

Recycling at home

We recycle because it is good for our environment, good for our economy, and because in Wisconsin, it's the law. Since 1990, [Wisconsin's recycling law](#) requires all residents to recycle items like cardboard, bottles and cans and ensures all residents have access to a local recycling program.

Contact your [local recycling program representative](#) to learn details of how your community's recycling program works. Your local representative will be able to inform you of collection locations and times, materials collected and other program details. You may also be able to find out more about your local program at [Recycle More Wisconsin \[exit DNR\]](#).

What to expect from your local recycling program

- recycling service for [banned materials](#);
- an education program to inform you of the recycling requirements at residential and non-residential properties; and
- an enforcement program to ensure compliance with these requirements.

Your recycling program may provide residential recycling services in your community directly or through contract with a private hauler. When the recycling program does not provide direct service, it must ensure recycling services are available through subscription between haulers and citizens, or at drop-off centers.

Curbside collection is required by law in communities with populations over 5,000 and population densities of at least 70 persons per square mile.

- Single-stream collection allows residents to place glass, aluminum, plastic, tin and paper into one container.
- Source-separated or "dual stream" collection requires such paper products as newspaper, magazines and corrugated cardboard to be separated from other recyclable materials – like plastic and metal. Source-separated collections are often referred to as "dual stream" collections.

Drop-Off centers are an option for recycling programs with populations under 5,000 or population densities of less than 70 persons per square mile. Residents may deposit banned and other recyclable materials at designated spots around town. Communities or private haulers may manage drop-off centers.

Doing more

Wisconsin is a leader in recycling – to remain at the forefront, each of us can do more. Consult the links below for ideas on further reducing your waste stream.

- [Compost](#) yard materials and vegetable food scraps. Composting is a smart way to keep valuable materials out of the landfill. Making your own compost saves you money and makes your plants happy.
- Eliminate [open burning](#). Burning even brush can cause pollution and health problems for you or your family and neighbors. It is illegal to burn treated wood, plastic, household garbage and most all other trash. State law allows burning of clean wood or brush and non-recyclable paper, but local ordinances may be more stringent than statewide requirements.
- Recycle [electronics](#). Keep these out of the landfill by recycling your used electronics, cell phones, fluorescent bulbs and rechargeable batteries. Your public works department or recycling program should have information about recycling options in your area.
- Recycle used [automotive materials](#). Used oil, oil filters, lead acid automotive batteries and used antifreeze should be recycled.

- Reuse or recycle [construction and demolition materials](#). Much of this material is a mix of reusable or recyclable material that should be kept out of the landfill.
- Properly manage [fluorescent and other light bulbs](#). Many types of bulbs contain metals such as mercury at toxic levels. These bulbs should be properly disposed of to avoid contaminating the environment or harming human health.
- • Buy products in recyclable containers with as little packaging as possible. Look for packaging that can be recycled in your community and items which you can repair or reuse. Also, support recycling markets by buying and using products made from recycled materials.
- Reduce use of [disposable shopping bags](#) and use canvas or other reusable bags instead.