



# Apartments & Condominiums

## A Guide to Recycling and Composting for Multi-Family Housing



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Curbside recycling for single family homes is in place for most communities in Cuyahoga County. However, a Cuyahoga Countywide Housing Study for May 2016 by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission shows approximately 35 percent of all households consist of apartments, two and three family rental units and condominiums.

Apartment buildings are commercial properties. Generally, municipalities do not provide curbside recycling services to commercial properties including apartment buildings and other multi-family housing units.

Some communities offer drop-off recycling at the city service department for residents, including apartment dwellers. At other apartment buildings, property managers and owners have put recycling in place due to tenant requests and their own understanding of conserving resources and reducing waste.

The responsibility of setting up a recycling program typically rests with property managers, property owners or the boards of condominium and homeowners' associations. In general, whoever in the organization is responsible for signing the trash hauling contract is the same person who will be responsible for arranging for recycling.

### Contact

If you would like help with setting up an apartment or condominium recycling program or educating management, staff and residents, please contact Business Recycling Specialist Doreen Schreiber at (216) 443-3732 or [dschreiber@cuyahogacounty.us](mailto:dschreiber@cuyahogacounty.us).



## Starting a Recycling Program

### Request Service

If your apartment or condominium complex is already set up for curbside trash collection, get started by contacting your current waste hauler to see if they can begin a curbside recycling program for you. The hauler may be able to provide “single stream” recycling which is the collection of commingled items: cans, cartons, glass bottles and jars, paper and cardboard boxes plus plastic bottles and jugs.

### Add a Dumpster

If your apartment or condo complex is a high-rise building and you are receiving trash pick-up via a front-load compactor or front-load dumpster, ask your waste hauler if they can place a cardboard or single stream recycling dumpster for your use.



- Once you start recycling, you will reduce the amount of trash you must manage. After a short time, you may be able to decrease the size of your trash dumpster or decrease the number of trash pick-ups to save money and use it towards your recycling program.
- Property managers acknowledge that cardboard boxes from online deliveries are an issue in trash dumpsters at multi-family housing complexes. Solve this problem with a cardboard recycling dumpster and by asking residents to break down the boxes before they recycle them.

### Determine the Size

What size recycling dumpster do you need? It depends on how much recyclable material is ending up in the trash. It also matters how much available space you have to place a recycling dumpster.

- Do a waste audit to see how much of the waste can be diverted to recycling. Step-by-step instructions can be found on the [District's website](#).
- The District's business recycling specialist can assist you with performing a trash audit. If no trash audit is performed, your waste hauler or the District can help you estimate what size recycling dumpster may be needed.

### Consider Your Options

If your apartment or condominium complex has a rear-load dumpster pick up for trash, you will not be able to use your regular trash hauler for recycling. Large waste hauling companies do not have the equipment to do rear-load recycling and are only able to service front-load dumpsters. If you're not sure if you have a rear-load or front-load dumpster, contact your hauler to inquire. It may also be stated on your hauling invoice.

Locally, Keep It Green Recycling is currently the only company in Cuyahoga County able to offer single stream recycling collection to buildings unable to have a dedicated dumpster. They can service apartments and condos where front-load dumpster recycling is not possible. Contact [Keep It Green Recycling](#) to see what options are available.

Once you've contracted for recycling services, it's time to educate everyone on what is recyclable and provide more details on how this will take place if you are providing recycling on-site.



## Recycling Education

### Teach Your Property Management and Staff

It's not just about the tenants. Property management and facilities staff need to know how to recycle properly. And, when the management staff is trained, they will take over educating the residents. Continual recycling education for tenants and owners is essential for the success of your program.

- Containers and signs in your facility must be set up properly and clearly labeled. We have tips on best practices for [setting up recycling bins](#) and for placing the [equipment and labels](#).
- Your management office should be onboard too. The District has suggestions and [tips for greening your building office](#) too.
- Keep the recycling stream clean by having separate bins for recycling. A spilled can of soda can ruin a recycling bin with paper.
- Make sure management and staff know that items for recycling should be empty, clean and dry. Caps should be placed on bottles or thrown in the trash. All items should be placed loosely (not bagged) in the bin.
- Get off to a great start and create a successful program by learning more about [workplace recycling behaviors](#).



