

# Zero Waste in Action

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## Universal Recycling: Portland, Oregon, USA

### Summary

Multi-family properties are required to provide recycling services to tenants and collect common recyclable materials. Property owners must make recycling as convenient as trash and provide education to tenants once a year.

### Population

609,000

### Year enacted

Began in 1995, amended in 2004 and 2010

### Who's affected

Apartments

## Overview of Recycling Requirements

Multi-family properties must provide recycling services to residents. The properties must collect all the same materials that are recyclable through the residential program, including plastic bottles and tubs, metal containers, glass bottles and paper products such as cardboard, magazines, newspaper, office paper and milk cartons. Multi-family units (MFUs) are defined as five or more units and Oregon state law requires dwellings of five or more units provide access to recycling for tenants.

Recycling bins should be as conveniently located as trash containers. For units with space limitations, the ordinance includes specific guidance on how much service should be provided based on the number of residents. Materials must be collected in a two-sort system with glass collected separately from other recyclables.

## Background

The recycling system for MFUs was standardized in 2005 but compliance took until 2010. The same ordinance also requires businesses to recycle, sets recycling goals for construction and demolition recycling, and spells out how much space should be allocated for recycling containers in the construction of new commercial properties.



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## Enforcement

The city has the right to inspect properties for compliance, either through a city initiative or following a complaint. If a violation occurs, the city gives the property owner 30 days to correct the situation and provides assistance and support. If the issue continues, penalties start at \$200 and may reach \$1,500 for continued noncompliance.

There is no responsibility on the tenant to recycle or for the property owner to ensure the tenants do recycle. A 75% diversion goal is not a legal mandate and is not tracked.

## Education

Property owners are required to provide tenants with information about how to use the recycling system at least once per year, and must provide this information to new tenants within 30 days of move-in.

The City of Portland works with the regional government to provide outreach and education assistance to property owners and tenants on the recycling system. They have developed recycling guides for property managers and tenants, and for tenant move-out.

## Future Plans

Portland is researching and running pilot projects collecting food scraps for composting from MFUs, in partnership with Portland State University. Multi-family properties such as group homes, assisted living facilities or other establishments with centralized food service may be required to compost food scraps. The city will determine which facilities and businesses must meet this requirement.

## Downloads

[Portland Recycles Plan](#)

[Portland Rules Update on Business, Multi-Family, and Construction Recycling](#)

## More information

[Portland Rules on Solid Waste and Recycling Collection](#)

[Garbage, Recycling, and Composting in Portland](#)



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