



City of Rohnert Park Recycling Program Multifamily and Commercial Sampling April, 2006

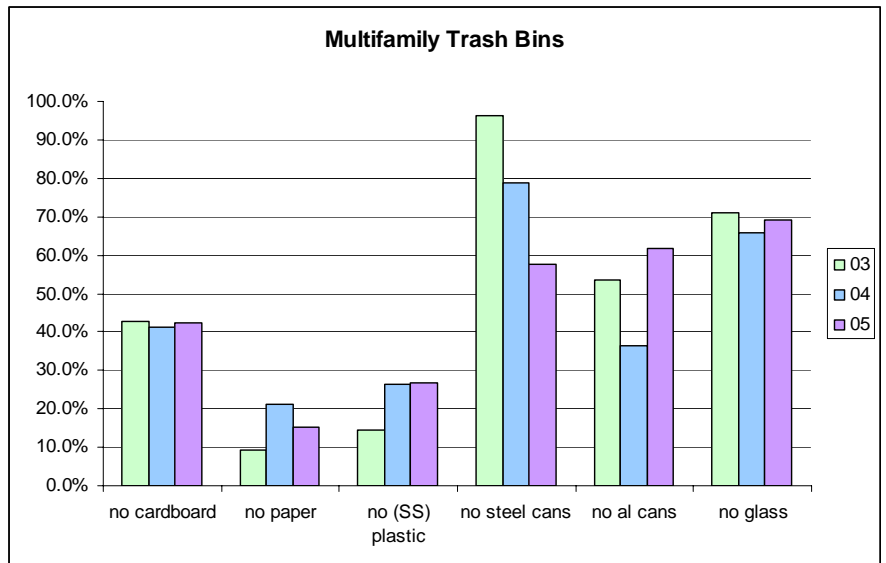
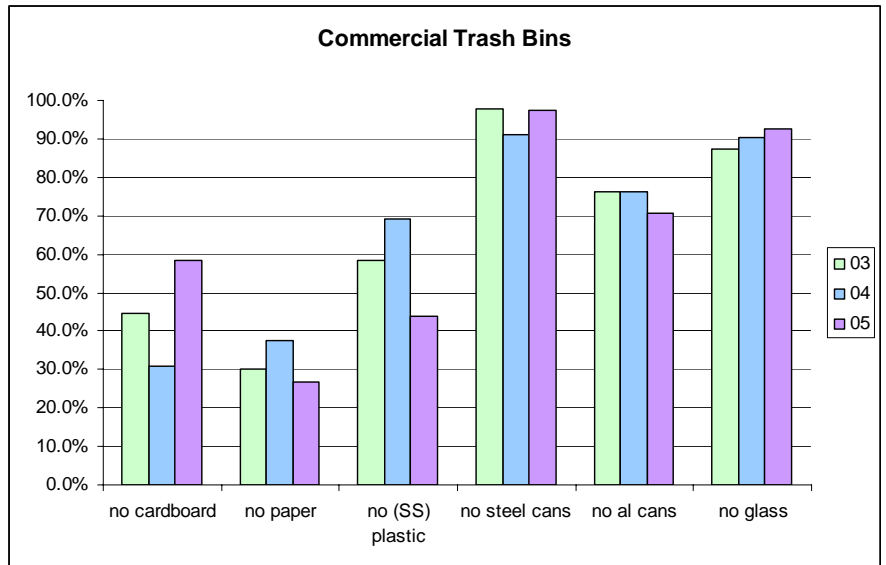
The purpose of the sampling task, part of our contracted Scope of Work with the City of Rohnert Park, is to identify opportunities to increase diversion in the commercial and multifamily sectors. We have surveyed bins each year during the fall and winter months.

Our methodology is designed to give a broad-brush overview of recyclables in trash containers, and contamination of recycling containers. Bins are chosen randomly, and a quick visual analysis conducted with minimal shifting of bin contents. We record observations of recyclables in trash bins and of trash contaminating recycling bins, using a subjective scale of 1 (“a lot”), 2 (“some”) or 3 (“very little or none.”)

This report summarizes results from the past three years of sampling. Since our ultimate objective is to have no recyclables in the trash bins or trash in the recycling bins, we have graphed the percentage of bins with this desirable result.

Recyclables in Trash Bins

We are seeing improvement over time in both commercial and multifamily bins. Less and less recyclable cardboard is discarded. Paper is the biggest challenge, and we have actually seen a decrease since last year in the number of trash bins that are free of recyclable paper. There is also an increase in the number of bins where “a lot” of paper was recorded, especially in commercial bins. On the other hand, the number of commercial bins containing “a lot” of “single stream” plastic (that is, plastic that could have been placed in the recycling bin) has dropped.



Contamination in recycling bins:

Although overall contamination levels remain very low, contamination is a continuing concern for Rohnert Park Disposal, as non-recyclables cause problems in sorting the material and reduce the quantity and marketability of recyclables. When a problem location is identified by RPD, we work aggressively to educate the multifamily tenants, or commercial managers and employees.

Since plastic bags are particularly problematic for the sorting operation, we emphasize the importance of keeping them out of the recycling bins, especially in our multifamily outreach. It is encouraging to see that the number of bins where “a lot” of bags were observed has decreased notably.

“Other trash” found in commercial bins is often film plastic or large plastic buckets. In multifamily bins, it is often reusable items like furniture or clothes. Both types of bins often have “shape foam” packaging material.

Summary

The overall level of diversion continues to improve, and both multifamily residents and businesses are doing a good job of keeping recycling bins free of contamination. In both sectors, paper recycling offers an important area for improvement.

