



Basic requirements for RU Recycling Programs



This document summarizes the minimum requirements your RU program needs to maintain its status as an approved DNR recycling program.

The six basic components are:

- A local recycling ordinance
- An education program
- A residential recycling collection and processing system
- A Compliance Assurance Plan (CAP)
- An annual report to DNR
- Notify DNR of program changes

Responsible units play an integral role in making Wisconsin a national leader in recycling. Our citizens' strong support for recycling is based on your commitment to providing convenient and comprehensive recycling options to your communities. Here in Wisconsin recycling is the law, but more importantly, it's what our citizens expect.

Responsible Units and Wisconsin Law

Wisconsin law bans the disposal or incineration of many recyclable materials. It also requires municipalities to operate recycling programs in order to facilitate recycling throughout the state. Each municipality is designated as the local government recycling "responsible unit" (RU), unless they have entered into an agreement to become part of a consolidated RU, and must comply with the basic components to maintain its status as a DNR approved recycling program. The DNR seeks to ensure compliance through technical assistance and outreach efforts. To date, no RU program has been disqualified.

Recycling Means Business

Did you know that recycling not only conserves our resources but also contributes to job creation and economic development in Wisconsin and all around the world? An estimated 97,000 people are employed in Wisconsin in recycling-related activities.

Wisconsin's recycling programs also support industry. They supply vital raw materials to companies in our state and all over the world. Manufacturers rely on the materials your community collects and recycles to make a wide variety of paper, metal and plastic based products. Producers are relying on **you** to keep their factories running and their people employed.



Six Components of a DNR approved P

“Recyclables” required to be collected refers to materials banned from landfills under s. 287.07(4):

- aluminum containers
- corrugated cardboard and other container board
- foam polystyrene packaging*
- glass containers
- magazines and newspapers
- #1 & #2 plastic bottles and jars**
- steel and bi-metal containers

Many RUs collect other materials for recycling in addition to these recyclables.

* currently exempted under state variance

**plastics # 3-7 currently exempted under state variance

See DNR publication “Wisconsin Recycles” for a complete list of banned materials

This document summarizes what your program needs to do to maintain its status as a DNR approved recycling program. The six basic components necessary to be an approved program are listed below. Many programs exceed the minimum requirements.

- Remember that a consolidated RU must ensure that its member municipalities are meeting requirements not directly fulfilled by the RU.
- This document does not cover all the details in the law. If you have questions, refer to s. NR 544.04, Wis. Adm. Code or ask your Regional DNR Recycling Specialist (contact information on the back side of this document).

1. Pass a local recycling ordinance with the following components:

- √ Requires residents to separate recyclables for recycling.
- √ Requires owners of multi-family housing and non-residential properties to:
 - Provide adequate containers for the collection of recyclables.
 - Inform tenants (upon leasing and semi-annually thereafter) what to recycle, where and how.
 - Ensure that those recyclables are taken to a recycling facility.
- √ Prohibits disposal of recyclables that have been separated for recycling.
- √ Contains provisions for enforcement that create the authority to verify compliance and assess penalties for non-compliance.

2. Have an education program that provides:

- √ Information on what recyclables are collected, where and how to recycle.
- √ Information on recycling or composting options for other materials banned from landfill disposal: lead acid batteries, major appliances, used oil, yard materials and electronics.

3. Provide a program for collecting, processing and marketing recyclables from single family and 2-4 unit residences. This system may be operated directly or contracted for by the RU and must address all of the following:

- √ Recyclables are separated from solid waste.
- √ Recyclables maintain their marketable condition.
- √ RUs that don't provide or contract for collection service must be able to demonstrate that their residents have convenient access to privately contracted collection service.

The population of a municipality determines the collection system.

- **Urban municipalities - population of 5,000 or greater and average density of 70 persons per square mile:**
 - Collect at least 106.6 lbs of recyclables per person per year.
 - Provide curbside recycling that is picked up at least once a month.



RU Program

- **Rural municipalities - do not meet the population requirements for Urban:**

- Collect at least 82.4 lbs of recyclables per person per year.
- Provide a collection service that is curbside, drop-off, or a combination of the two. If drop-off service is provided, it shall be open at least 2 days each month for a minimum of 5 hours each day.

√ The collected materials are processed in a material recovery facility (MRF) that is self-certified with DNR.

4. Implement a Compliance Assurance Plan that:

- √ Describes the procedures to address at least one commonly encountered non-compliance issue with your recycling ordinance.
- √ Is updated as you encounter other non-compliance issues.

5. Submit an annual report to DNR by April 30 of each year reporting on your program and collection. Every RU must do this, whether or not they receive a recycling grant. Look for reminders sent out in January.

The following information should be tracked throughout the year so that it can be included in your annual report.

- √ Compliance issues:
 - The number of complaints received, inspections, citations and written or verbal warnings issued, for residential and non-residential facilities.
- √ Weights of recyclables collected:
 - If you contract with a private hauler, the contract should stipulate that they report the tonnage of recyclables collected for you in time for the annual report submittal.
 - If one or more private haulers collect recyclables through household subscription services, you need to report tonnages they collect from single family and 2-4 unit residences. One option is to have a local ordinance requiring haulers working within an RU to report weights of recyclables collected.

6. Notify DNR of program changes by contacting your regional recycling specialist

- √ Changes in contact information
 - This is essential so that you receive important notices regarding recycling grants and annual reports.
- √ Significant changes to your program such as:
 - Consolidation, or dissolution of a consolidation, with another RU.
 - Switch from providing collection service to requiring individual household subscription service.
 - Significant change to your recycling ordinance.



Resources

For additional information on recycling in Wisconsin, contact the DNR Waste and Materials Management Program at DNRWasteMaterials@Wisconsin.gov or 608-266-2111.

Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin—

A nonprofit association of business, government, nonprofits and trade associations.

www.arow-online.org

www.arow-online.org/ or 608-634-6082

Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center —

Provides information and technical assistance to businesses on waste reduction, recycling and pollution prevention.

www.uwex.edu/shwec/

Contact SHWEC at shwec-help@uwm.edu.

WasteCap Resources, Inc.—

A nonprofit dedicated to providing waste reduction and recycling assistance for the benefit of business and the environment.

www.wastecap.org

Contact WasteCap at

wastecap@wastecap.org or

(414) 961-1100 or (608) 245-1100.

Wisconsin Business Recycling

Toolkit —A toolkit for commercial, business, institutions and other away from home recycling.

[www.shwec.uwm.edu/](http://www.shwec.uwm.edu/recyclingtoolkit/)

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Wisconsin Recycling Markets

Directory—A detailed directory of recyclers, haulers and contractors throughout the state. Enter the item you would like to recycle to see a list of recyclers in your area.

See www.wisconsinrecyclingdirectory.com.



To download this and other signage

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Recycling/outreach.html#tabx3>

State Resources:

For additional information on Wisconsin's recycling laws:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Recycling/law.html>

How to contact your regional recycling specialist:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/staffdir/dynamic/recycling.asp>

For more information on recycling in Wisconsin:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Recycling/>

For recycling education and outreach materials, visit

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Recycling/outreach.html>



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