

At-Store Plastic Bag Recycling Collection Toolkit

For Grocers and Other Retailers

Provided by

progressive  alliance

*Best manufacturing practices
Environmental leadership
Sound public policy.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Progressive Bag Alliance has developed this toolkit to help make it easier for retailers of all sizes to implement at-store plastic bag recycling programs and facilitate the recovery of clean, dry grocery and retail carryout bags, as well as other polyethylene films. This toolkit provides retailers with a step-by-step process to implement an at-store plastic bag recycling program including: instructions on **required bag language, setting up collections bins, signage, bag consolidation, sale of material, and consumer education.**

California retailers distribute more than 19 billion plastic retail carry out bags annually. Less than 5% are currently recycled. At-store plastic bag recycling programs can help provide California consumers with a convenient network of more than 7,000 locations for bag recycling.

Benefits of Plastic Bags and Plastic Bag Recycling:

- Plastic carryout bags, which can be made strong enough to hold up to 25 pounds of goods, reduce the need for double bagging
- Plastic carryout bags are water resistant and ideal for sports, travel and outdoor "reuses"
- Thanks to advances in resins, today's plastic bags use 25 percent less material than bags made in 1987, without compromising strength
- Plastic bags are recycled into such products as plastic lumber, new plastic bags, trash-can liners, flower pots and drain pipes
- Plastic lumber, made with recycled plastic, holds nails and screws better than wood, is virtually maintenance free and lasts for 50 years
- The number of plastics recycling businesses has nearly tripled over the past several years, with more than 1,700 businesses handling and reclaiming post-consumer plastics
- The post-consumer plastics recycling industry provides jobs for more than 52,000 American workers

Additional Information

If you need assistance in setting up this program, we suggest that you contact your plastic bag manufacturer/supplier or distributor for additional help. AB 2449 requires the "the manufacturer of plastic carryout bags shall develop educational materials to encourage the reducing, reusing and recycling of plastic bags and shall make those materials available to stores required to comply with this chapter."

For more information on plastic bag recycling programs and to access an electronic copy of this toolkit, please visit www.progressivebagalliance.com.

II. BAG PRINTING, COLLECTION, AND CONSOLIDATION

Bag Printing

As of July 1, 2007, all plastic carryout bags being used in the stores are required to include the following language printed on each bag:

"PLEASE RETURN TO A PARTICIPATING STORE FOR RECYCLING"

The above language is required to be displayed on the bag in a manner visible to a consumer and in all capital letters. To achieve proper visibility, it is recommended that the above language be printed in at least 24 point font size in a prominent place on the bag where customers can clearly see the message, such as the top of the bag. To support the public education intent of the law, it is suggested that the above phrase not be printed in the gusset of the bag.

Setting Up Collection Bins

The first step in setting up bag collection bins is to determine the size, location and type of collection bin you need. It is important to obtain and use bins that deter contamination. Good signage is key. Make sure that the bin mouth has limited access, but is not too small, and that consumers are able to read the sign and recognize that the bin is for bags only – not garbage. It is good to place the signage close to the bin opening and use transparent bins to help with quality control.

Bin Location

The bins should be placed in a visible area of your store – preferably near the front entrance. Be sure to keep in mind that the bins need to be durable enough to withstand ongoing floor cleaning in a high-traffic area, and that bins should be placed in protected areas unless they are designed to be placed outdoors.

Choosing a Bin

Retailers have a variety of options when deciding on the type of bin to use. Regardless of the bin used, a plastic can liner must be utilized. In all cases, the collected film can be recycled in a clear bag. Bagged films can be easily handled for loading or unloading during transfer or baling activities.

Examples of Bin Options Include:

Link-A-Bag Systems

Open Frame Racks in place of conventional bins have proven to be effective in maintaining quality. This type of collection bin involves a rack-style support that holds a clear polyethylene plastic bag. The company claims that the clear bag reinforces the fact that the receptacle is for recyclables only, thus reducing contamination. Packs of bags and custom graphics space are available.

For additional information contact: Link-a-Bag Systems, 1211 South Salina Street, Syracuse, NY 13202. 1-800-321-8154 or www.linkabag.com

NOTE: Other systems similar to the Link-a-Bag program are available from most grocery bag manufacturers.



