

Frequently Asked Recycling Questions:

Q1. We can recycle glass at home, why not in the hospitals?

A1. *Glass can be recycled from the hospitals too, but it must be placed in a rigid container to protect those transporting it in case it breaks.*

Q2. Where can I recycle tin cans?

A2. *In the rigid plastic stream*

Q3. What types of plastic can be recycled?

A3. *All rigid (hard) plastics with a recycling symbol and number can be placed in the rigid plastics stream and any soft plastic (i.e. bags, packaging) can be recycled in the soft plastics stream*

Q4. Why can't clean IV bags and tubing be recycled?

A4. *Anything that looks like medical waste is not handled by the recycling industry due to the potential for it to be contaminated. So placing these items in the recycling puts our recycling contract at risk.*

Q5. Can blue-wrap be recycled?

A5. *Clean blue wrap can be recycled in the soft plastics stream. Yes! Its plastic not paper!*

Q6. Why does the OR only have 2 bins and we have up to 4 on our unit?

A6. *Due to small volumes of paper produced in the OR's we have opted to allow non-confidential paper to be included with the rigid plastics in one bin. A second bin is required now for soft plastics to ensure they are recycled. See question 8 for more information on waste separation.*

Q7. Who do we contact to recycle printing cartridges?

A7. *The Support Service Manager at your site will be able to tell you. Contact details for SSM's can be found on the BISS intranet site, accessed from the VCH Connect intranet site:
http://vchconnect.vch.ca/programs_services/biss/support_services/page_66110.htm*

Q8. What happens the funds generated by refundable beverage containers?

A8. *At most sites where the recycling renewal program is implemented, staff will have the option to collect beverage containers with funds going to their department or to have housekeeping pick them up. If housekeeping picks up the beverage containers, funds will go to Food Services. Food services pays the deposit on all beverage containers going out on patient trays and does not generally recoup this cost, so the funds generated through recycling help to balance this deficit.*

Q9. Why do we have to separate materials into different bins if it all goes into one bin on the loading dock?

A9. *Not all recycling depots accept recyclable materials in one stream. If we were to lose the current contract, we would have to change the entire system.*

Separating out materials from the beginning provides us with more options for vendors and ensures the continuation of the program in future. In addition, research has shown that contamination is higher when all materials are accepted in one stream.

Q10. What happens to the recycling once it's been removed from my unit?

A10. *Housekeeping staff take the recycling to a secure location at your site where it is stored until the vendor collects it. The recycling is then transported to a sorting facility where it is bulked or bailed for onward reprocessing.*

Q11. How can I set up recycling at a leased site?

A11. *This needs to be set-up with the building property manager. Unfortunately the Health Authority cannot set-up recycling contracts with leased sites. For further details on how to set-up recycling at a leased site, please see the "Recycling Procedure for Leased Sites" document.*

Q12. Does non-confidential paper need to be kept out of the confidential shredding bins because of the cost?

A12. *No. A recent contract negotiation has kept the cost of confidential shredding down. Recycling all copy paper (including post-it notes and envelopes) through confidential shredding also decreases the risk that confidential information will end up in the garbage or mixed paper recycling.*

Q13. Why can't paper towel go into the mixed paper stream?

A13. *Paper towels typically are made from almost exclusively recycled product. The vendor will only allow a small percentage of our mixed paper (5%) to include paper towel. As such, we would most certainly exceed that amount if we tried to recycle all our paper towels from the hospitals.*

Don't see your question listed above? Contact Christine Ronning at christine.ronning@phsa.ca