AIRPORTS

Introduction

One study put out by the Natural Resources Defense Council shows that, on average, 75% of the waste stream generated at airports is consistently recyclable. Airports are a unique environment where a captive audience generates increasing amounts of waste and where security issues call for innovative ways to capture the recyclables in the waste stream.

Resources

Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
The NRDC is an international nonprofit environmental organization working to protect the world’s natural resources, public health, and the environment. They have a report entitled “Trash Landings” which is available in print or online. This report presents the findings from NRDC's yearlong study of the airline industry and outlines clear steps that airlines and airports -- and other large municipal operations -- can take to put effective recycling initiatives into place.

Resource Recycling Magazine
There is an excellent overview of airport recycling in the May 2009 of Resource Recycling Magazine entitled “Recycling Takes Flight”.

Scientific American Magazine
An enlightening, if somewhat critical, article on the status of recycling on the nation’s airlines and airports can be found in the September ’09 issue of Scientific American.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
The EPA has issued a report “How to Start a Recycling Program at Your Airport”. This report covers how to start a program, types of collection bins, types of recyclables and how to manage them, waste audits, and has several case studies listed below.

Case Studies
The EPA offers the following four case studies:
2. Salt Lake City Department of Airports. Many tons of a wide variety of materials are recycled annually. Materials are generated by the flying public as well as all in-house and behind the scenes departments.
3. The San Diego International Airport has received recycling awards from the city and recyclables captured has gone from 107 tons in 2002 to 362 tons in 2006. A link is provided to a handbook on recycling at the airport:
4. Seattle-Tacoma (Sea-Tac) International Airport  Learn how Sea-Tac Airport improved recycling for Seattle air travelers (PDF)