



Plastic Bottle Recycling

Case Study: Orange County Convenience Stores

Recycling since: 2004

Type of facility: Convenience Store

Recycles: plastic bottles, aluminum cans, cardboard

Cost of service: County provides the services, no cost involved

Description:

Between 2004 and 2006, five Orange County convenience stores began to recycle with the help of Orange County Solid Waste. Since implementation, one convenience store has switched owners and ceased to recycle. Three of the five are owned by Holmes Oil Co. which requested recycling because it wanted to “green” its stores. The fifth convenience store, Merritt’s Store, began to recycle at the request of an Orange County Solid Waste employee who visited the store often. This store is more of a small grocery and grill than a typical convenience store, and has a strong lunch business.

Implementation:

Holmes Oil Co. purchased three Busch System, 90-gallon multi-sort bins and placed one in each of its stores’ parking lots. The multi-sort bins provide two holes for commingled beverage containers and a slot



for newspaper, which are the materials it recycles. These bins are serviced by Orange County Solid Waste bi-weekly. In addition, signs around the convenience stores indicate recycling is provided. Despite these steps, many customers still do not utilize the recycling bins, one reason being they are farther away (10 to 15 ft.) than the trash cans. In addition, labels for the containers have faded or have been removed. This is an easy fix that needs to be implemented to greatly improve participation.

At Merritt’s Store, 60-gallon blue curbside bins were provided by Orange County Solid Waste. These bins are placed outside the store, where customers and employees can access them. There are no bins inside the store. The curbside bins are serviced by an Orange County Solid Waste urban curbside truck on a weekly or twice-weekly basis, depending on the pick-up route (the store is situated on a busy road). While this offers customers a great opportunity for diverting recyclables from the landfill, the employee who set up the recycling continues to notice a number of aluminum cans and plastic bottles in the trash, as well as littered on the road approaching the store.

Interviewed:

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Results:

Though exact weights are unknown, it is estimated that the three Holmes Oil Co. stores recover up to 1.77 tons of commingled material (cans, bottles, and newspaper) annually per store, while Merritt's Store recovers up to 740 pounds of cans and bottles per year.

