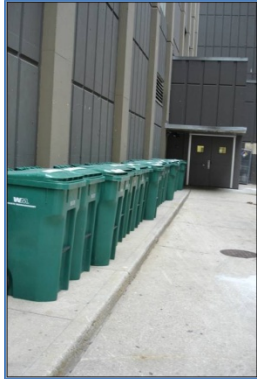




Recycling in Large Residential Buildings



Large buildings offer great opportunities for recycling programs. Due to the size and complexity of managing large buildings, it's important to involve as many stakeholders as possible, including building managers, condo boards, maintenance staff and residents in the planning of a recycling program.

Many existing high-rise buildings have some type of recycling program in place which may need to be modified for collection of source-separated recycling,

like single stream recycling.



Collecting recyclables at the same location where the trash is disposed of is the best scenario. In the photo to the left, there is space in this chute room to easily accommodate a toter for collection of recyclables. Waste haulers will typically provide toters for the building. (See the case study on a small chute room on the next page).

Buildings should consider taking advantage of any shared or common areas as an opportunity to collect recyclables.

The laundry room in the photo to the left is a great location for collecting empty detergent bottles. Maintenance will have to monitor these areas dependent on use. In the building in the photo to the left, this location is typically checked daily by maintenance, but the receptacle emptied less frequently.



Characteristics of Large Buildings

Generally there are similarities within the structure of large buildings (> 100 units) which tend to define how recycling practices are implemented. These characteristics might include:

- *Elevators and/or freight elevators*
- *Property manager and condo board*
- *Common areas may include laundry areas, meeting rooms, and other amenities*
- *Single location of mailboxes at entry*
- *Full time maintenance staff*
- *Cleaning staff for common areas*
- *Chute rooms for trash disposal*
- *Multi-level parking garages*
- *Trash/recycling collected both inside and outside of building*

Potential Tool Kit Accessories

Components of the tool kit which may be helpful in large buildings include:

- *Recycling Plan and Waste Generation and Recyclable Collection Worksheet*
- *Vendor Contact List*
- *Waste & Recycling Hauler RFP*
- *Tenant Lease Language and Condominium By-Laws Insert*
- *Sample Letter to Residents*
- *Sample Newsletter*
- *Sample Recycling Flyer and Poster*
- *Pledge Card*
- *FAQs/Fact Sheets*



Recycling in Large Residential Buildings

Best Management Practices

Recycling in high-rise buildings offers a unique opportunity to collect a large volume of recyclables at a single location. The following best management practices (BMPs) promote efficiency and safety in large residential building recycling programs:

- Depending on size, chute rooms should be considered for collection of recyclables. Most waste haulers will provide toters for collection of recyclables in chute rooms as part of the contract. There may be a minimal monthly fee associated with the toters if a large number is required.
- Any common area such as mail rooms, laundry rooms, meeting rooms, storage lockers, bike storage areas, garages and pools should be considered for collection of recyclables. If a garage has multiple entrances, a container should be located near each entrance.
- Recycling containers are available in a wide variety of sizes, including minimal footprints, for use in small areas such as chute rooms.
- Any locations where recyclables are collected should be monitored by building staff at a minimum of once a day to ensure recyclables are not overflowing or near an ignition source. If small containers are used, emptying the containers on a daily basis may be required, dependent on use by residents.
- Below are some examples of important things to consider before placing containers; however, for specific information on fire safety, contact the **Fire Prevention Bureau at (312) 744-4762**.
 - Both the door to the trash chute and the room itself should be free from obstruction.
 - Materials must be monitored, collected and removed on a regular basis so that no excess accumulation occurs.
 - Due to their combustibility, extra care and attention (such as increased monitoring and more frequent removal) must be paid to any paper or plastic materials being collected.
 - High-rise buildings that are required to have a Life Safety Plan should consider adding the locations of the recycling receptacles to the plan.

A Case Study: Building A - Recycling with a Small Chute Room



Small chute rooms are a consideration when setting up recycling programs in high-rise buildings. The high-rise chute room shown in the photo to the left is very small and does not allow for the collection of recyclables. Therefore, the building uses other common areas to place recycling receptacles so residents can participate in a recycling program.

In this high-rise example, recycling toters are located at the entrance to the parking area. This area serves as another pathway for residents to enter and exit the building. The toters are clearly labeled to avoid contamination with trash. Maintenance staff regularly empties the toters into larger receptacles (in this case, dumpsters) located in the adjacent trash room. By providing the toters in a location that residents walk past, instead of requiring residents to use out of sight dumpsters, the building is providing convenient access to recycling.





Recycling in Large Residential Buildings

A Success Story: Building B - Achieving a 50% Recycling Rate!

Recycling in a multi-unit residential building can be a challenge, but when management and residents work together, there's an opportunity for great success! This is just one story of a building overcoming challenges and implementing a successful recycling program.

To begin the program, the condo board of a 100 unit building purchased recycling bins for each unit and distributed educational materials to the residents. Once the bins and materials were distributed to residents, a meeting was held to introduce the program to the residents. During the meeting, there was support for the recycling program from the condo board, building manager, and maintenance staff.

The maintenance staff supported the recycling program and worked with the waste hauler during the start-up period. The program began with trash picked up daily and recycling picked up twice a week. Several problems developed as the program began, as described in the text box below. Even with some problems, residents embraced the program and began recycling. The volume of recyclables quickly increased. Maintenance continued to work with the hauler modifying the trash and recyclables pickup schedule to meet the needs of the building. Currently, trash is picked up three days a week and the recycling is picked up on the alternate three days.

After two to three months of improving the building's recycling program, the residents reached a new goal – a 50% recycling rate. The building now recycles half of its waste stream!

How to Get There - Creative Problem Solving

Problem#1: *What Recycling Program?*

The building's contract with the waste hauler was for the blue bag system. Because residents did not have confidence that their materials were being kept separate from the trash, there was low participation. The building manager, hauler, and condo board met to discuss how to improve recycling and to understand the hauler's recycling capabilities. The hauler could provide separate collection using single stream recycling services like the City's Blue Cart program. This made recycling an easy option for residents.

Problem #2: Too Many Recyclables

There were not enough storage containers to hold the increased volume of materials being recycled by residents on the weekends, so trash dumpsters were used. Although maintenance staff knew which dumpsters which contained trash and which contained recycling, the waste hauler did not. Maintenance staff worked with the waste hauler and designated one location for dumpsters containing trash and a separate location for dumpsters containing recyclables. Therefore, more recycling dumpsters could be added and the hauler knew which ones contained recyclables and which contained trash based on where the dumpsters were located.