



## Steps to Take to Add Cartons – Facilities

Food and beverage cartons are recyclable! Now that more than 60 percent of U.S. households have access to carton recycling, it is more important than ever to get on board with carton recycling.

Adding cartons will help divert a growing amount of materials from the waste stream, creating another source of revenue from the sale of this valuable commodity. Your recycling facility is key to bringing carton recycling to your area. Any recycling facility can add cartons to the single- or dual-stream recycling mix. Simply follow the steps below based on the Carton Council's experience in adding cartons in facilities and communities across the U.S.

### **Step One: Making the Grade – #52**

First, you will need to make sure you meet Grade #52 specifications. Separating cartons into their own bales allows cartons to be moved as Grade #52, under PSI (Paper Stock Industries). We call this "positive sorting" of cartons, which can be accomplished through automation such as through optical sorting, or manually with mechanical assist such as handpicking with vacuum assist. Positive sorting of cartons will allow you to reap the benefits of market value for cartons.

### **Step Two: Installing the Right Equipment**

There are a number of proven ways to sort cartons, depending on the facility. In some cases for large facilities, one of the most efficient ways to positively sort cartons into Grade #52 bales is through automation – typically with an optical sorter – although there are other approaches. If optical sort equipment is not suitable for your MRF, other facility modifications may be more appropriate such as adding bunkers or vacuum systems. If your facility is smaller in size, is space-constrained, or has low-cost labor, you can positively sort cartons manually by adding carton-separating stations to sort lines – and a great way to increase picking efficiency is to add a vacuum system to quickly move the cartons to the bunker.

### **Step Three: Training Your Workforce**

The next step is to talk with your sorting staff and educate them on how to identify cartons – both gable-top and aseptic. The Carton Council has great posters in multiple languages to display in sorting areas that will help your sorters recognize the cartons that can be positively sorted for Grade #52 bales. (Contact us at [info@recyclecartons.com](mailto:info@recyclecartons.com).)

### **Step Four: Making the Market Connection**

Your Grade #52 bales are now ready to move! Over 150 mills worldwide, including 9 here in North America, are hungry for recovered cartons. The fiber in cartons is desired by these mills, and the poly and poly/aluminum components have value as well. If you require assistance in moving cartons, the Carton Council can connect you to an experienced broker network.

### **Step Five: Promoting Carton Recycling**

The final step is to inform your customers and residents that they can, and should, recycle their refrigerated and shelf-stable cartons effectively immediately. Informing your customers will help ensure you produce the volume your facility has the potential to receive. The first and most common place to start is to update all lists of accepted materials, including on your website, on recycling containers (if applicable), on stickers, and on any other materials that list accepted materials. Also feel free to utilize templates from the Carton Council for advertisements, flyers, bill stuffers and more that may all be customized with your contact information and logos.