



Reusable Moving Crates Case Study

StopWaste.Org

For almost two decades, StopWaste.Org has spearheaded source reduction and recycling programs in Alameda County. Although the Agency's focus is local, over the years it has earned a national reputation as a leader in developing innovative waste reduction and resource conservation programs. StopWaste.Org has a newly renovated 14,000 square-foot LEED™-certified office building in Oakland that houses 31 staff members.

Facts-at-a-Glance

Challenges

- Move office without generating excessive waste
- Keep costs comparable to a traditional move
- Prevent damage to new building and worker injuries

Solutions

- Use reusable moving crates to reduce waste
- Incorporate dollies to reduce labor and risk of injury
- Reduce truck trips and packing time with large, standard size crates

Benefits

- Prevented 826 pounds of cardboard waste
- Eliminated heavy lifting
- Reduced plastic film waste
- Provided greater protection of belongings
- Improved security
- Increased moving truck capacity by 40%-50%
- Cut greenhouse gas emissions
- Cost competitive

The Story

In March 2007 StopWaste.Org moved into a newly renovated building in downtown Oakland. Green building techniques were incorporated throughout the renovation to transform a rundown, 1924 structure into a beautiful and healthy workplace. At least 95 percent of the original structural elements, including exterior walls, roof, floors, concrete columns and steel beams were preserved. More than 75 percent of the construction and demolition debris was recycled rather than sent to landfill. The project earned a Platinum certification in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) from the U.S. Green Building Council. The complete story about the renovation is available at www.StopWaste.Org.

Challenges

One logistical challenge remained to create a sustainable workplace. How would the Agency move into the new office without generating the mountain of cardboard and plastic-wrap waste typical of traditional moves? Fortunately, one of the moving companies approached offered a cost-competitive bid with reusable crates. The reusable crates reduced waste, cut back on labor, and improved the efficiency of the move.

"I highly recommend the crates to other businesses. They saved energy, natural resources, and labor, while also preventing damage to our new building."

ROBERTA MILLER
Program Manager, StopWaste.Org



Reusable crates are easy for your staff to fill, stack and move around on the dollies which are specially designed to hold three stacked crates. To secure sensitive materials, tamper-resistant nylon zip-ties are provided.



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Solutions

Increase the efficiency of the moving process and eliminate cardboard and plastic wrap waste by using reusable moving crates.

“Promoting waste-reduction practices is part of our Agency’s core mission. Our move was a great opportunity to “walk the talk” and apply some of the practices we promote. Using reusable crates was not only good for the environment, it made the move easier for everyone!”

MARK CULLORS
Program Manager, StopWaste.Org

Less Labor

Staff immediately recognized the ease that reusable crates added to the move. This moving system included the crates and dollies that are specially designed to hold three stacked crates. The packing process was simple and eliminated the need for heavy lifting. First, office staff placed an empty crate on top of a dolly and packed it full. Then, an empty crate was stacked on top of the full one. Once the dolly was fully loaded with packed crates it was rolled to the aggregation area. When the moving trucks arrived, the packed dollies were rolled right onto the moving truck.

Innovative Service

Although the cost of moving with reusable crates was similar to a traditional move, it offered a number of performance advantages. The rigid and durable crates provided greater protection of contents. The crates held twice as much as standard cardboard boxes. This reduced the

number of containers needed and allowed staff to spend more time packing and less time shuffling boxes around. Colored tags designating the different floors and specific office destinations kept the move organized and made unpacking easier. The smooth edged plastic dollies used to move the crates caused less damage to walls and door-jams than the metal hand-trucks typically used for cardboard boxes. Tamper-resistant nylon zip-ties were used to help secure sensitive materials in the crates.

Environmental Impact

By using reusable crates, StopWaste.Org prevented the use of 826 pounds of cardboard. Although cardboard is recyclable, reusable crates are environmentally preferable because they reduce the pollution and natural resource consumption caused by the production of new cardboard boxes. Since the crates were bigger than cardboard boxes many oversized items that would have been shrink-wrapped were packed into containers, which cut back on wasted single use plastic wrap. The crates packed onto the moving truck more efficiently and increased moving truck capacity by more than 40%. Fewer truck trips meant improved efficiency and lower greenhouse gas emissions.



The StopWaste Partnership

The StopWaste Partnership is a free technical assistance service dedicated to improving the environmental performance and reducing costs of Alameda County businesses and public agencies. The program provides expert support and funding to prevent waste, conserve water and energy, and use all resources more efficiently.

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photo credit: Dennis Garvey

For more information on Reusable totes and other reusable transport packaging, visit www.UseReusables.com.

Visit www.StopWaste.Org/Partnership or call **1-877-STOPWASTE.**