

Corporate Universal Waste Recycling: Ensuring Compliance, Generating Savings

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The concept of incorporating “green” practices into business operations is well-known to most large companies¹. Incorporating green business practices can provide the opportunity to connect with environmentally-conscious purchasers and consumers through [publicizing of green initiatives](#), and may contribute directly to the bottom line by increasing the efficiency of business operations.

One critical green practice for large companies to implement is universal waste (UW) recycling. “[Universal waste](#)” is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency designation for common hazardous material-containing products become regulated when the products can no longer be used under special, streamlined hazardous waste management rules². These wastes, including spent fluorescent lamps and batteries as well as mercury-containing ballasts, thermostats, and in some cases, electronics are [required by law to be recycled](#) in most states.

Compliance with waste disposal laws, environmentally sustainable business, and green marketing are goals for most large firms. But implementing UW recycling across the complex, multi-facility structure of a large corporation can pose challenges including:

Multi-site UW recycling challenges can include minimizing recycling costs, ensuring organization-wide participation, and measuring recycling progress.

- Minimizing recycling costs
- Ensuring and documenting organization-wide participation
- Measuring recycling progress against corporate goals

A corporate UW recycling program can [both solve these challenges and generate additional benefits](#) like green marketing opportunities and reduced liability for improper disposal, as well as the negative publicity that often occurs when such activity is discovered.

Minimizing Recycling Costs

An immediate advantage of implementing a [corporate UW recycling program](#) is cost reductions and time savings. As in most retail transactions, buying recycling services “in bulk” is usually cheaper than buying such services individually for each facility, and many recycling companies are willing to provide discounts when they are guaranteed business over a portfolio of facilities and an extended period of time. In addition, company-wide programs standardize the types and source of recycling services, thereby streamlining the UW recycling process. Individual facilities don’t have to spend time researching and sourcing their own recycling solutions, resulting in significant collective time savings.

¹ <http://reason.com/archives/2006/02/01/the-age-of-corporate-environme>

² <http://www.epa.gov/osw/hazard/wastetypes/universal/>

Mark Scott, senior chief operating engineer for CBRE property management in Suwanee, GA recalled his company's situation before putting a [corporate recycling program](#) into place. "It was very frustrating" he said. "We had to spend a lot of time tracking down local vendors, and they were difficult to manage because they all had different ways of doing things."

Ensuring Compliance

Corporate recycling programs can also increase facility participation rate, improving company-wide UW disposal [compliance and minimizing liability](#) for improper disposal. If individual facilities are allowed to "go it alone" and remain responsible for their own recycling, it is likely that some facilities see recycling as a cost burden and will not see the value—for their facility or the corporation as a whole—in taking the time and effort to set up a recycling program. Non-participation by even a small number of facilities can not only inhibit the overall green marketing and efficiency goals of the organization, but just one waste violation detected by an environmental regulatory agency can also result in large fines. And while thousands of dollars in fines are never good, the negative press from a violation can significantly tarnish the green reputation of a company and reduce purchaser and consumer confidence in the environmental concerns of the organization.

Measuring Recycling Progress

One of the difficulties large organizations with a Nation-wide presence faces, is the inability to find a single recycler to manage their entire portfolio's locations. Ideally, a corporate recycling program allows a large company to engage a single vendor to [manage their recycling and reporting needs](#). Standardized reporting metrics vary by company but should always include basic requirements:

- Recycling progress against goals set
- Corporate, regional, state and/or facility level compliance
- Corporate, regional and/or facility level spending
- Environmental impact quantification metrics, such as pounds or units recycled and the impact that their recycling effort has on their shared "communities"

Without company-wide, standardized reporting, the process of collecting, analyzing, and comparing data for each facility is difficult. The problem is further complicated if multiple vendors are used to address their recycling needs. If data is missing, unavailable or inconsistent across multiple facilities, quantifying recycling progress—or identifying a non-participating facility—may not even be possible, thereby jeopardizing their sustainability effort.

Inability to quantify recycling progress can turn into a missed opportunity for marketing green efforts to customers. Being able to back up a [commitment to sustainable practices with hard data](#) on pounds of mercury recycled is a greater green selling point than simply stating, "We're an environmentally-friendly company."

A Fresh Approach to Corporate UW Recycling

One company that develops corporate UW recycling programs for large, multi-site organizations is [Air Cycle Corporation](#).

