

Think twice about where you throw out that trash

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Dec. 3, 2009 -- An average American produces 56 tons of trash per year, the Clean Air Council states, but Carlisle Barracks and the U.S. Army War College are striving to reduce the amount of waste carried off post to the local landfill through increased recycling and awareness.

Believe it or not, all waste is not equal in Carlisle Barracks buildings. Cans, glass bottles and plastic containers can be recycled in various locations in Root Hall and other buildings while white office paper and corrugated cardboard can be placed in recycling bins in seminar rooms and offices.

“Cardboard and white office paper are what goes into the blue cans that you see in each seminar room and in offices,” clarified Donna Swauger, Environmental Management System coordinator. “Comingled, or cans, glass bottles and “1” and “2” plastics, can be recycled in properly marked receptacles.”

Swauger noted that plastic should not accompany paper recyclables and should be removed from cardboard and paper products before they are tossed in bins.

“As a first step we have added recycle bins near the soda machines in Root Hall and we have also added additional collection points behind Root Hall and pulled the green toter reserved for comingled recyclables forward near the other dumpsters,” Swauger said.

Some employees said they don’t separate their recyclables because it has long been believed that they all go to the same place, but this is not the case.

“The trash should be separated from the recyclable paper in the blue bins,” said Linda Etter, supervisor for Prestige Maintenance in Root Hall. “Trash also should not be placed in the recycle bin in the Joint Deli because if it is, our cleaning crew can’t put that bag in the recycling bin out back.”

Trash is not supposed to be placed in the cafeteria’s recycle bin, which is reserved for aluminum cans, glass bottles and plastics “1” and “2.”

“We are hoping that our new waste removal contract will include single-stream recycling that will allow us to throw all recyclables into the blue bins, but until then we want to strengthen our current recycling practices,” Swauger said. “For instance, newspaper is not recycled under the current contract. It will be with implementation of the Environmental Management Program which includes switching to single stream recycling with Waste Management.”

On the residential side of post, Balfour Beatty Communities offers recycling to residents, courtesy of services provided by York Waste Disposal. Items such as aluminum cans, glass bottles, newspapers, white paper, corrugated cardboard, magazines and phone books are carted off post and recycled regularly through the disposal company’s single-stream recycling program.

Swauger offered some environmentally friendly tips that fall under the “reduce, re-use, recycle” mantra and can serve as a good first step for those looking to help with Carlisle Barracks’ efforts to improve environmental stewardship.

“Purchase items with less packaging than traditional, don’t buy bottled water - fill your own bottles,” Swauger suggested. “Don’t throw away good, still serviceable items, but rather donate them to charity or sell them in consignment shops; we even have a thrift shop on post.” Environmental questions can be posed to building environmental points of contact. Each building is equipped with a designated EPOC who can help direct environmental inquiries or answer questions about building recycling practices.

Marianne Barrick, Root Hall EPOC, has already started strengthening the building’s recycling program by placing additional bins for cans and glass bottles and plastics throughout central areas in the building and spreading recycling awareness.

“I placed some additional bins outside the B-wing elevators on the second and third floors and a receptacle is also beside the vending machine on the second floor,” she said. “We need a few more and I put an order in for some so we can have more in places like the cafeteria.”

U.S. Army War College Archives - News Article - 03 December 2009