

Just the Facts: Why Recycling Bins Aren't Enough

With an increased focus on environmental protection, more and more organisations across the globe are making recycling a major priority. Unfortunately however, there still exists many misconceptions.

Here are 4 of the most popular myths when it comes to paper recycling in the office:

MYTH #1

"MY PAPER IS 100% RECYCLED BECAUSE I HAVE A RECYCLING BIN BY MY DESK."

FACT: With the current recycling rate for paper and card at 60% in Australia¹, there is no certainty that everything gets recycled. In fact, some cleaning companies dump both the rubbish and recycling bin into the same bag at night, which means dumpster divers may get to confidential documents first.

For example, in 2017, dozens of confidential files were found dumped in an unsecured recycling bin in Melbourne. If these documents had been securely destroyed and recycled, the risk of a data breach could have been avoided.²



DID YOU KNOW?

Shred-it recycled 1.5 billion pounds of paper in 2019.



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MYTH #2

"ANYTHING I PUT IN THE BLUE BIN AT THE PRINTING STATION IS SECURE AND RECYCLED."

FACT: People dig through the recycling bins looking for documents they have mistakenly thrown out and often find things that they might not have found otherwise. Confidential documents such as duplicate presentation slides, company reports, and a lot of emails get printed and then thrown into the bin. Given the opportunity, insider fraudsters will take materials of interest if they find them.

In the banking industry, one report showed that insider fraud accounts for 50% of all bank fraud³ meaning that it is critical that unwanted documents be kept in secure consoles.

MYTH #3

"THE RECYCLING PROCESS, FROM START TO FINISH, IS COMPLETELY SECURE."

FACT: There are several points of exposure throughout the recycling process, where your information could be compromised. The recycling industry is also not governed by strict security standards. Even while recycling materials are being transported, any confidential document could fly off the back of the truck.

A survey by the AIC found that 1 in 4 Australians have been a victim of identity crime at some point in their lives.⁴ With so many opportunities for your data to be put at risk, consider implementing secure workplace policies to keep your information secure.

MYTH #4

"EVERYONE KNOWS NOT TO PUT A CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT IN THE BIN."

FACT: Even when a workplace provides locked consoles for documents that need to be securely destroyed, confidential documents still end up in the bin.

In a 2018 study⁵ published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), researchers at 5 Toronto hospitals found thousands of files containing sensitive patient information in open recycling bins. The researchers said employees and cleaners do not always know that information is 'confidential'. Therefore, using a *Shred-it All* Policy will allow your employees to take the guesswork out of what must be shred.

SO KEEP IN MIND:

While it's important to adopt green strategies in the workplace, the effort is wasted if confidential information is exposed and documents never make it to the recycling facility.

Sources:

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- Patient Details in the Recycling? Cbc.ca, March 20, 2018 <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/hospitals-documents-paper-patient-privacy-1.4584093>

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