Businesses in Montgomery County have been required to recycle since 1993, when the County enacted Montgomery County Executive Regulation (ER) 109-92AM. This regulation was aimed at reducing the amount of waste disposed within the County by 50 percent, required businesses to recycle certain materials, and created reporting requirements. More than ten years later, the Division of Solid Waste Services (DSWS) has modified ER109-92AM to improve and clarify recycling requirements. On February 8, 2005, the County enacted ER15-04AM which supersedes ER109-92AM.

This revised regulation affects all business and property owners, managers, employees, and recycling and refuse collection companies. Additional materials must now be recycled by businesses, and additional reporting and program requirements have been implemented. The County also enacted a second law, titled ER18-04. This new law complements ER15-04AM by banning the disposal of required recyclable materials as solid waste at County disposal facilities. Guidelines have been created for collection companies that contract with businesses in Montgomery County for the collection of recyclable materials and clearly define roles and responsibilities of these parties.

Montgomery County now has a goal of recycling 70 percent of all waste generated in the County. With a commitment from all businesses and the cooperation of collection companies, the County hopes to meet and exceed this new goal in a continuing effort to reduce the impact on County disposal facilities by 2020.

This brochure answers some of the most commonly asked questions about the business recycling requirements. Please call the Division’s Business Recycling Program, SORRT, at 3-1-1 or 240-777-0311 (if calling from outside Montgomery County) if you have additional questions.
Q. Which businesses are affected by these regulations?

A. All businesses in Montgomery County, whether enterprise, individual, corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, or other entity or person, including institutions, health care facilities, construction sites, and Federal, State, and local government facilities, are required to comply with these recycling regulations.

Q. What materials must my business recycle?

A. Businesses are required to recycle the following materials:

- **Mixed or sorted paper** (white paper, colored paper, corrugated cardboard, bookboard, newspapers, inserts, magazines, catalogs, telephone directories, paperback books, unwanted mail, and all other clean, dry, and shredded paper).
- **Commingled or separated containers** (aluminum cans and foil products, tin metal steel/fin cans, glass bottles and jars, and plastics including bottles, tubs, flower pots, buckets, lids, caps, and sterilized containers).
- **Scrap metal** (ferrous and non-ferrous items).
- **Yard trim** (grass, leaves, garden trimmings, and brush).
- **Christmas trees**

Other materials that businesses can recycle voluntarily include:

- Plastic film, such as plastic shopping bags and shrink wrap
- Wood waste
- Food waste
- Construction and demolition debris
- Pallets
- Computer equipment
- Toner cartridges

Q. What is the role of non-residential commercial property owners or managers?

A. Property owners, consistent with County solid waste law and ER15-04AM, are required to make recycling collection service and storage space for recyclable materials available to tenants. In addition, property owners and/or managers of multi-tenant facilities must file an Annual Business Recycling and Waste Reduction Report covering facilities in their entirety, including information for all tenants.

Q. What if my business cannot recycle the required materials?

A. Businesses for which recycling a required material poses an extreme hardship may request a temporary exemption by indicating on their Plan and/or Annual Business Recycling and Waste Reduction Report the materials your business is collecting. The Plan identifies the materials that your business will recycle, a description of your waste collection company, and the refresh collection company that collects your trash. If you currently dispose of large amounts of waste that can be recycled (such as mixed paper), then you may find that recycling will save your company money. The refuse collection company that collects your trash passes along the costs of disposing of the trash. However, if a recycling collection company can avoid a disposal fee and recover some revenue from the sale of the recyclable commodity, the savings should be reflected in your service bill. At the same time, in most cases, you can reduce the size of your trash container, or reduce the frequency of collections, saving even more money.

Even small businesses that lease property can see reduced costs. By recycling, you are keeping the costs down for your property owner or building management company, and that should also keep your costs down.

Most importantly though, reducing waste and recycling as much material as possible makes Montgomery County an even better place to live, work, and play – for this generation and for generations to come. That's why we have set the goal to recycle 70 percent of all waste, generated and implemented these important recycling requirements.