

Zero Waste in Action

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Mandatory Recycling: Collier County, Florida, USA

Summary

Collier County implemented the first mandatory recycling ordinance for non-residential properties in Florida in 2004 following a voluntary program that failed to produce substantial results. The policy was estimated to save more than \$15 million in avoided disposal costs over 20 years

Population

339,600

Year enacted

2004

Who's affected

Businesses

Overview of Recycling Requirements

Collier County implemented the first mandatory recycling ordinance for non-residential properties in Florida in 2004 following a voluntary program that failed to produce substantial results. All non-residential properties must recycle paper, cardboard, ferrous metal, and plastic, aluminum, and glass containers if they generate more than 96 gallons of material per month. Properties that do not generate 96 gallons or more of any of these materials must designate one or more of the materials to recycle. The Board of the County Commissioners may require other materials, such as organic waste, to be recycled if a recycling market exists and is cost-effective to use.

The ordinance applies to any business, non-profit organizations, or institution such as government, schools, churches, and hospitals located within the unincorporated areas of the county. Everglades City adopted the ordinance through an Interlocal Recycling Agreement, and the city of Naples adopted a similar ordinance modeled after the county in 2008.

The ordinance was revised in 2009 to require temporary events and venues to recycle, as well as requiring multi-family properties to provide recycling services to residents.



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Properties are exempt if they produce less than one 96-gallon container of trash twice a week, if no recyclable materials are generated, or if no market/collection system exists for the recyclable materials. Hardship exemptions are also granted for a period of one year and then reviewed.

Non-residential properties are served by an open-market hauling system for trash and recycling, with a certificate of operation required for recycling haulers. Collier County oversees the residential recycling through a franchised collection system.

Policy Highlights and Costs

To pass the ordinance in 2004, the county worked with the local business community to include the following provisions:

- Required businesses to recycle as many materials as practical
- Lifted land development code requirements if there are conflicts with the ordinance. These include possible exemptions for the required number of spaces of enclosures around waste and recycling containers.
- Created an education and outreach program, including an awards program, and to conduct a report on the efficacy of the ordinance.
- Provided a 12-month grace period before enforcement and pollution control.
- Set minimum standards for a business to be in compliance, including providing recycling containers and the choice to contract for collection services of self-haul materials.

Oversight and implementation of the program was expected to cost the county \$2.7 million over 20 years while providing \$18 million in savings from avoided disposal costs at an out-of-county landfill.

Event Recycling and Venue Requirements

Event organizers must seek a permit with the Solid Waste Management Department's Temporary Special Events Recycling Plan. The plan focuses on "reasonable measures" to promote recycling, particularly for cardboard, paper, and beverage containers. Venues must submit an annual plan.

During the event, at least one recycling container must be next to each solid waste container and all containers must be properly labeled. The county provides recycling containers on loan and provides staff assistance for setting up recycling.

Organizers must include information about recycling in promotional literature, signage, and temporary event announcements, and are encouraged to host a pre-event recycling workshop for vendors and volunteers to promote recycling. Following the event, organizers must submit their invoices for waste and recycling services, or provide copies of their receipts from self-hauling recyclables. Events that generate less than one 96-gallon container of waste are exempt.



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Policy Background

After conducting a small pilot program that showed 3 out of 4 businesses could save money with recycling by reducing trash costs, Collier County introduced a business recycling ordinance in 2002. Due to business and community group opposition, the ordinance was not passed. The county instead chose to work with the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce on an 18-month pilot program to encourage voluntary recycling for Collier's 3,200 commercial enterprises. The results were disappointing, with the number of companies recycling rising only from 10% to 12%. This led the county Board of Commissioners to reconsider and improve the ordinance before passage in 2004.

Education and Enforcement

The county offers waste and recycling assessments, educational presentations, brochures, a training DVD, and technical assistance to help businesses comply with the ordinance. The Waste Reduction Awards program recognizes businesses that go above and beyond the minimum requirements of the ordinances with "exceptional and/or innovative recycling and/or waste reduction efforts. Businesses had 12 months to comply with the ordinance before enforcement began. The county enforces the ordinance when staff members are on a property to investigate another complaint. A warning is issued for the first offense with possible fines for the second offense. To demonstrate compliance, properties may be asked to provide a service agreement with a contracted hauler of self-hauling receipts from a recycling facility. The county visited more than 400 businesses in 2005-2006 and found 98% were in compliance.

Downloads

[Full Recycling Ordinance for Collier County](#)

[Recycling Ordinance Summary for Collier County](#)

[Recycle at Work Brochure](#)

[Recycling at Events in Collier County](#)

More information

[Business Recycling in Collier County](#)

[Collier County Business Recycling Initiative: Building Partnerships and Benefiting the Bottom Line](#)

[Business Training Video](#)

[Recycling Ordinance and Interlocal Agreements for Collier County](#)



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