

CAMPUS-WIDE COMMINGLED RECYCLING



Campus-Wide Commingled Recycling

BACKGROUND

The University of California, Irvine is now introducing a commingled recycling bin to offices across campus. With the help of UCI's Facilities Management 8,000 offices will receive their commingled recycling bins in the summer of 2016. This new initiative hopes to bring UCI's diversion rate closer to our goal of 90% or better by 2020!

A crucial aspect in this new campus-wide change is being aware of all the materials that can now be recycled. With a quick rinse and dry of many materials, we can divert more items from landfills, therefore contributing to a cleaner environment. Recycling also helps save natural resources by reusing materials.

Previously, personal office recycling bins only accepted mixed paper and limited the amount of other materials that could be recycled. Commingled means that paper, cardboard, glass, metal, and plastic can now be recycled in the same bin. Signage on the bins have also been updated to easily demonstrate what items can be recycled. Common office items that can be recycled include all paper materials, frozen dinner trays, Starbucks coffee cups, empty tissue boxes, paper lunch bags, soda cans, aluminum, and plastic containers.



Commingled Recycling Sign



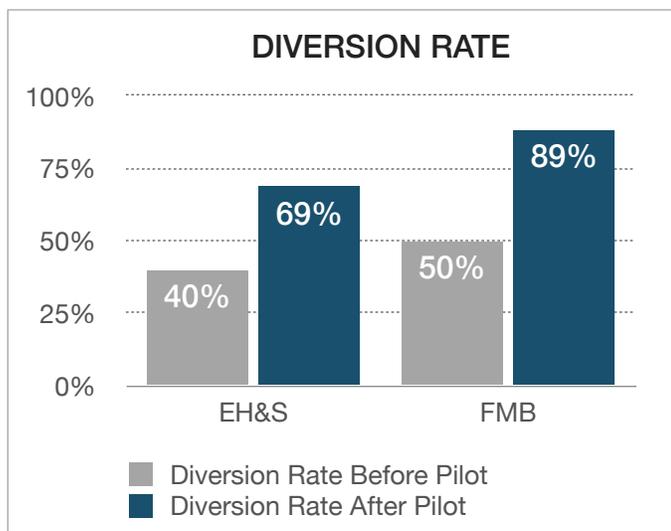
Desk-side commingled recycling bin (6 gal)

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INITIATION

Past pilot programs have shown success with the transition to a commingled recycling bin. Staff from UCI's Environmental Safe and Health department as well as Facilities Management Building received a new commingled recycling bin to help increase their diversion rate.

Waste audits conducted at both facilities showed that staff were properly disposing the correct materials in their recycling bin. A survey was also conducted to gain staff's personal responses to the changes. Many said they liked being able to recycle more items at their office and found the signage on the bins to be helpful. The graph below shows the increase in diversion rate for both facilities that currently have commingled recycling bins for all staff members.



The data indicated that recycling has improved by at least 25% in both locations.

Successes gained for past pilot programs have now led to the campus-wide initiation to convert all office recycling bins to commingled.

COMMINGELED RECYCLING

Items accepted in the commingled recycling bin:

Material	Common Items
Paper	Printer paper, envelopes, magazines, newspaper
Carboard	Tissue boxes, cartons, food packages, Starbucks hot cups
Plastic	Dinner trays, water bottles, Starbucks cold cups
Metal	Soda cans, soup cans, aluminum foil
Glass	Beverage containers

**All items in the recycling bin should be clean and dry with no food or liquid residue*

Items Not Accepted in the commingled recycling bin:

Material	Common Items
Wrappers	Potato chip bags, candy wrappers, ketchup packets, containers with foil lining
Food	Pizza, donuts, fruits, vegetables etc.
Specific Plastic Items	Drinking straws, plastic fork and spoon, plastic trash bags
Styrofoam	Food containers and cups

**Any packing containers with a foil lining such as potato chip bags cannot be recycled because the plastic and metal cannot be separated into 1 material.*

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PROCESS & DISTRIBUTION

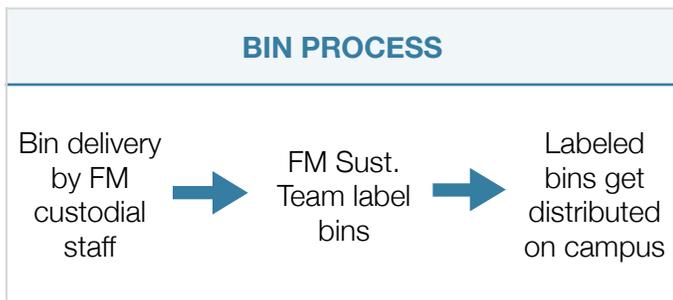
With the help of student involvement and Facilities Management, 8,000 blue commingled-recycling bins have been distributed in university office facilities. A large portion of this program’s bins were reused from previous “mixed-recycling” bins across campus. These blue bins were washed and labeled with new signage demonstrating commingled recycling. Facilities Management custodial staff collected the reused bins and washed them. Student-workers from the FM Sustainability Team then labeled the bins with the new signage and prepare them to be delivered by FM custodial staff to offices. A two month process of labeling and distribution took place in order to complete the campus wide commingled recycling program.

EXPECTATIONS

As of 2016, UCI has a diversion rate of 81%. In order to achieve the UC-wide goal of “Zero Waste” by 2020, campuses need to meet or exceed a 90% diversion rate of municipal solid waste.



“According to the UCOP mandated diversion goals, universities are expected to have reached 50% diversion by 2008, 75% diversion by 2012, and eventually have a 90% or greater diversion rate by 2020”



Student interns on the FM Sustainability Team labeling bins

With the new implementation of commingled recycling bins in all offices across campus, UCI hopes to improve our current diversion rate and make recycling in office settings easier than ever. Recycling is not just an action but a practice. With helpful signage and an opportunity to increase the amount of materials that are recycled we hope to improve sustainable practices across campus as well as minimize the amount of waste going into landfills. Together we can all be sustainable members of the UCI community and get closer to our goal of becoming a Zero Waste University by 2020.