

## Business & Multi-Family Recycling FAQs

### Q: What is the purpose of the Business & Multi-Family recycling ordinance?

A: The purpose of the ordinance is to increase the City's recycling rate by requiring all *commercial businesses and multifamily properties* to establish recycling programs. This includes homeowners associations (HOA) and condominium associations not receiving City solid waste collection services. These entities are responsible for generating 77% of the City's solid waste, and therefore, must be called upon to assist the City in achieving its recycling goals.

### Q: Why is the ordinance necessary?

The State of Virginia **requires** each municipality to recycle at least 25% of its Municipal Solid Waste (MSW). In 2005 the City of Alexandria's recycling rate fell below this threshold for the first time due to changes in State requirements concerning acceptable recyclable materials. In response, the City Council passed [Article H of Title 5](#) mandating commercial and multi-family recycling and established a goal of achieving a 35% recycling rate by 2011.

### Q: Who will be required to recycle?

A: The following commercial entities are now required to implement recycling programs.

- **Multifamily properties:** including apartment buildings and condominiums.
- **Commercial Businesses:** including, but not limited to office buildings, hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and retail stores.
- **Homeowners Associations** that contract for their own solid waste services.

### Q: What are multifamily properties required to recycle?

A: Multifamily properties are **required** to recycle:

- **mixed paper**—including corrugated cardboard, newspaper, magazines, junk mail, office paper, paper bags, and paperboard such as cereal boxes
- **commingled containers**—including glass jars and bottles, aluminum cans, plastic jugs and bottles and tin/steel cans.

### Q: What are businesses required to recycle?

A: Businesses are required to recycle the two materials they generate in largest quantities. This includes, but is not limited to:

- mixed paper and cardboard
- commingled containers (glass, plastic, aluminum, tin)
- clean wood/pallets
- scrap metal
- used motor oil, antifreeze, or hydraulic fluids
- used tires
- yard waste
- textiles or plastic film

### Q: Why are single-family homes exempt from the ordinance?

A: Single-family homes are not exempt from recycling. Single-family homes served by the City are required to recycle; however, the City will not enforce action against individual households. Rather, the City is working to encourage increased participation by single-family residents. Single-family homes or town houses **not served by the City** are also required to recycle. These entities will be treated like multifamily properties and will be required to submit Recycling Implementation Plans and Commercial Recycling Data Reports, or be subject to penalties (see below for more details).

**Q: Will single-family homes served by the City ever be fined for not participating in recycling?**

A: If the City demonstrates that it cannot achieve the State mandated 25% recycling rate by 2009, the City may face fines and may need to create a penalty system for non-compliance.

**Q: What is the role of the private companies that collect refuse and recycling from multifamily properties and businesses?**

Private solid waste companies or waste haulers contract directly with multifamily properties, homeowners associations, and businesses to provide collection services. Each year these companies will be responsible for submitting a Recycling Data Report that will provide the total number of tons collected for disposal vs. the total number of tons collected for recycling. In addition, they will be required to provide their customers with solid waste and recycling data for their specific property(s).

**Q: How much will haulers be fined if they do not report their tonnage information to the City?**

A: As in other northern Virginia jurisdictions, haulers that do not submit annual Recycling Data Reports each year will be issued a fine. Each individual violation shall be \$500 for the first violation, \$1,000 for the second violation, and \$1,500 for the third violation. If they do not provide the Recycling Data Report following the third violation, the City can revoke the company's hauler license.

**Q: What are the recycling requirements for businesses, multifamily properties, and homeowners associations?**

A: Multifamily properties, homeowners associations, and businesses are now required to submit Recycling Implementation Plans and Recycling Data Reports on alternating years or be subject to penalties as outlined in Ordinance #4438. The due date for Recycling Implementation Plans has been extended until December 31, 2008, after which the Office of Recycling will begin enforcement proceedings against those entities who have not submitted their required RIP forms for review. The first Recycling Data Reports will be required one year thereafter. Please refer to the [Recycling Works! Brochure](#) for more information.

**Q: What is a Recycling Implementation Plan?**

A Recycling Implementation Plan (RIP) provides the City with details regarding a property's trash and recycling collections. Recycling Implementation Plans are required by other jurisdictions in Northern Virginia. Details outlined in the plans include the name of the hauler, types of recyclables to be recovered, location and size of collection containers, number of employees or tenants, and all contact information for the property owner, homeowners association, or property management company.

**Q: What is a Recycling Data Report?**

A: Multifamily properties, homeowners associations, and businesses will also have to submit a Recycling Data Report every other year that estimates the total tonnage of trash and recyclables generated at their site(s) during the previous year. Such estimates may be required from the entity's hauler or estimated from information provided with the Recycling Data Report.

**Q: How do I know when to submit a Recycling Implementation Plan?**

A: Every other year in November, the City will send a notice to multifamily properties, homeowners associations, and businesses to notify them that their Recycling Implementation Plans are due. In order to facilitate this process, the City has developed a web-based form for submitting the Recycling Implementation Plan online. Those entities without internet access may request a hardcopy of the RIP form through instructions provided in the annual notification.

**Q: What is the penalty for not submitting a Recycling Implementation Plan?**

A: For the first two years of the program, multifamily properties, homeowners associations, and businesses will be issued a class four civil penalty if they do not submit their plans on time. Beginning in January 2008, however, the City will be able to categorize properties by how much solid waste they generated the previous year. Those properties generating *more than ten tons* of solid waste per year will be considered a **large generator** and will be issued a class three civil penalty if their Recycling Implementation Plan is not submitted on time. Those properties generating *less than ten tons* of refuse per year will be considered a **small generator** and issued a class five civil penalty if their Recycling Implementation Plans are not submitted on time. Monetary penalties for each of these classes of fines are detailed in the Ordinance #4438.

<http://www.alexrecycles.org/pdf/recyclingordinance.pdf>

**Q: How do I know when to submit a Recycling Data Report?**

A: Every other year in November, the City will send a notice to all multifamily properties, homeowners associations, and businesses to notify them that their Recycling Data Reports are due. In order to facilitate this process, the City is developing a web-based form for submitting the Recycling Data Report online. Those entities without internet access may request a hardcopy of the Report form through instructions provided in the annual notification.

**Q: What is the penalty for not submitting a Recycling Data Report?**

A: Penalties for failing to submit your Recycling Data Report will be the same as those listed above for failing to submit a Recycling Implementation Plan.

**Q: Why does the City require a Recycling Data Report from commercial entities, when it is already getting data from the haulers?**

A: The information collected from the haulers provides the City with aggregate data that helps calculate the citywide recycling rate, while the information provided by individual properties will help evaluate their programs. This information not only provides information on how a program can be improved, but it also helps the City to cross check that the aggregate numbers being provided by the haulers are accurate.

**Q: Will there be any fines or penalties for multifamily properties, homeowners associations, and businesses for not recycling?**

A: The City will not take enforcement action against properties for failing to participate in an established recycling program. Rather, the City will work with individual properties to encourage increased participation in the recycling program by their employees or tenants and by providing technical assistance and outreach. However, the City will impose fines on all entities who fail to comply with the requirements of Ordinance #4438 as outlined above.