

Apartment collection and recycling guide

Aim of the Guide: for more people living in apartment blocks to become environmentally aware and start taking responsible steps towards the preservation of the environment.

Introduction

Whether you live in a house, apartment, complex or estate, collection and recycling can be easily practiced. Collection and recycling are major components and a good way to contribute to the environment. If you feel like it can be difficult to collect and recycle in your apartment or to get people living in the same apartment block as you live onboard, here are some tips so that you can get a collection and recycling programme going within your complex.

Getting started

An important starting point for setting up an effective collection and recycling programme in your apartment complex is to establish what can and cannot be recycled, and to know what the volumes of those materials are currently being thrown in your general waste bins.

1. Conduct a waste audit

Survey your apartment's communal refuse area over a period of a week or two, and record exactly what is going into the waste bins. Establish which of those materials are recyclable, get an idea of the volumes and then decide which ones you want to include in your apartment block collection and recycling initiative according to a list of priorities.

2. Appoint a coordinator

It is of key importance to appoint a coordinator to oversee and organize such a collection and recycling programme. This person should ideally be enthusiastic about sustainability and willing to help plan and see the entire collection and recycling initiative through.

3. Focus your attention

You'll make the biggest impact if you focus on "easy-to-recycle" materials. Here are a few suggestions (please note this is not an exhaustive list and the best way to compile this list is by asking collectors which materials they want):

- #1 plastic (bottles and jars)
- #2 plastic (milk jugs)
- Liquid board cartons
- Cardboard
- Aluminium and steel cans
- Newspaper and office paper

- Glass

See the National Recycling Forum's website for information about what can and can't be recycled in South Africa: www.recycling.co.za

4. Consult with management

A successful recycling initiative needs to be strongly supported by top management, who would have to approve the programme and communication efforts needed to motivate tenants to participate. Your landlord should be able to answer your questions as to why there isn't already a collection and recycling programme available in the complex. There may not be a contractor available in the area to pick up the recycling or the contractor may be too pricey, and rent would have to be raised across the board for the complex to be able to afford the programme. They may also be able to tell you whether previous attempts at starting a programme have failed to give you an idea as to whether your efforts will prove worthwhile.

Encouraging Participation

If you want to pursue the chance of a recycling program in your apartment complex, you'll have to ask your neighbours for their opinion. Explain why you believe strongly in a recycling service and ask them if they'd be willing to pay a bit more each month in order to have the service provided. Ask them what the maximum is that they'd be willing to pay extra in order to have the service and let them know you won't be able to push the service through without their support.

Once you have an estimate on how much, if any, your neighbours would be willing to contribute monthly to offset a recycling program cost, do some research into local recycling contractors that would offer service to your area. Make phone calls and ask for weekly, biweekly or monthly pickup estimates, being sure to tell them approximately how many apartments and residents live in the complex.

If your apartment complex has regular board meetings, this is the place to present your case. Attend the next meeting and show your petition to demonstrate how much support you have for the program. You can then present the quotes you got from contractors for the board members' consideration. The decision will then rest with the board. Ask any of your neighbours who were especially supportive to show up for the meeting to help encourage the board to decide favourably.

If your apartment complex doesn't have a board, you should present the same facts to your landlord, preferably with your supportive neighbours' help. Your landlord can then discuss the idea with the owner of the complex and see if they can agree on a plan of action. Don't be disappointed if the motion doesn't go through; not all your neighbours may agree that the additional expense is worth the extra rent.

To prevent waste and collect contaminant-free recyclables, your participating tenants must be knowledgeable about programme guidelines and the benefits of participating. Petco offers a range of educational material (posters and collection bags for special events).



Track progress and inform tenants about the successes achieved. You could consider incentives or rewards to help raise awareness and entrench the recycling habit.

If a recycling program in your apartment complex is not possible, you can still look for ways in which to recycle on your own. Take your recycling to a local recycling centre once a week or so, reduce the amount of waste you use and re-use what you can, even if you must think creatively.

