



## Office Collection and Recycling Guide:

**Aim of the Guide: for more businesses to become environmentally aware and start taking responsible steps towards the preservation of the environment.**

### Introduction

Corporate citizenship or corporate social responsibility is a term used to describe a company's role in, or responsibility towards society.

Recycling at the office is not only a form of Corporate Social Investment but you can reap the rewards with green credentials, like carbon credits and enterprise development.

So, let's take a look at how to add recycling in the office to your social responsibility agenda. Establishing an office recycling initiative won't just reduce your carbon footprint, but it could also save your business money. Making a contribution to a cleaner environment and a better life for all by collecting PET for recycling is easy.

Recycling programmes are often only a smaller part of a broader workplace programme to encourage sustainable business practices; Especially if you're looking to save on costs, combining your recycling programme with an effort to reduce office waste and reuse existing products can be a smart business strategy. When you're auditing what goes into the waste bins, you might realise that you're wasting a lot of paper. Try to find tasks that could be paperless, or products that could be reused. Recycling, reducing, and reusing doesn't have to stop in the workplace, but can be done at home too.

### Getting Started

Ready to get up close and personal with your office waste? The first step to setting up an effective recycling programme is to survey your workplace, and figure out exactly what's going into the bins. Then, you can figure out which products are recyclable and which ones you want to include in your workplace recycling initiative. The easiest way to do this is by reaching out to whomever collects your recycling, whether it's your municipal waste



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management programme or your building management, and asking them exactly what they recycle and what they don't. It generally makes sense to start small. Paper, plastic, glass and cans are a good place to start. A few months after you launch your programme, as employee participation and awareness increases, you can move onto other, larger recyclable objects, such as ink cartridges, computers, and other electronics.

Whatever you decide to recycle, you'll need to appoint a co-ordinator to oversee and organize the programme. This person should ideally be enthusiastic about sustainability and willing to help see the entire recycling initiative through.

## Encouraging Participation

Even if you've found the perfect programme co-ordinator, a successful recycling initiative needs to come from the top down in order to motivate employees to participate. People tend to respond more strongly when the CEO encourages and motivates the team. Be strategic about your placement of recycling bins. They need to go in places where the most waste is generated, like copy rooms, near printers, board rooms, and in staff cafeterias. They also need to be easily identifiable, with clear signage indicating that they are for recyclable materials only. (Make sure to specify which material goes into which bin.) Besides handy bins, another way to encourage employees to participate is through consistent communication. Make sure every worker in the office is aware of the programme and its goals. Track progress in public by counting up recycled materials, and letting everyone know what they've helped to accomplish. You might even try adding incentives or rewards.

## Training Staff

You can do everything you can to educate employees and make it easier for them to contribute, but don't assume the rest of the process that you can't see is going to get it right. It's essential to reach out to your building management or your landlord to notify them of your recycling initiative, so they can make sure all their cleaning staff are on the same page. You need an on-going education programme that lets your employees know the details of your programme, and what they can and cannot recycle.

## Arranging for Collection

One of the most important parts of the process is deciding how to collect and dispose of the recyclables. There are many different types of paper products, like printer paper, magazines, cardboard, and construction paper. You can separate each specific type, which can make your recyclables more valuable if you disposing of them at a drop-off centre and could increase employee awareness about the specifics of recycling.

You could also collect all paper products in one bin, and plastics in another, in a method called commingled collection. This is less work, but the materials could be contaminated easily when they are mingled together.



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Many businesses are located in municipalities with recycling services, or are located in office complexes where the management is responsible for waste disposal. Contact whoever takes care of your waste to arrange for proper disposal and pickup of whatever materials you recycle, too.

You may have to hire an outside service. This will depend on the size of your company, as many commercial recyclers require a particular volume of waste that could be more than your company generates.

Consider partnering with other companies, hiring smaller companies, or arranging to drop off recycling at collection points.