NextLife Recycling

NextLife Recycling offers a complete plastic bag collection recycling program. The company sells its customers three different styles of collection bins. The first of these is a corrugated polypropylene bin and lid. This type of bin accommodates a large, inner plastic bag liner into which plastic bags are deposited. The bins are available in different sizes and configurations. They also offer a solid plastic bin frame with a separate bin inside. This model is designed for permanent, long-term use and can be held in place with bolts. If used outside, however, it needs to be kept in a covered area because it has an open top. The third bin style is a heavy-duty bin capable of withstanding extreme outdoor weather.

For additional information contact: NextLife Recycling Alliance, 1801 S. Federal Highway, Suite 305, Delray Beach, FL 33483. 1-877-NXTLIFE, 1-877-698-5433 or www.nextlife-recycling.com

Diversi-Plast

Diversi-Plast offers a line of collections bins made of corrugated plastic. The material can be manufactured from recycled plastic and is available in a wide range of colors and designs. The bins can also accommodate printing and can be produced with a non-skid coating on one side. The bins are said to be both durable and versatile, and extremely lightweight. The corrugated plastic (plastic liners fused to plastic fluting) is moisture proof and chemical resistant.

For additional information contact: Diversi-Plast, 7425 Laurel Avenue, Golden Valley, MN 55426. 763-540-9700 or www.diversi-plast.com



Rubbermaid

Rubbermaid offers Plaza Containers that can be used indoors or outdoors and function well in all weather conditions. The side-mounted, hinged door offers full interior access for "no lift" bag removal. The tie-down feature in the bin base provides for a secure installation. The bin can be purchased in several different colors with an imprintable area ideal for signage.


For information on where to purchase Rubbermaid bins log onto: <http://www.rcpworksmarter.com/>



Signage

The most critical aspect for program success is to have clear signs on the recycling bins that direct the customer to the bins and instruct on what bags to place in the bins. All plastic bag collection bins should be properly labeled "Recycle Your Plastic Shopping Bags Here" or "Recycle Plastic Shopping Bags Only" and should be lined with a clear polyethylene plastic bag to ease collection. In general, signage must clearly and simply communicate to consumers what you want them to do. It is helpful to have the signage on the top of the bin or close to the opening to maximize visibility.

Provide specific instructions, such as:

- Please recycle clean, dry plastic bags here
- Empty bags and turn them inside out
- Do NOT include receipts or other debris
- Place all your empty plastic bags into one bag
- Please include: plastic shopping bags, grocery bags, plastic newspaper bags, plastic drycleaning bags, all clean, clear bags labeled with  or 
- Do NOT include: food wrap (e.g. Saran Wrap), plastic bags or other film that has had direct contact with food or organic material
- Thank you for recycling!

The Progressive Bag Alliance has developed at-store signage for your convenience, following are examples:


Recycle Bin Sign: The recycle bin sign provides instructions on how to recycle plastic bags and film. The sign should be placed near the plastic bag recycling bin/receptacle



PLEASE RECYCLE
Clean, Dry Plastic Bags Here

TURN BAGS INSIDE OUT | NO RECEIPTS OR OTHER ITEMS INSIDE

Please include the following:

- Checkout bags
- Retail bags (no drawstring handles)
- Plastic newspaper bags
- Plastic dry cleaning bags
- All clean, clear bags labeled with 

DO NOT INCLUDE the following:

(The following are considered fine contaminants)

- NO food wrap (e.g. Saran Wrap)
- NO film (bags) that has had direct contact with food or organic material

THANK YOU!



PLEASE RECYCLE
CLEAN, DRY PLASTIC BAGS HERE

In partnership with the Progressive Bag Alliance

Recycling Poster: The recycling poster helps raise awareness about recycling plastic bags. The poster can be placed at-store near checkout/cashiers or in the store window for visibility outside



Recycling Small Sign: The small recycling sign helps raise awareness about recycling plastic bags. The sign can be placed anywhere at-store, but most effective at checkout

Recycle Bin: This is an example of how clear signage should be placed on your recycle bin



Print-ready files of these images are available at www.progressivebagalliance.com.

Consolidation of Plastic Shopping Bags

Developing a consolidation strategy is important. Once you have designed the basic collection scheme, you must consider how best to transfer material to a central location. A comprehensive plan to collect plastic films as part of your regular waste management activity can minimize the marginal labor and cost requirements of diverting plastic films.

Ideally, move material from the front of the store directly to a designated bin in the back of the store to avoid accidental contamination while being stored. The central receiving point should be located near the recycling point for other material to maximize the efficiency of transferring materials together.

