



## Public Works Department: Recycling Center

Jon A. Reisenbuechler, Operations Manager

*jonreisenbuechler@co.manitowoc.wi.us*

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*PO Box 351 • 3000 Basswood Road • Manitowoc WI 54221-0351*

*Phone: 920.683.4333 • Fax: 920.683.5030*

### For Immediate Release

Date: 11/11/2020  
From: Jon Reisenbuechler

SUBJECT: Manitowoc County Compost Site Fire

Absolutely no ashes are accepted at the Manitowoc County Compost Sites. Violations will result in a \$200 citation and possible damages.

On Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup> a resident dumped ashes in the compost pile at the Basswood site. Within an hour the pile was on fire. Once started, it spread quickly due to the dry leaves and wind. Multiple Fire Departments were quickly on site and it was contained within 4 hours. The fire reignited the next morning and additional firefighting was needed.

Even if ashes seem cool they often still contain embers that can easily reignite and start fires. This is especially true in windy, dry conditions when they are piled amongst dry brush or leaves. Unfortunately, this is not the first occurrence, the Fire Department and Recycling Center staff have had to extinguish multiple fires from patrons carelessly dumping ashes at the sites in previous years.

Ashes are not accepted for multiple reasons. Obviously, they can be a fire hazard, as this incident demonstrates. Ashes are also not accepted because they may contain undesirable chemicals from whatever was burned and we have no way to know if they came from clean wood, treated lumber, household trash, or worse. We do not want these contaminants in our finished compost products.

Throwing ashes in the compost pile, or anywhere else on the site, is considered illegal dumping and is a violation of Manitowoc County Code 6.12 and will result in a \$200 citation and possibly damages. Please follow the guidelines we have when using the compost sites and the recycling depot. The guidelines are posted at the site entrance, on our website, and on our compost program flyer. We have these guidelines in place to keep our programs running safely and efficiently.

The best thing to do with your ashes is to (safely) use them at your property or thoroughly douse them in water and let them sit at least a month before taking them to the landfill. If you use a solid waste hauler or municipal drop off site be sure to check their guidelines too; many places do not accept ashes for fire safety reasons.

If you have materials that you are unsure of then stop in the office to ask, call 920-683-4333, or visit us online at [Manitowocounty.com/recyclingcenter](http://Manitowocounty.com/recyclingcenter).

