

How to Recycle/Reduce/Reuse Almost Everything

This guide is curated by Five Rivers MetroParks' Master Recycling volunteers and will be updated periodically as recycling guidelines change and/or new outlets and resources are discovered. Please check back and feel free to contact our Sustainability Coordinator with any questions (see contact info at the end of this document).

A majority of all waste that gets sent to the landfill is either recyclable or compostable. This guide illustrates how to recycle, reuse or properly dispose of most household items with links to resources here in Montgomery County. It also has some tips and tricks for reducing reliance on common disposable items.

First, follow your [local recycler's guidelines](#) for plastic containers, glass bottles, metal, cardboard and paper, then consult this guide for ideas about how to go above and beyond commingled recycling. In Montgomery County, all commingled recycling collection is ultimately delivered to Rumpke where it is dispersed to various markets. Regardless of who collects recycling in your area, please follow the guidelines from Rumpke in the link above for commingled collection.

Paper and Cardboard

All paper types can be recycled in commingled collection including cardboard as long as it doesn't have grease or other residue saturating the material. Soiled areas of pizza boxes or other cardboard can be cut out so the rest of the container can be recycled. Cartons, even those with a wax, metal or plastic lining, are recyclable in commingled collection as well.

Glass

Nearly all single use glass containers can be recycled, no matter what color they are. Tempered glass, windows, drinking glasses, etc. cannot be recycled. Consider donating those materials to a second hand store or reclamation yard if they are in usable condition.

Plastic

- Commingled collection plastics are limited to bottles and jugs, regardless of the number. Lids are okay as is some minor residue. Please rinse and crush containers if possible. Please do not put plastic bags or other plastic film in commingled recycling as it can jam or damage sorting machinery.
- There are some additional outlets for other plastics for those willing to give the additional effort:
 - #1 Plastics – Polyethylene Terphthalate (PETE) – these are the most recyclable of all plastics and what many bottles and jugs are made from.....every recycler takes these items
 - #2 Plastics – High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) – If a bottle or jug, place in the recycling bin.
 - If #2 plastic bags, usually milky, not clear, and sometimes are colored black, gray, or white and that they do not stretch. Examples include bags inside cereal boxes and cracker boxes. Return them to Kroger, Meijer, Walmart in the collection barrel usually inside the front entrance.
 - #3 Plastics – Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) – avoid buying anything with this in it when possible. Most post-consumer PVC is not readily recyclable.

- #4 Plastics – Low Density Polyethylene (LDPE) – many plastic bags are made from this material. Plastic bags get tangled in the conveyor at your recycler’s plant, but most chain grocery stores will take these back. – Note that they are usually transparent and will stretch - Return them to Kroger, Meijer, Walmart, barrel usually inside the front entrance. These include grocery bags, zip lock bags (remove the pull zipper), paper towel and toilet paper packaging, sandwich bags, most bread and bun bags, produce bags, dry cleaning bags, sealed air pouches from mailings, newspaper sleeves (see novolex.com/sustainability/bag-2-bag for a complete list of what they take)
- #5 Plastics – Polypropylene (PP) – Yogurt cups, cottage cheese containers, deli containers, kitchen storage containers. These plastics are currently not recycled in our area. Avoid buying items in these containers when possible and consider creative reuse options – potting plants, storage containers, etc.
- #6 Plastics – Polystyrene (PS) – currently there is not a market for PS foam, recyclers don’t take it. Avoid buying or using this material
- #7 Plastics (mixed materials that cannot be separated) – Avoid buying or using these materials as well. Most recyclers will not accept mixed plastics.

Metal

Generally speaking, Rumpke accepts most metal containers including aluminum and steel, but not pots, pans, pipes, scrap metal, or metal containing machines and appliances.

- **Aluminum foil** – large sheets without food - roll into a ball of at least 3” in diameter and put into recycling bin. Loose foil will not get recycled.
- **Small bits of aluminum** (like yogurt covers) - fold and drop into an aluminum soda can.
- **Bits of steel** – staples, steel lids, paper clips, screws, nails, tie wraps – put into a steel can then crush it
- **Propane tanks, gas cans, and fire extinguishers** – are not recyclable and considered hazardous waste! Drop off for free at Montgomery County Solid Waste District Household (MCSWD) Hazardous Waste Program – Encrete Lane on Tues, and Sat. from 8 am till 2 pm. See below for more information.
- **Large pieces of steel, aluminum, brass, copper** – take to First St. Recycling, Franklin Iron and Metal, Cohen or other metal recyclers for some cash (approx. values are steel – 5 cents /lb., aluminum – 20 to 40 cents, brass - \$1.00, and copper \$2.00).

Electronics

Drop off computers, TV’s, DVD players, cell phones and anything with a cord at MCSWD [Household Electronics Recycling Program](#).

Household Hazardous and Universal Waste

These are items that are either regulated for disposal by the EPA or should not be placed in trash or recycling for other safety reasons. MCSWD has a [program for residents on Tuesdays and Saturdays](#) where household hazardous waste can be dropped off free of charge.

