

Generally, staples are not considered a technical problem for the recycling process. However, in some areas of the country, staples create a problem for recycling collection operations that do not handle stapled boxes. The justification given is that workers have a high rate of injury (cuts and scratches) from handling the stapled boxes. The health and safety aspects are a problem to the recycling companies so they often establish policies stating that they simply will not handle stapled boxes.

Recycle Other Wastes Produced in Packaging, Shipping and Warehouse

Recyclers are available for paper (paper, cardboard), wood (pallets, frames, skids), metals (hardware, fasteners), and glass. If the materials cannot be reused within the facility, check to see if it can be reused or recycled externally. Keep dedicated containers in work areas as receptacles for each type of material. Also, if you use starch peanuts for packing, note that they are often biodegradable.

Shelby Williams Industries Inc. Case Study

Corrugated cardboard from cartons received with raw materials in addition to the dunnage wrapped around pallets of product cartons created large amounts of scrap for Shelby Williams Industries. Historically, the scrap was picked up by recycler. However, it was suggested that this material was appropriate for use as carton inserts and furniture edge protectors, which Shelby Williams was purchasing by the thousands each week.

In 1992, a small, in house department was established to re-cut the scrap cardboard into inserts. Machines were designed and developed by Shelby Williams employees to die cut and crease edge protectors and other inserts. Even though the project was successful, the remaining odd shaped scrap that remained after cutting was not acceptable by recyclers, and many smaller boxes did not convert to the insert sizes required. Shelby Williams had no boiler where scrap might be used as fuel.

To resolve this problem, Shelby Williams made arrangements with a local recycler to take all their scrap cardboard for no cost. The recycler then uses Shelby Williams "homemade" cutting and creasing machines to make all the inserts that Shelby Williams needs at no charge, or for only a few cents each to cover labor costs.

The net result is a reduction of the cost of inserts from an average of 22 cents each to about 3 cents each. Applied over 3000 to 5000 inserts per week, significant savings were realized. Also, most of the cardboard is re-used rather than recycled which prevents additional energy usage associated with recycling.

Web Links

Packaging Association Links <http://www.napco.com/packaginglinks.html>

Here are links to over 50 associations relating to packaging of manufacturing items, including ASTM, Institute of Packaging Professionals, etc.

National Wooden Pallet & Containers Association <http://www.nwpca.com>

An association that can lead you to pallet experts and help you meet your recycling needs.