

Ask the Recycling Specialist

What to expect from a recycling program evaluation

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Why do DNR recycling specialists evaluate my recycling program?

DNR is required under state statutes to review at least 5% of responsible units (RU) each year to ensure that programs and activities funded by state recycling grants meet the requirements for an approved effective recycling program. RU program evaluations are one means we use to ensure that your responsible unit's effective recycling program is in compliance with current state regulations. We also use these as an opportunity to provide technical assistance and outreach on a variety of related topics, and as a means of facilitating networking among neighboring RUs.

When will my recycling program be evaluated?

Your program may be evaluated at any time, but your regional recycling specialist will notify you in advance of the visit. DNR's goal is to evaluate at a minimum 10% of all effective recycling programs every year.

How is my program chosen for an evaluation?

Recycling specialists evaluate programs based on a number of criteria. Depending on the needs of a RU, we determine whether an individual or group evaluation is most appropriate.

- √ There were prior problems with your program (perhaps your responsible unit is or was on probation);
- √ Complaints from responsible unit residents or businesses;
- √ Annual effective recycling program report data shows that your responsible unit is below the pounds per capita goals for recycling;
- √ Information from your recycling grant indicates that your program's costs per ton were higher than expected;
- √ Significant time has passed since the last evaluation;
- √ Referral from another DNR employee; or
- √ Your program is exceptionally good and the specialist wants to learn from your success!

How do I prepare for the recycling program evaluation?

- √ Be sure your responsible unit is in compliance with current regulations.
- √ Keep your records and documents up-to-date and organized. Make certain they are complete.
- √ Assure proper handling of recyclables.
- √ Periodically conduct self-evaluations.
- √ Correct any problems that arise immediately.
- √ If you have questions, don't hesitate to call your regional recycling specialist.

What happens during a recycling program evaluation?

Evaluations will be announced. The regional recycling specialist will call or write you a letter to schedule an appointment. On the day of the visit, you can expect a discussion with your recycling specialist on the

procedures your responsible unit uses to collect, process and market your recyclables. The specialist may ask to review your processing and marketing records, visit any drop-off sites, walk through any drop-off sites, walk through any facility you operate (such as a MRF) or observe a portion of curbside collection. The specialist will be interested in viewing any educational materials prepared for your residents. He/she may also want to visit a portion of the businesses and multi-family dwellings to gauge compliance at those entities.

The recycling specialist will also use this opportunity with you to discuss other topics. Examples of other topics include those listed below. If you have any topic you would like addressed, let your recycling specialist know.

- √ Recycling Efficiency Incentive Grants (REI)
- √ Open and Illegal Burning
- √ RU Program Efficiency
- √ Hauler Relations
- √ Non-Residential (Commercial Business) Recycling

What happens after a program evaluation?

That depends upon the results of the evaluation. After the evaluation, the specialist will send you a letter outlining the results of the evaluation. If no problems or deficiencies are found, the letter may be your only record of the program evaluation. If the recycling program evaluation uncovered a problem or a weakness with the recycling program, the regional recycling specialist will work with you to resolve the problem or strengthen the recycling program in that area. Enforcement measures may be taken depending on the severity of the problem and the responsible unit's degree of cooperation in solving the problem.

Contact 608/266-2111 or Waste.Materials@dnr.state.wi.us for further information.