Environmentally Friendly Solutions for Everyday Challenges
Recycling & food waste diversion

Air Cycle helps clients start or centralize multi-site recycling programs to ensure regulatory compliance and maximize cost-savings. Air Cycle has designed and facilitated recycling programs for firms in a variety of industries, from large real estate companies like [CBRE](#) and Lincoln Property Company, to hoteliers like [Marriott International](#), to retailers with smaller facilities like Teavana. Air Cycle has a program in place that helps design corporate programs to achieve three objectives: cost and time savings, ease of participation and compliance, and the ability to track and publicize recycling progress.

Comprehensive Solutions, Broad Spectrum of Products, Services, and a National Footprint

Air Cycle offers a vast variety of products, services, and resources to meet your company's needs, which is supported by a National network of permitted recycling facilities. Air Cycle takes a programmed approach when working with a customer to set up their recycling program. The effort begins with a workshop to discuss the company's recycling needs. From there a program is designed around the size and types of facilities that will be participating, along with the types of products which they would like to recycle. A corporate recycling program typically includes lamps, batteries, lighting ballasts and electronics. Generally speaking, large foot print facilities (>150,000 sf.) are able to utilize the company's [Bulb Eater bulk recycling offering](#), while their [EasyPak™ Pre-paid recycling containers](#) for smaller locations. Air Cycle will then work to collect operational and locational information on the facilities provided, from which to develop reporting protocols.

Bulb Eater® crushes spent fluorescent lamps of any length into 100% recyclable material while capturing over 99.99% of the vapors released.

[Bulb Eater®](#) – Drum Top Fluorescent Lamp Crushers

- Reduces labor by up to 20 hours per 1,000 lamps
- Save up to 50% on recycling costs
- Minimize storage space by up to 80% with lamp crushing
- Certified online training program
- [VRSU Premium](#) – crushes straight & u-tube lamps
- [Bulb Eater® 3](#) – crushes straight linear lamps, U-tubes, & CFL's



[EasyPak™](#) – Pre-Paid Recycling Containers. These recycling containers are the safe and easy way to recycle your facilities fluorescent bulbs, batteries, ballasts, and electronics. One price includes everything you need: the UN Certified recycling container, shipping to the recycling center, recycling fees, and certificates of recycling.

- Convenient – Recycling reports and certificates available online
- Sustainable – Automatically receive replacement containers
- Comprehensive – Recycling and return shipping fees are pre-paid



Nationwide Waste Pickup – If you have large amounts waste, then you will save significant time and money utilizing bulk pickups. Bulk pickups can handle unlimited quantities of crushed or intact fluorescent lamps, ballasts, batteries, and electronic waste.

- Large quantity bulk recycling pickups
- Certificate of Recycling confirming the proper handling of your waste



EnviroPure – This organic, self-contained, continual feed system is designed to transform food waste into a grey-water effluent that can be safely disposed of into existing municipal sanitary sewer systems. This is a great fit for any commercial kitchen operation such as schools, hotels, hospitals, and other large service kitchens.

- Eliminates transportation cost for food waste
- Reduces janitorial labor and supply costs
- Creates positive environmental impact
- Low maintenance – NO odors, NO sludge build up, NO clean outs



Cost and Time Savings



Air Cycle's [corporate recycling programs](#) create time and cost savings for individual facilities, because they don't have to search out the lowest-cost recycling solution. Mark Scott of CBRE has experienced [these](#)

Organizations can often save thousands of dollars per year when ordering recycling products in bulk with an Air Cycle corporate program.

[benefits at his facilities](#): "The initial setup of the program and our current recycling process is streamlined and very user friendly, especially compared to what we were doing before." Air Cycle established a [web portal for CBRE](#) that any CBRE location can access, which contains the product and services that CBRE selected as part of the scoping session. Now Scott and his staff can access the portal from any internet connection, log in to their Air Cycle-created web portal, and select the products and services they need, at their corporate price schedule. The facilities also have access to compliance reporting and tracking, as well as the ability to retrieve their on-line recycling certificates. This capability eliminates the need to maintain paper copies on site, in the event the facility is audited by State or Federal compliance personnel.

Ease of Use and Compliance

Air Cycle corporate programs are easy to use and highly adaptable for any situation. While a web portal may be appropriate for a large user with locations spread throughout the United States, an [auto reorder setup](#) may represent a better solution for another, particularly if the locations are established with p-card or credit card capabilities for smaller purchases. The company set up process works hand in hand with a company's unique policies and procedures. Air Cycle also provides assistance with the development and implementation process that recognizes the need for effective field communication to ensure that the corporate vision that created the need for the program is effectively passed on to end users to ensure "buy in" at the facility level.