### Teach Your Residents

- Your building recycling program will be a success if you provide easy access to recycling bins and communicate the program details with residents.
- The best places to put recycling bins for tenants are in laundry and mail rooms.
- Capture empty, clean and dry plastic beverage bottles, cans, laundry detergent and fabric softener bottles in the laundry room.
- Mail rooms are great for capturing junk mail and flattened boxes.
- Keep the stream clean by having separate bins for recycling. A spilled can of soda can ruin a recycling bin with paper.
- Make sure residents know that items should be empty, clean and dry. Caps should be placed on bottles or thrown in the trash. All items should be placed loose (not bagged) in the bin.
- Encourage tenants or new owners to recycle by providing them with a reusable tote bag or small recycling bin to carry their recycling to the recycling dumpster.
- No bags in the recycling bin. Plastic bags are a big contaminant at material recovery facilities. If a tenant chooses to carry their recyclables out in a plastic bag, they need to empty the contents from the bag then keep it for reuse. Clean, empty and dry bags can be recycled at local grocery stores or retailers.
- When you welcome a new tenant or owner, include recycling education in your information packets to explain your recycling program. Resources, including flyers and postcards, are available from the Solid Waste District.



## Other Recycling Opportunities



### Drop-Off Recycling

If you decide not to offer on-site recycling for your complex, there are some drop-off recycling options in Cuyahoga County. The drop-offs are provided by private companies and by local communities.

- Cardboard and paper may be dropped off at [River Valley Paper](#) or [Royal Oak Recycling](#) locations.
- Aluminum cans may be dropped off at Northeast Ohio [Aluminum Cans for Burned Children](#) (ACBC) locations.
- Individual cities within Cuyahoga County may have drop off recycling locations at their service departments as well. See the [District's website](#).

### Miscellaneous Recycling and Donation Centers

Management, staff and tenants of multi-family housing have more than just cans, paper and bottles to recycle.

Information on recycling electronics, toner and ink cartridges, clothing, appliances and other items can be found at [www.CuyahogaRecycles.org](http://www.CuyahogaRecycles.org).



Use the “What Do I Do With?” search bar at the top of every page to find answers to recycling or disposal questions.

Tenants move in and out. The District can help them find places to recycle or donate items they no longer want or need. A good resource for donations is the District's [Pass It On: A Resource-Full Guide to Donating Usable Stuff](#).



## Composting

To help reduce waste, building tenants may also have an interest in composting. While it's usually an activity that takes place in the backyard, it's difficult for residents of apartments or condominiums to have a place to compost their kitchen organics and food waste. Potential solutions may be a local food waste collection service or vermicomposting which a tenant could do within their own unit.



### Rust Belt Riders Food Waste Collection Service

Cleveland-based food waste composting service Rust Belt Riders has food scrap drop-off sites for residents in Cuyahoga County. The company also offers a collection service which can be set up at your building for composting, including for meat and dairy.

Visit [Rust Belt Riders](#) for a list of what can be composted, current rates and to find drop-off sites in Cuyahoga County. For questions, contact Rust Belt Riders at (216) 800-4651 or [info@rustbeltriders.com](mailto:info@rustbeltriders.com)



### Vermicomposting

Vermicomposting is a method of composting which utilizes a specific type of worm to break down kitchen food scraps. It's an excellent option to reduce some organic waste being sent to a landfill.

Worm bins can be purchased or made using common household materials such as plastic storage bins. When done properly, worm composting is inexpensive, odor free and takes up a small amount of space, so it is perfect for apartment and condominium dwellers.

The Solid Waste District provides information on how to get started [composting with worms](#). For an in-depth conversation, contact Education Specialist Carin Miller at (216) 443-3731 or [cmiller@cuyahogacounty.us](mailto:cmiller@cuyahogacounty.us).



## For Residents

If you are a resident of an apartment or condominium, contact the building owner, property manager, president of the condominium association or chairperson of the homeowners' association to express your interest in having a recycling or composting program for residents.

It may be more effective to get a group of residents together to express the desire to have a recycling program. There is strength in numbers, and managers are more likely to be responsive to your request.

You may have to make multiple requests. Be persistent. Not only may they be hesitant due to the cost involved, but they may be apprehensive because they do not know the steps involved to procure recycling. This is where you can help lead them with the information contained in this guide.

## Contact

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