

## CAPITALIZING ON PVC SCRAP RECYCLING

There is one constant with industrial activity: it generates waste, and lots of it. This is especially true when manufacturing high-volume cable assemblies. Although the metals used in cable assemblies are easy to dispose via recycling and are in high demand, what happens with the leftover insulation or jacket materials, such as PVC?

### SCRAPING THE SCRAP

Currently, the majority of PVC waste ends up in a landfill. However, these landfills do not solve the PVC disposal dilemma. PVC scrap can damage infrastructure, pollute the local environment (such as contamination of groundwater or aquifers), or create bothersome problems such as dust, odor, or noise pollution. Many users of cable assemblies feel that landfills are an undesirable way of discarding scrap.

### WHY RECYCLE?

PVC is recyclable and provides an outstanding long-term solution for waste management. In fact, PVC is the second most commonly used plastic after polyethylene. Recycling PVC can reduce the amount of virgin PVC manufactured, which reduces its environmental footprint. Furthermore, the recycling process uses only half the primary energy (54 percent) to process the original PVC and emits only 39 percent of the greenhouse gases. Hence, it results in a significantly lower global warming potential.

Starting a recycling program is not only helpful for the environment, but also for businesses. Many companies will buy PVC scrap or exchange materials, which reduces cost. In the United States, free disposal services to recycle PVC are available and about 25 states offer tax credits for recycling market development. Finally, recognition of recycling is a huge benefit for companies both small and large as there has been a surge in consumers buying more “green” products. By going green, improved public image, new markets and improved employee morale are all possible.

### WHERE TO START

To recycle, contact your local public works department to determine if it accepts PVC plastics for recycling. If so, you’ll need to know whether the PVC can be collected curbside or whether it has to be dropped off at the recycling center. This information may also be available on your town’s website.

In addition to the public works department, recycling facilities across North America accept both post-consumer and post-industrial PVC scrap. A database of PVC vinyl recyclers and companies manufacturing products from recycled vinyl is available at [vinylinfo.org/recycling/directory/](http://vinylinfo.org/recycling/directory/).

### CASE STUDY

In one example of a successful PVC recycling program, a plastic recycling company helped a manufacturer process its PVC cutoffs. These cutoffs have very little market value, and disposal costs were estimated at \$0.03–\$0.05/lb. The recycling company was able to recover 95 percent of the PVC metal-free, so the manufacturer could sell it at \$0.30/lb. The manufacturer also reprocessed the recycled PVC and even further reduced costs instead of purchasing new virgin material.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>“Window Profiles & Lineals: Metal Is Not An Issue.” Web. 7 Jan 2013.

For more information, contact your local  
Anixter sales representative at **1.800.ANIXTER.**