

## Recycling & Waste Reduction Guide

### What to do before the Onsite Assessment:

1. **Submit your garbage bill to us.** This document will allow us to evaluate waste disposal options, including recycling and composting.
2. **Verify that you are implementing all checked measures.** Be able to verify practices and products purchased by your business that are made with recycled content.

### What to expect from the Onsite Assessment:

The assessment staff will review the waste reduction and recycling portion of the checklist with you and ask you to furnish supporting documentation for all measures checked off on your checklist. Your business will pass the audit if the minimum numbers of required measures are already in place. If not, we will give you recommendations on how to implement other measures to meet Go Green NRV standards.

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### Please use the following resources to help your business implement and meet the Go Green NRV Waste Reduction standards.

The Town of Blacksburg and most other municipalities in Virginia must meet a mandatory annual waste diversion rate of 25%. Businesses and organizations can play a major role in helping Blacksburg to meet and exceed this requirement. Go Green NRV is making a public commitment to reduce waste and divert waste from the landfill by leading the way for others to do the same. These resources can help you get started:

- Town of Blacksburg Office of Waste Reduction & Recycling: [www.blacksburg.gov/recycling](http://www.blacksburg.gov/recycling)
- Department of Environmental Quality: [www.deq.state.va.us/recycle](http://www.deq.state.va.us/recycle)
- Environmental Protection Agency: [www.epa.gov/waste/conserve/rrr/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/waste/conserve/rrr/index.htm)
- Montgomery Regional Solid Waste Authority: [www.mrswa.com](http://www.mrswa.com)
- Sustainable Blacksburg: [www.sustainableblacksburg.org](http://www.sustainableblacksburg.org)
- YMCA at VT: [www.vtymca.org](http://www.vtymca.org)
- Virginia Tech Recycling: <http://facilities.vt.edu/physicalplant/recycle/>

More specifically, Go Green NRV asks that businesses and organizations focus on these three activities in terms of waste:

1. **Recycling and Composting programs**
  2. **Source Reduction**
  3. **Environmentally Preferable Purchasing**
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## 1. Participate in recycling and composting programs.

Disposing of unwanted items so they do not end up in a landfill is fundamental to the Go Green NRV program. Some municipalities in the New River Valley may be able to offer recycling collection service to businesses, but in most cases, businesses should contract with hauler privately for this service. Both dual (mixed paper and commingled containers) and single stream (paper and containers together, including additional plastics) recycling programs are available to businesses in this area. Go Green NRV can provide you with a list of haulers and contact information for these services.

Composting services are also available to businesses in the New River Valley. PME Compost (<http://www.poplarmanorenterprises.com/>) will collect organic materials such as food and yard waste to compost at their commercial facility in Riner. This service helps to divert organic materials from the landfill where they create greenhouse gasses.

Contact us for information on setting up waste diversion programs and to learn about the cost savings achieved through waste diversion.

Businesses in Blacksburg interested in any of these services and developing a comprehensive recycling and waste reduction program should contact the Town of Blacksburg's Office of Waste Reduction & Recycling at 961-1806 or [recycle@blacksburg.gov](mailto:recycle@blacksburg.gov). This office can provide you with site specific assistance. Visit the office online at [www.blacksburg.gov/recycling](http://www.blacksburg.gov/recycling).

### ***Increase and improve your waste diversion.***

There are several steps an applicant can take to ensure that less waste is generated, contamination is minimized, and diversion is maximized. Use these tools to strengthen your waste diversion program:

- **Collection** – Recycling receptacles should be strategically placed within your business in order to ensure that the maximum amounts of materials are recovered. To recover all recyclable materials generated by staff, set up recycling bins at central, strategic locations (for instance - by large copier stations and in break rooms and other common areas) as well as at each desk. It is important to determine who will be responsible for emptying these receptacles and when they will be emptied in advance to ensure for a smooth program.

Set up compost bins to recover all food and yard discards as well as any food related paper products such as paper take out boxes, paper coffee cups, napkins, tissues, paper towels, sandwich wrappers, and pastry bags. Make sure you collect all compostable materials from all kitchens, kitchenettes, and bathrooms.

- **Training** – Appoint a recycling coordinator or team to help manage the program. Conduct regular trainings for your staff on materials that belong in each bin. Send electronic reminders to your staff on items that (you find) are often placed in the wrong bin (such as coffee cup sleeves, soiled napkins, etc). Be sure to deliver positive feedback as well!
- **Signage** - Use signage to educate staff about materials that belong in each bin. Display signs/stickers on and above receptacles. Use clear, simple wording and visuals to help convey your

message. Particularly for composting, it may be helpful to state what is *not* acceptable in the bin. Depending on your staff, it might be helpful to create signs in Spanish or other languages as well.

