

## Facilities Management from A to Z

Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard  
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# R

ecycling

Recycling involves processing used resources into new products to prevent waste of potentially useful materials, reduce the consumption of fresh raw materials, reduce energy usage, reduce air and water pollution and lower greenhouse gas emission. Reusing, recovering and recycling business waste can reduce disposal costs, generate income if the waste still has value and improve both business image and environmental credentials.

Recycling is third in the waste management hierarchy after reducing and reusing waste. It is less beneficial to the environment than reuse because energy and resources are needed to reprocess the waste before the materials can be used again.

Buying products that can be recycled more easily can reduce costs and help the environment. The cost to business of recycling is unlikely to be more than sending waste for energy recovery or disposal, and it can be much less.

For facility managers the challenge is usually the collection and separation of recyclable materials from general waste streams. It is estimated that only 7.5 per cent of all office waste, including paper, is recycled when 70 per cent of office waste could potentially be recycled.

The way recycling and waste management operates in the UK is driven by legislation which largely derives from European Union directives. The key directive is the Waste Framework Directive which was revised in 2008. Other notable directives cover end of life vehicles, waste electronics and batteries.

The Landfill Directive (Council Directive 1993/31/EC) requires local authorities to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill. As a consequence, nearly all councils provide recycling collections at low or no cost. Companies and councils which handle waste also have to meet a duty of care to ensure their waste is handled responsibly and contractors must be officially licensed to transport and recycle business waste.

*The Let's Recycle website [www.letsrecycle.com](http://www.letsrecycle.com) provides price and quality details for recyclable materials*

*The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) provides information for businesses that are looking to start recycling [www.wrap.org.uk](http://www.wrap.org.uk)*