Logistics

Considerations about the logistics of a collection and recycling programme, and the methods of collection and disposal include, among other:

Space requirements

- Issues of space and temporary can become a problem if not included in the programme's detailed plan. Identify a suitable area where the recyclable materials may be stored during the collection phase (before being picked up or taken off site). Take PET plastic bottles as an example: since they are filled with air, they take up a large volume, even though their mass is relatively low. The same is true for some other recyclables such as liquid board cartons. If a method is available to squash the bottles and cartons, it is advisable to do so, as this would save space and more could be collected in one load.
- The site should be secure and not be in the way of anyone. It should nevertheless also be easily accessible to the vehicles that transport the materials off site.
- Relevant health, safety and fire prevention standards should be considered and implemented.

Delivery or collection?

- One of the most important parts of the process is deciding how to dispose of the recyclable materials. Do you take it away yourself, or will you have it collected?
- Decide whether you are going to do detailed separation at source. For instance, there are many different types of paper such as printer paper, newspapers, magazines, cardboard and construction paper. The same is true for different kinds of plastics, glass and metals. Should you separate each specific type, it could make your recyclables more valuable. Discuss this with the specific collection and recycling organisations and collectors. It may be necessary to choose different ways of disposal for different materials, depending on the nature and volumes of the specific recyclable materials that your apartment block must manage. Talk to Petco about the most effective way of collecting and recycling PET beverage bottles and containers, Liquid Board Cartons and their associated closures and labels.
- You could also collect all paper products in one bin, plastics in another, etc. This method is called sorted recyclable collection and means less work, but materials could be easily contaminated when they are mixed together. Again, it is important to know how and where such sorted recyclable materials could be deposited or collected.
- Volumes are key to the decision about disposal and collection. Recyclable materials need to be collected in large volumes in order to make them viable for the collector. Where large volumes of recyclables are not collected, you will need to arrange your own delivery.



- You could organise to undertake disposal at a drop-off site – this means using your own vehicle or organising transport when enough volumes have been collected at regular intervals.
- You may have to hire an outside recycling service. This will depend on the size of your complex, as many commercial recyclers require a volume of waste that could be more than your complex generate. Consider partnering with other companies in the same building or area to share the costs.
- Municipal drop-off sites do not pay for recyclables, but if you collect significant volumes, you could contact a recycler close to you for rates and delivery/collection options. A current list of drop-off sites can be found on our website. If you want to maximise your collection and recycling programme and become a local drop-off site, you can advertise the service to other local businesses, they could then deliver their recyclable materials to you for collection and recycling. Contact info@petco.co.za for advice in this regard.
- Another viable option is donating to charities. Many local organisations will offer to come pick up recycled materials, such as books, electronics and other materials.

Who is Petco and how can we help you?

Petco Producer Responsibility Organisation NPC is a Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO), incorporated in 2004, that administers Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes on behalf of its members for various identified products in the packaging sector. Petco serves as a national organisation responsible for driving recycling activities, unlocking the collection and recycling value chain, guiding product design, stimulating end-use markets for recycled material, carrying out education and awareness initiatives and building the required local recycling infrastructure and capacity.

Petco serves as a catalyst for turning intentions into tangible actions. As a collective organisation deeply committed to fostering a circular economy, Petco recognises the vital role that households play in responsible waste management. To make this commitment tangible, Petco provides educational materials designed for households. These resources serve to demystify the intricacies of recycling, making it more accessible and understandable for every member of the household. But our support doesn't stop there. Recognising the practical challenges of collecting and recycling, Petco offers material collection bags, simplifying the process of gathering and transporting materials to designated recycling centres.

Useful Contacts

Visit 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:

- Institute of Waste Management www.iwmsa.co.za
- National Recycling Forum www.recycling.co.za



- Packaging SA
- Plastics SA

www.packagingsa.co.za

www.plasticsinfo.co.za

Contact Petco

Call toll free: 011 615 8875 (JHB)/ 021 794 6300 (CPT)

Email: info@petco.co.za

Website: www.petco.co.za

Facebook: [Petco.Official](https://www.facebook.com/Petco.Official)

X: [Petco.Official](https://twitter.com/Petco.Official)

Instagram: [petco.official](https://www.instagram.com/petco.official)

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