Assign a designated staff person for the recycling program. Although little maintenance of the bins is required, staff should be assigned to monitor the bins and empty them when necessary. After the collection bags (filled with empty plastic shopping bags and other film) have been brought to the back of the store, the retailer has two options:

1. Central Distribution Facility

The preferred method of dealing with large "bags of bags" is to ship them to a central distribution facility. The bags at the individual stores should then be collected and loaded onto an outgoing truck heading back to such a facility. The bags will then be compacted and baled at the distribution center along with other film materials such as stretch film, shrink, and bundling film before being shipped to the recycler or processor. If the volume of material being collected is large enough, arrangements can be made with the recycler to have an empty trailer located on site. This reduces costs and improves efficiency.

2. No Central Distribution Facility

Retailers that do not have access to a central distribution facility will need to collect their bags and either send them to or have them picked up by a broker, waste management firm or recycler. The material will be consolidated with material from other outlets, baled and then shipped to the recycling firm for reprocessing.

Note: If you have difficulty finding sources to purchase or handle this material we suggest you contact your bag manufacturer/supplier.

III. SALE OF MATERIAL

Once you have determined the volume generated within a specific time period, the most important step is establishing a working relationship with a film recycling company. The amount of collected material and the level of contamination will dictate the price you receive for the collected material. Transportation costs are typically a major factor when determining whether a film recovery program is feasible. The closer the collected film is to the recycling market, the lower the transportation costs will be and the more likely it will be sustainable.

If your plastic bag and scrap film generation is less than one ton per month, utilizing a drop-off location may be the most economical way to recycle your plastic bags and film.

The American Plastics Council website will help you find a market that is suitable for your recycling program. You can visit <http://www.plasticbagrecycling.org/searchMarketBiz.php> to identify market opportunities and drop-off locations.

U.S. Film Recyclers

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| ARKANSAS Advanced Environmental Recycling Technologies (AERT) Jenny Poe, 479-756-7406 | NEW YORK American Ecoboard Darryl Braun-Duin, 540-667-5191 |
| FLORIDA NextLife Recycling/Sun Valley Worldwide Jeff Silver, 561-330-8520 | South Carolina Hilex Poly Bag 2 Bag Recycling Team, 800-432-1050 |
| IOWA Plastic Recycling of Iowa Falls, Inc. Bob Mestdagh, 800-338-1438 | VIRGINIA Trex Company Ray Hampton, 540-542-6358 |

U.S. Brokers

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|--|--|
| FLORIDA Diversified Plastics Richard Denison, 954-977-4040 Noble Recycling Frank Bentivegna, 561-536-0595 | MICHIGAN Recycling Concepts Tim White/Renee Searles, 616-942-8888 |
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IV. CONSUMER EDUCATION

The enclosed tools will communicate to customers, as well as grocery and retail store employees, about the most effective and proper methods of using and recycling plastic bags. The program explains how to properly dispose of plastics bags for recycling at a grocery or retail store location.

Program Logos

These logos can be used in signage, collateral or printing on bags. Use them alone or in conjunction with other proper bag use messages.

- Recycle Every Bag logo
- Bag It Right logo
- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle logo

Recycling Poster

The recycling poster helps raise awareness about recycling plastic bags. The poster can be placed at-store near checkout/cashiers or in the store window for visibility outside.

Recycling Small Sign

The small recycling sign helps raise awareness about recycling plastic bags. The sign can be placed at-store at checkout.

Recycle Bin Sign

The recycle bin sign provides instructions on how to recycle plastic bags and film. The sign should be placed near the plastic bag recycling bin/receptacle.

Bag It Right Reminder Sign

The Bag It Right sign helps remind baggers and checkers to fill each bag appropriately (with at least eight items) and to only double bag when absolutely necessary. The sign should be placed at the bagging station and/or checkout.

Bag It Right Button

This is an example of how the Bag It Right or Recycle Every Bag logo can be used. The button can be worn by baggers to raise awareness among store employees and customers.

Just Ask For One Bag Divider

The Just Ask for One messaging on the divider helps communicate to customers about proper bag use. It helps capture customers' attention at the point of use.

Recycle Every Bag Logo and Slogans

The logo and slogans are to be used for printing on plastic bags.

Bag It Right Logo and Slogans

The logo and slogans are to be used for printing on plastic bags.

Checkout Bag Ads

The checkout bag advertisements are meant to communicate to customers about proper bag use and disposal. These can be used at-store, as posters outside of the store and in company collateral and advertising.