prop@proprecycles.org). We do our part to close the recycling loop and print all our publications on recycled paper.*

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