Please see collection services and drop-off sites on the PETCO website [here](#).

Another viable option is donating to charities. Many local organisations will offer to come and pick up recycled materials, particularly electronics. It's another way to encourage employees by creating a sense of good will.

## Additional Considerations

### 1. Space requirements

Identify a possible site in or near the office where the PET plastic can be stored during the collection phase. As plastic bottles are filled with air they take up a large amount of volume. The site should be secure and not be in the way of anyone. If a method is available to squash the bottles; it is advised as this would save space and more could be collected for one load. This would not only make the collection easier but also lower the carbon footprint of the programme.

### 2. Delivery or collection

PET plastic needs to be collected in large volumes in order for it to be viable for the collector to cover transport costs. Where large volumes of recyclables are not collected, it is best for an employee to deliver the plastic to the closest drop-off point. A current list of municipal drop-off sites is available on [www.petco.co.za](http://www.petco.co.za). If you want to maximize the recycling programme in your office, and become a local drop off centre, you can advertise the service to other offices near you and they can deliver their PET plastic to you for recycling. Municipal drop-off sites do not pay for recyclables but if you collect significant volumes, you can contact a recycler close to you for rates and delivery/collection options. **Visit [sst.or.za](http://sst.or.za) to add your recycling business/buy-back centre, drop-off site or Municipal/government site to SST's waste location map.**

### 3. Education

Inform all staff of the PET plastic recycling programme ensuring that they understand what type of plastic is being recycled and the steps that are to be followed. See below for the plastic polymer identification code to look out for during the collection process. This is a helpful [video](#) about the PET recycling process.



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#### 4. Drop-off

Arrange for the PET plastic to be bundled up following squashing and drop off at the closest drop-off centre; if you have larger quantities call your recycler to collect.

### Recycling Tips

- Check that there is no PVC shrink-wrap label, as this means that the container not recyclable
- Make sure there is nothing inside any of the PET bottles
- Make sure there are no PET bottles with metal caps on them
- **Do not** flake the bottles
- PET trays and punnets are currently not being recycled on a large scale as not all of them are identifiable and many are made of mixed polymers or with additives, thus making recycling difficult. Check with your collector / recycler upfront.
- **Do not** rinse the bottle during collection, the bottle goes through a number of washes when being recycled and therefore rinsing beforehand is a waste of water.
- Keep the cap on the bottle as it can be recycled and turned into other products.

### What is PET plastic?



PET is the short name for **Polyethylene Terephthalate**, the type of plastic labelled with the #1 polymer identification code (in a triangle) on or near the bottom of bottles and containers. It is recognisable as an imprint on containers (transparent, clear and/or tinted or any other solid colour). PET is mainly used for **beverage bottles** for (bottled water, carbonated soft drinks, milk, juice, sports and energy drinks), **bottles** for household, personal care and pharmaceutical products **jars, punnets, tubs and trays** for food items, as well as **sheet and film** for packaging.

In South Africa empty, thrown away PET bottles are collected, then flattened and bundled up into big blocks (baled) and delivered to the recycling plant where they are colour sorted, washed, chopped into smaller particles (granulated), re-washed, and extruded (melted down and then made into long thin strings of plastic). Those strings are then cut into small pieces (pellets), before those are then re-used (as recycled plastics) for making a number of items we enjoy every day including fiber filling for our pillows, sleeping bags and winter coats, carpets in cars, fleece shirts but most importantly as recycled PET containers.

Once recycled, from either pre-consumer (such as factory off-cuts) or post-consumer (household) material sources, it is called rPET or Recycled Polyethylene Terephthalate.

### Why collect and recycle PET Plastics?

PET is technically 100% recyclable. It is lightweight and strong and can be transported efficiently and is superior compared to other packaging options with regard to its



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environmental footprint linked to energy demand in production and resulting Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions.

When recycled PET can further greatly reduce fuel use, energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. PET recycling creates jobs by providing a source of income and helps to save the planet's virgin resources.

