

Communicating With Your Waste Hauler

Businesses Work with their Waste Hauler to Recycle

Working with Your Hauler

Wisconsin's recycling laws and all local ordinances require businesses and institutions to recycle office paper, newspaper, magazines, corrugated cardboard, steel and aluminum cans, glass bottles and jars, plastic containers (#1 & #2), major appliances, vehicular batteries, used motor oil, tires, and yard waste. The owner of the building is required to provide recycling services unless they assign responsibility to tenants in their lease. Businesses are also required to recycling fluorescent bulbs and computers.

Most businesses and institutions contract with a hauler or waste services provider for removal of the waste they generate. Many also have a contract with the same hauler for their recyclables. These essential services are part of the cost of running a business, and you should try to select a hauler who will be reliable, meets your needs and gives you the best deal.

Selecting a Hauler

Talk with neighboring businesses or local businesses similar to yours and find out who collects their waste and recyclables. Ask about their satisfaction with the service and what they are paying.

If the volume of trash and recyclables you generate each week is small, ask other businesses in the same building or immediately adjacent to yours if they would be interested in sharing services. If you are a small business with minimal generation of recyclables, consider having a willing employee take small quantities home or to a drop-off site (if available) to recycle.

Call local haulers and get price quotes. If you have a large business, the hauler may visit you to determine your needs. If your business is small, the hauler may ask you to estimate the volume of waste and recyclables you generate. Regardless of the size of your business, their quotes will be based on the size of the Dumpster(s) they will provide, frequency of pick-up, and the type and volume of recyclables.

Also, ask each hauler how they deal with:

- other parties using your Dumpster,
- overflowing containers,
- holidays on scheduled pick-up dates, and
- severe weather on scheduled pick-up dates.

Let the haulers know you are getting competitive bids.

Ask if you will receive a rebate or reduced rate based on the value of your recyclables. Note: You would have to generate a large amount (several tons a month) to off-set the hauler's cost for handling these.

Some recyclables are quite valuable, and if you generate a large amount, consider getting quotes from haulers that just collect recyclables, or who primarily profit from recycling rather than landfilling. Many paper recyclers offer office paper recycling services.

Contracts

Besides the basic cost of service, frequency of pick-up, days for pick-up, and size of containers, your contract with a hauler should also answer these questions:

- What is the length of the contract?
- What is the contract renewal date? (Note: many may renew automatically unless notice is given by the customer to cancel.)
- What are the cancellation terms?
- Can you change container size or frequency of pick-up without penalty?
- Will containers be clearly marked indicating what should be placed in them?
- Can extra bins/containers be provided for special events? At what cost?
- If your volume of trash decreases during the contractual period, can you get a rate reduction?
- What price increases are allowed during the contract period?
- What equipment and containers will the contractor provide?
- Will the contractor help train employees? Janitorial staff?
- Will recyclables and trash be picked up on the same days?
- Will revenues or rebates received from sale of recyclables be shared with customers?
- If so, what market information will be used to determine any rebate value, and how often will rebates be paid?
- Will contractor provide reports on amount of trash and recyclables collected?
- Is a minimum amount of recyclables required?

Cost Savings Tips

Do you know what's in your trash? A waste sort will help identify the types of trash you generate so you can evaluate what can be reduced through better purchasing, reuse, recycling or composting. The better you manage your materials before they end up in the trash, the bigger your cost savings will be.

Are your Dumpsters or bins full on pick-up days? If not, reduce the number of pick-ups or size of the bins/Dumpsters.

Are you doing a good job collecting and separating your recyclables from the trash? Ask your hauler how to prepare your recyclables to keep them free from contamination and make them easier for the hauler to manage.

Negotiation Tips

Remember, *you are the customer*. The hauler should be meeting your needs. Expect the same level of service that you would from any other service provider.

Obtain more than one bid. The difference in cost and level of service among haulers can vary significantly.

Do not assume anything. Carefully review the services each hauler will provide and all the terms in the contract for the provider you select.

Do not be intimidated by form contracts. Cross out any provisions you do not like. If the hauler will not agree to reasonable requests, contact other haulers.

Pay close attention to duration of contract and any automatic renewal provisions. Long-term contracts may not be in your best interest.

Avoid clauses that permit the hauler to unilaterally raise rates during the life of the contract.

Consider how the contract can be terminated if you sell or move your business or otherwise wish to end the contract.

What are your rights if the hauler does not perform satisfactorily? Include some minimum performance standards in the contract.

Reprinted with permission from Waukesha County