- **Disposal Strategies for items that do not belong in traditional recycling bins** - Collect batteries, electronics, fluorescent lights, plastic bags, and/or scrap metal for proper disposal with a small, well-marked bin near the waste stations. Some municipalities in the New River Valley have established recycling programs for these materials. The Montgomery Regional Solid Waste Authority ([www.mrswa.com](http://www.mrswa.com)) also accepts these sorts of materials and other abnormal recyclables at a nominal fee. Utilize the YMCA Thrift Shop, Goodwill, Salvation Army, the Habitat for Humanity ReStore, and other thrift/consignment organizations to donate reusable office supplies, furniture, etc.

## 2. Source Reduction

In addition to a robust waste diversion program, Go Green NRV applicants must also implement waste reduction practices listed on the checklist. Below are just a few of many source reduction measures you can implement in your business:

- **Use only durable dishes, both at your facility and for events.** Demonstrate your environmental commitment to reduce energy and natural resource consumption, and reduce ongoing financial costs of disposable foodware. If reusable dishes are not possible, use compostable foodware only if it will actually be composted.

Restaurants should consult the environmentally preferable purchasing guidelines for takeout and any disposable foodware.

- **Reduce paper.** A contemporary electronic fax system can conserve paper by storing fax messages electronically, thereby saving money and time. There are several kinds of fax software that enable users to receive and send faxes electronically such as, Fax2Mail, Mighty Fax, Send2Fax, MyFax and Snappy Software.com.

Additionally, scanners make it possible to send more documents electronically; reducing the amount of copies made and allowing for electronic archiving. Use email and avoid printing/mailing when possible.

- **Set all company computers to print default double-sided.** You will save resources and money by reducing the amount of paper used. You can also instruct staff to use size reduction and margin features or print multiple pages per sheet to further reduce paper consumption. Use any single-side sheets as scrap paper. Most importantly, do not print unless absolutely necessary.
- **Encourage reusable bags.** Retail and restaurant establishments should encourage reusable bag use (and where appropriate reusable mugs and other containers) by posting reminders or offering small incentives such as a discount or candy. Businesses can also sell or distribute reusable bags. Finally, businesses should do away with plastic bag use completely.



- **Install a water filter instead of purchasing bottled water for staff and/or guests.** Encourage users to bring their own cup or reusable bottle.

### 3. Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

The purchasing decisions your company makes should be responsible both upstream and downstream. The easiest way to make smart consumer decisions is to source products such as paper and office supplies that are made from recycled materials. If possible, build with reclaimed or Forest Stewardship Certified materials, buy Fair Trade Certified agricultural products, and local and organic produce and meats. We ask you to buy, contract, and get professional services from local and sustainable businesses whenever possible.



- **Purchase paper products made from recycled paper.** For office paper the suggested minimum standard is 50% recycled content, however we encourage all businesses to purchase paper made with 100% recycled content. All collateral (business cards, letterhead and custom printed envelopes) and marketing materials should also meet this standard. Other paper products such as folders and sticky notes should also be purchased with the highest recycled content available. Purchasing chlorine-free office paper with at least 50 % post-consumer recycled content is ideal.

There are many smaller companies that offer high quality paper. Additionally, bigger brand name retailers, such as Staples, now offer paper with up to 100% recycled content.



- **Purchase janitorial papers (paper towel, napkins, tissues, and toilet paper) with recycled content.** The current standard is 35% recycled content for these products; however, we strongly encourage businesses to purchase the highest recycled content available. Chlorine-free paper with 100% recycled content is currently available. Examples of these kinds of products include Green Forest and Seventh Generation.

Local groceries offer these products as well as bigger brand names stores such as Kroger.

- **Any business that uses a plotter or large format printer should purchase large format paper**

**with a minimum 35% recycled content.**

- **For restaurants and caterers, be sure all take out containers and cutlery are compostable** and contain recycled content where appropriate.



- **Retail stores and restaurants that give bags to their customers should purchase paper bags made with a minimum 40% recycled content**, but recommended 100% recycled content. Although possibly recyclable, plastic bags are problematic for the environment. Go Green NRV asks participating businesses to find alternative products such as recycled, reused, or compostable bags.

For more information on purchasing compostable plastic bags and other products, please visit any of the following websites: Green Home (household), Green Home (institutional), Treecycle.com, Reusablebags.com, Simply Biodegradable, Cereplast.

- **When remodeling or renovating your office interior, source products made from recycled content or reclaimed materials.** Please visit any of the following websites for companies that provide these services: FurnitureRefurbished.com, Samclar.com, Teknetcom.com.

\*\*\* Special thanks to the San Francisco Green Business for allowing us the use of their literature <http://sfgreenbiz.org>. \*\*\*