- **Batteries** – free drop off at MCSWD or anytime at the 2nd St. Market (*then* consider converting to Rechargeable Batteries that can be used over again for up to 200 times).
- **Liquid Chemicals** - herbicides, pesticides, oil-based paint, motor oil, transmission fluid, antifreeze, aerosol paint, varnish, stain, thinners, strippers, pool chemicals, household cleaners, gasoline, kerosene, fertilizers.
- **Water-Based Paint/Latex Paint** – if a nearly full can, take it to the Restore (Habitat for Humanity) on Riverview Dr. If a nearly empty can, pop the lid and allow it to evaporate outside, then scrape the dried paint into the trash and recycle the can.
- **Light Bulbs** - (fluorescent, incandescent, or CFL).
- **Tires** – drop off at MCSWD at their Tire Buyback event or contact staff for free disposal of up to 10 tires within a year with a voucher.

Appliances

- Functioning large appliances: contact DP&L about the large appliance recycling program with free pickup and a cash incentive <https://www.dpandl.com/save-money/residential/appliance-recycling-for-your-home/>
- Functioning small appliances: sell on Craigslist or Marketplace or donate to a thrift store such as Goodwill
- Non-functioning appliances: contact a local scrap metal operation to have picked up for free, or deliver to a scrap operation to receive a cash incentive or check out [free appliance recycling dates](#) at MCSWD, some small appliances such as microwaves can also be dropped off at the [electronics recycling program](#).

Home Improvement and Construction Materials

(Lumber, boards, molding, railing, cabinets, sinks, faucet fixtures, light fixtures, etc.)

- Consider selling materials on Craigslist, Marketplace or other classified listings.
- Donate to the [Habitat for Humanity Restore](#) on Riverview Dr. (if you have a lot of building materials they will come and pick it up).
- Donate to [Dayton Reclamation LLC](#).

Office and Home Furnishing

- Donate to a second hand/thrift store.
- Sell on Craigslist, Facebook marketplace or other classified ads forum.

Organic Waste (Compost)

- Composting at home
 - MetoParks and MCSWD partner to offer a free program to the public called Compost Kitchen 3-4 times per year. Visit www.metroparks.org to search for upcoming classes. It's a 3 session series and all participants receive a free composter upon completion. It offers a lot of information on how to set up and improve upon composting as well as use compost for

gardening and landscaping. However, getting started with composting is easy and you can visit the link below for a quick guide.

- **A short (but long) list of compostable materials:**

Raw uncooked fruit and vegetable pieces, shredded paper, hair (yours and your pet's), cotton cloth – shredded or torn, cotton balls, cotton string, wool cloth – shredded and torn, q-tips with cardboard stems, vacuum sweepings, dust, drier lint, napkins soiled with food on them, chip bedding from small animals, expired spices, Used paper and wood matchsticks, Bamboo chopsticks (break them up), coffee grounds, tea bags, nail clippings, toothpicks, sawdust, eggshells, soil from potted plants, floor sweepings, plant pruning and clippings, dead grass, leaves (run the mower over them speed composting),

- Compost is free fertilizer! Learn all about composting and using compost for gardening and landscaping at the Compost Kitchen series. Participants receive a free composter!

- [Visit our website](#) for more information on composting
- **Yard Waste** – branches, leaves, grass clippings, brush. Drop off at MCSWD – Encrete Lane for a for free, Mon – Fri 6 am to 8 pm and Sat 8 am to 3 pm. Some municipalities also have yard waste disposal areas for composting.

Textiles

- Goodwill accepts textiles, even if they are in poor condition. Spent clothing and other fabrics can be sold to fiber mills. Drop off clothing, old towels, sheets, etc.

Practice Refuse, Reduce and Reuse – A few tips to get started or improve your waste management game

- **Shopping bags** – bring your own reusable totes (refuse plastic and paper bags at the checkout)
- **Beverage containers** – stainless steel canteens and coffee/tea travelers are a much better option. Collapsible silicon cups are great to replace plastic and styrofoam cups.
- **Disposable service ware** – use real dishware and wash dishes to save money and easily avoid disposable ware or purchase compostable ware and make sure it gets composted.
- **Styrofoam and other takeout containers** – refuse these. Keep a reusable container in your car for carryout.
- **Single serving food containers** – avoid these when possible. Instead buy in bulk and portion into reusable containers.
- **Handouts, fliers, give-away knick knacks, stuff you don't really need** – refuse these things and say that you're working on reducing waste.
- **Condiment packets** – ketchup, mustard, soy sauce, relish, hot sauce, etc – refuse these take out packets, or take just what you need.
- **Lunch bag** – invest in a reusable bag or lunch box.

Avoid or reduce buying these things when possible:

- **Tissues** – use a reusable cloth hanky (unless you have a cold).
- **Paper towels** – use cloth towels, or excess paper napkins they give you at fast food restaurants.

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- Anything with **excessive packaging**.
- **Anything new** that you can borrow, or buy used.
- Anything **made from Styrofoam**.
- **Disposable razors, disposable dinnerware, disposable anything.**

Do you have questions? Comments? Additional ideas for reducing waste? Contact our Sustainability Coordinator at 937-279-6979 or tim.pritchard@metroparks.org.