Starting the program is easy. The company takes a consultative approach with its Program Implementation Process, which recognizes that for a program to succeed it must also be easy for the personnel responsible for implementing it at the facility level. There is no complicated paperwork or forms to complete - Air Cycle walks you through the process. Once a program is set up, it is backed by dedicated phone and online support personnel.

An easy-to-use program encourages a high participation rate, ultimately increasing overall company compliance with UW regulations. Since the program starts with reporting, corporate environmental health, management and safety personnel normally responsible for this activity will be able to monitor compliance at corporate, regional and facility levels, through Air Cycle's on-line reporting tools. [Paul Hildreth, project director at Marriott International, discusses his experience with Air Cycle corporate programs](#): "We believe that Air Cycle offers our hotels an easier and more eco-friendly option to dispose of fluorescent bulbs. It's a great solution for hotels in states where regulations are continuously evolving to meet environmental demands."

Tracking and Publicizing Green Progress

Companies that do not have the ability to easily measure the progress of their UW recycling programs face two problems: they cannot track their waste recycled, which in turn does not allow them to document and publicize recycling efforts to customers or regulatory officials. [Air Cycle recycling programs incorporate several tools](#) to make sure companies using the programs can measure recycling progress and market results.



- The cornerstone of Air Cycle tracking and publication tools are their web-based [recycling reports](#). These reports track every type of universal waste that each individual facility recycles, and displays the totals in sortable categories including year, month, and waste type. Recycling reports can be viewed for individual facilities or for the company as a whole. Reports display information in an easy-to-understand graphical interface, but include the detailed data that provide a solid foundation for green marketing campaigns.



Air Cycle recycling tracking tools:

- Recycling reports
- Container tracking
- Certificates of recycling



- The EasyPak™ recycling [container tracking](#) tool enables company employees to view the status of purchased EasyPak™ containers. Facilities simply fill EasyPak™ containers with the applicable lamp, battery, ballast, or electronic waste, and then ship them to the Air Cycle approved recycling center, using the pre-paid UPS shipping label that is provided when the original container is shipped to them. With container tracking, a company can see at any time which of its facilities are actually ordering, filling, and returning EasyPak™ containers, and which facilities have neglected to use them. For a corporate recycling program to be successful, high participation rates are imperative. This also allows corporate Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) personnel to monitor facility participation, which in turn ensures compliance with the Corporate mandate. An additional key feature of the Easypak™ container program is an

automated E-mail notification if a container has not been filled or returned within 12 months of the date of purchase. This insures compliance with universal waste accumulation and storage time limits. [Container tracking](#) is one more way to make sure that every facility is doing its part.



- Air Cycle also offers online, official [certificates of recycling](#). Certificates are issued to facilities after recycling waste with EasyPak™ or an Air Cycle bulk pickup. They are official recognition of the amounts and types of waste recycled and can prove to regulatory officials that a facility is recycling waste. Once issued, certificates are available online 24/7, and are easily printed or emailed. Mark Scott of CBRE knows the benefits of these certificates: “Our customers in our buildings want to see proof that we are recycling of our waste properly. All we have to do is look up the recycling certificate online and print it out to show them how well we’re doing.”
- Air Cycle also provides a pro-active program roll out “Report Card”, which monitors the success (or failure) of the program launch. High or low participation rates at a facility provides the information necessary to measure the program success, make changes as necessary and/or adjust the type of services provided to the end user facility. The Report Card also provides key monthly, quarterly and/or annual metrics. Metrics are available at a Corporate, Regional, State and/or Facility level. Sample metrics include:



- Program cost
- Types of containers or services provided
- Recycling metrics in pounds, count and/or container
- Average days to fill a container
- Facilities not using the program
- Impact the recycling program has on the environment

Summary

A corporate UW recycling program can minimize recycling costs, help ensure company-wide compliance and participation, and provide the tools needed to measure recycling progress against goals. Recycling with a corporate program can also produce benefits like green marketing opportunities and reduced liability for improper disposal. [Air Cycle corporate programs](#) provide cost-savings on recycling products and services, custom online account and ordering systems, and easy-to-use recycling tracking and publication tools. With Air Cycle, corporate UW recycling is a challenging green practice, made simpler.

Air Cycle Corporation is a sustainable solutions and technologies company. We believe that people want innovative tools and services that are easy to use, improve results, save money, and are environmentally protective. Air Cycle is committed to developing those tools and services in order to help people and protect our environment, and create opportunity for our team and partners.

For more information, please visit [Air Cycle.com](http://AirCycle.com), call 800-909-9709, or email info@aircycle.com