The PET that is removed from the waste stream results in less waste going to landfill sites and reduces the amount of natural resources needed to make certain products, thereby reducing the impact on the Earth and environment. Recycling of PET fits very well into the concept of the Circular Economy, and closed loop thinking which looks at a cradle-to-cradle approach and aims to design waste out of a system by ensuring that waste from one product or process becomes a resource for another. This reduces the need for additional resource use and eliminates waste from the outset.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

- 1 recycled plastic bottle saves enough energy to power a 60-watt incandescent light bulb for 3 hours.
- Five 2-liter recycled PET bottles produce enough fibrefill to make a winter jacket.
- The energy saved by recycling one plastic bottle will power a computer for 25minutes.  
Recycling 10 tons of PET plastic saves as much greenhouse gas emissions as removing more than three cars from

### **Who is PETCO and how can we support you?**

PETCO is a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) responsible for managing the PET industry's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) in South Africa. Our mission is to grow the collection and recycling of PET bottles after consumer use. We have done this for over 15 years and are funded by a mandatory EPR fees paid by Producers on the PET plastic that they place on the market<sup>1</sup>. We invest all our funds in ensuring and encouraging visible recycling, through:

- Contracting and financing PET recyclers who collect bottles, process them into rPET in preparation for the manufacture of new products
- Consumer education and awareness (including schools and community groups)
- Training and joint venture projects (including those with municipalities)
- Equipment support and sponsorship (for collectors), and
- Providing guidance relating to Design for Circularity (for industry).

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on Section 18 Legislation: <https://petco.co.za/section-18-everything-you-need-to-know/>



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PETCO offers educational material such as posters and PET collection bags for events that detail the PET recycling process. PETCO can also assist with putting you in touch with a collector or collection agency in your area (email [supportservices@petco.co.za](mailto:supportservices@petco.co.za)). You can also apply to hire banners to be returned after any specific collection or recycling school or community event.

## Contact PETCO for further information

<b>Call toll free:</b>	0860 147 738 (0860 1 is PET)
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:info@petco.co.za">info@petco.co.za</a>
<b>Twitter</b>	PETCO_SA
<b>Facebook:</b>	PETPlasticRecyclingSA
<b>Instagram:</b>	PETCO_SA
<b>LinkedIn:</b>	PETCO, the South African PET Plastic Recycling Company
<b>YouTube:</b>	PETCO South Africa
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.petco.co.za">www.petco.co.za</a>

## Useful contacts

Visit [www.petco.co.za](http://www.petco.co.za) for a list of collection points, drop off sites and buy-back centres.

You could also contact some other industry bodies for general assistance or information about other material streams. Here are some of them, but you could also visit PETCO's website to download a fact sheet with useful contacts:

- Institute of Waste Management [www.iwmsa.co.za](http://www.iwmsa.co.za)
- National Recycling Forum [www.recycling.co.za](http://www.recycling.co.za)
- Packaging SA [www.packagingsa.co.za](http://www.packagingsa.co.za)
- Recycle Paper ZA [www.recyclepaper.co.za/](http://www.recyclepaper.co.za/)
- Polyolefin Recycling Company (POLYCO) [www.polyco.co.za](http://www.polyco.co.za)
- Polystyrene Packaging Council (PSPC) [www.polystyrenepackaging.co.za/](http://www.polystyrenepackaging.co.za/)
- ROSE Foundation [www.rosefoundation.org.za](http://www.rosefoundation.org.za)
- SAVA [www.savinyls.co.za](http://www.savinyls.co.za)
- Tetra Pak [www.tetrapak.com/za](http://www.tetrapak.com/za)
- The Glass Recycling Company [www.glassrecyclingcompany.co.za](http://www.glassrecyclingcompany.co.za)
- Collect-a-Can [www.collectacan.co.za](http://www.collectacan.co.za)



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