

## RECYCLE - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

# Collection (cont.)

be periodic events conducted by one Girl Guide company or regularly scheduled occurrences helping charities to meet a funding goal. Despite being relatively simple in operation, drives put potential waste to good use in the community.

Possibly the most organized form of low-tech recycling is the depot. Instead of the collectors going to the public, the public delivers recyclables to the collectors. Staffed recycling depots are facilities where a person drops off recyclables. The donor is reimbursed, depending on the weight and value of the material, or simply leaves the goods for free. Industry, municipalities or private contractors may sponsor this type of depot. Some facilities are manned by charities who receive the profit from the products collected. Others are staffed by volunteers trying to help the environment. Staffed depots are inexpensive to operate but they do not generate the same participation or diversion rate as more advanced systems. Cheaper still are unmanned depots. However, there is a risk of a higher level of *contamination* among the recyclables.

### **Medium-Tech**

Slightly more advanced collection can be had in medium-tech systems. The basic method involves pick-up trucks, trailers or flat-bed vehicles. Recyclables are collected from house to house. Material is tossed into the back of the vehicles then hauled away. When the number and quantity of items is kept low, this system is fairly efficient. If either variable increases, problems arise. First, consider an increase in the number of items. Because there is no separation at the time of collection, material can become contaminated. Broken glass can mix with plastic; coloured glass can be found in clear glass. Markets for contaminated material are almost non-existent. Technology to divide materials and remove contaminants is available but it is costly. An increase in the amount of material a medium-tech program handles would soon overload the system. The number of trucks or number of trips per truck would rise, once again eliminating the low cost and simplicity of the system.

Side-loader trucks try to combat the contamination issue. The body of the truck is divided into sections. Individual or groups of recyclables are manually loaded into a designated section. Paper and cardboard might go in one area, metals in another and plastics in yet another. As the material in each compartment grows, the opening on the side of the truck is reduced to keep the recyclables in the vehicle. If the recyclable items are light, then lifting them hour after hour may not be too strenuous. Heavy articles like glass containers and paper can soon tire the collection workers. As more material is placed in a section, a person has to lift higher. Injuries can occur, again, depending upon the type and amount of material collected.

