



WasteCap Nebraska
On-site Waste and Recycling Review

OBSERVATIONS

XYZ Hospital is a surgical center providing surgical services for both in-patient and out-patient surgeries. There are currently 21 patient beds on third floor with overflow on the first floor. There are approximately 200 full and part time employees. Approximately 35 surgical procedures are performed daily with 10-15 patients staying overnight, on average. An informal Green Team has been formed and upper management supports their efforts to improve resource management.

Waste service is currently being provided by *Local Refuse Hauler*. Waste is collected in a 40-cubic yard compactor, emptied twice per week and a smaller compactor that is emptied daily. Although there are a couple of employees who personally collect and recycle newspapers and aluminum cans, there is not currently a well-established recycling program in place for the facility. The main goal of the waste review was to establish a collection system to capture recyclable cardboard and other recyclable materials and to provide guidance on establishing the program protocols.

Housekeeping services are provided by a contractor and include once per day collection in offices and twice per day collection in patient rooms. A local restaurant provides catering services in the cafeteria, using all disposable dishware. Although there is a small dishwasher, it would likely not support the use of reusable dishware. Each employee has been provided both a hot and a cold beverage container for use at work, although many still use the "Styrofoam" cups offered in the cafeteria. The walk-through seemed to indicate that most of the recyclable waste would be collected in the cafeteria, nourishment stations and in the basement where the supply and food prep areas exist. The food prep area had many items in individual serving containers that are recyclable and should be considered for inclusion in the recycling program. There were also a large number of pallets being generated at the site.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conduct a short (2-4 weeks) Pilot Program to see how much of each material is being generated and where the recyclables are being generated. Record the waste through photos, charts or any other way that works best. Try to get weights and/or volume estimates. Even if you end up throwing away the material, you now have a baseline from where to set your goals. WasteCap can assist with this process for a nominal fee.
 - a. Determine which materials you would like to target first. Generally, in your case, it would be cardboard, beverage containers and other food packaging
 - b. Provide educational materials to all employees and/or contractors who will be impacted by the pilot explaining:

- i. the goals of the pilot,
 - ii. where to recycle,
 - iii. how to recycle (i.e. flatten all boxes)
 - iv. Which materials can be combined or need to be separated
 - c. Choose container sizes, colors and shapes that will be utilized for collecting each type of material. It was noted that a large number of containers in the cafeteria could be used for collecting recyclables if they are well labeled and placed next to well-labeled trash containers.
 - d. Develop consistent and clear signage for all collection containers. Include both pictures and text. Printing signage in color has been shown to increase participation and reduce contamination of recyclables.
 - e. Make sure to always have a trash container located near any recycling containers to reduce the risk of contaminating recyclables with food waste or other trash.
2. Review waste hauling bills to determine costs per cubic yard and potential savings, include in your baseline assessment.
 - a. Once a program is established, you may be able to save money by reducing the frequency of pick-ups or container sizes
 - b. If you are generating a large enough volume of materials, there may also be payment for the materials
3. Contact Recycling companies that offer co-mingled recycling services (all in one container). Let them know the results of your pilot program and volumes of materials anticipated for recycling. They may want to visit to see where and how many containers should be placed at the building.
4. Develop a formalized, cross-functional **Green Team** to assist with the pilot project and future program planning. This team should include a representative from all departments including purchasing, maintenance, management, nursing and others.
 - a. WasteCap can offer Green Team planning and training services at a nominal fee.
 - b. Attend WasteCap Nebraska's bi-monthly Green Team Roundtables to learn from other organizations how to be successful with your waste reduction and recycling efforts as well as see first-hand how other businesses are Getting Green Done!
5. Participate in WasteCap Nebraska's **Strive Toward Sustainability** program, a training and recognition program for organizations' sustainable business achievements.
6. Contact WasteCap Nebraska (402-436-2384) for assistance with any of the above recommendations. With over 20-years in the waste and recycling industry, WasteCap can help make your program development a smooth transition and a successful program.



Large compactor collected twice per week



Small compactor collected daily