



New Mexico Environment Department  
Pollution Prevention Program  
Hospitality Industry

**STEPS for IMPLEMENTING A RECYCLING AND WASTE REDUCTION PROGRAM**

**Step 1: Organize a Waste Reduction Team**

Commitment to waste reduction begins at the top. If the management team fully supports waste reduction, employees will follow. Be sure to involve the employees in the planning stages. Establish a committee with representatives from each of your work areas (for example, management, housekeeping, maintenance, laundry, restaurant, and accounting)

**Step 2: Conduct a Waste Assessment**

You need to know what is being thrown away (that is, what materials are in your facility's waste stream) before you design a waste reduction and recycling program. Call the New Mexico Environment Department Pollution Prevention Program, 827-0677, Michelle Vattano, to schedule a free waste assessment.

**Step 3: Establish Waste Reduction Goals**

Using your waste assessment as a basis, determine how you can reduce the amount of waste being produced and what waste materials can be reused or recycled. Set waste reduction goals for each of these approaches. For example, you might aim to reduce waste production by 10 percent, reuse 10 percent of what is now being discarded, and recycle 50 percent of the waste.

**Step 4: Secure Recycling Markets**

Before you begin collecting recyclable materials, you must find someone to take them. You may choose to market the recyclable materials yourself or hire a recycling agency to remove them. Your local waste management department can help determine the alternatives in your area or contact the New Mexico Recycling Coalition at [www.nmrecycle.org](http://www.nmrecycle.org) or call (505) 983-4470.

### **Step 5: Set up a Collection and Storage System**

The recycling services you select can help you design an in-house collection and storage system. Hotel managers have often found that no increase in staff is required to carry out a waste reduction program. There are several ways to reduce labor time and costs:

- Integrate the separation and collection of recyclable wastes into normal work procedures. Putting an item into a recycling container takes the same amount of time as putting it into a trash can.
- Sort recyclable wastes the first time they are handled – for example, put corrugated boxes directly into a pile or container designated for recycling as soon as they are unpacked.
- Handle recyclable wastes as few times as possible

### **Step 6: Buy Recycled Products**

Collecting recyclable wastes is the first step in recycling, but your facility should also consider purchasing products made from recycled materials in order to participate fully in the recycling process. Buying recycled products helps develop the market for recyclable materials and increases their value. You'll find recycled items to be comparable in quality and price to products made from new materials.

### **Step 7: Train Your Staff and Promote the Program**

The success of your recycling program will also depend on training and promotion to encourage full participation by staff members and guests. Employees need ongoing training on how to collect and store recyclable wastes, and guests need guidelines for separating materials to be recycled. Many hotels use table ten cards in guest rooms to describe the recycling program and encourage guests to participate. Keep employees informed of the progress of the program and recognize those who contribute to its success.

Promote your program by letting your guests and the public know about your achievements. Print a brochure that describes your recycling program and waste reduction efforts. Send out press releases about your goals and accomplishments.

### **Step 8: Establish an Evaluation and Monitoring Procedure**

You'll need ongoing monitoring and evaluation procedures to maintain a successful waste reduction program. Build flexibility into the program so you can make changes when necessary. Maintain logs and benchmarking figures on a spreadsheet to evaluate and review your efforts.