

This versatile metal is 100 per cent recyclable

Ships, cars, train tracks, pipes for the building industry and even humble paper clips can be manufactured from recycled scrap steel.

In fact, anything that can be manufactured from new steel sheets can be made from recycled steel. The metal can be used over and over again. So instead of sending old steel to landfill you can save your business money by separating this material from the waste and having it collected for recycling.

Recycle steel and save energy

Making steel involves an energy intensive process, so a significant amount of energy is effectively locked into the metal. Recycling scrap steel saves up to 74 per cent of the energy that would have been needed to make it from virgin materials, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency¹. Reusing scrap significantly reduces the amount of iron ore, coal and limestone that traditional steel making requires².



Common steel items that can be recycled include cans, scrap metal from cars, fridges, washing machines, iron bars, roofing iron, metal drums and old metal bins.

When cleaned and sorted, steel is sought after by recyclers. It is worth money and you should be recycling even small quantities.

Simple ways to save on steel costs

Think in terms of the waste hierarchy. How can you avoid, reduce, reuse or recycle steel?

- Avoid** → **Do we need it?**
- Reduce** → **Do we need so much?**
- Reuse** → **Can we use it again?**
- Recycle** → **Can someone else use it or convert it into something new?**



AVOID

Consider where the iron or steel items that end up in your bin come from. Look for ways to co-operate with suppliers to reduce the amount of this metal you receive. For example ask your suppliers not to use metal strapping but a more recyclable plastic twine to contain the packs of product they send to you.



REDUCE

If a less energy intensive material than steel is available that can fill the same role, consider using it.



REUSE

During refurbishment or construction of your premises, find out from your builders about the possibility of recovering and reusing existing steel.



RECYCLE

Conduct an audit of your workplace to identify steel recycling opportunities and methods of capturing this material. Go to **BusinessRecycling.com.au** to find a local metals recycling service provider.

Ask your recycling service about what types of steel can be recycled and the method of collection or sorting they prefer. Your recycling contractor should be able to provide training on using the system and give advice on signs and information. To achieve the best results, train your staff in how to use the system.

Here are some more tips:

- Save money by matching your bin collection timetable to your business needs. If your bins are not normally full after a week, then consider moving to a fortnightly collection cycle.
- If the volume of a particular recyclable is still not large enough to warrant a dedicated bin consider sharing a metals recycling bin with a neighbouring business. Negotiate splitting the fee and rebate with them.
- You will pay more for a collection if there is cross contamination. Ask your recycling contractor how to avoid it.
- Make sure staff and cleaners are aware of and follow all the elements of your recycling program. They need to be committed to the recycling program and to make sure all materials go in the correct bin.

Recycling steel will require an extra bin or container, but the advantage is that your business may be paid for the metal or at least not have to pay for its collection.

For further information

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