

"one man's trash..."

Solid Waste District of La Porte County

Your guide to reducing, reusing, and recycling

A Fresh Start for a Sustainable Year



Credit: RGStudio | E+ | Getty Images

As we embrace a new year, it's natural to reflect on ways we can improve our lives and our impact on the environment. One simple way to achieve this is by reducing our consumption. By doing so, we can save money and cut down on waste. As you think about your resolutions for 2026, consider some of these ideas that will reduce your waste and save you money.

One of the easiest ways to reduce waste is by embracing reusable items in everyday life. Reusable bags, for example, are a simple swap for their disposable counterparts, but remembering to use them can be a challenge. Try placing them in visible spots, like next to your car seat or in your front passenger area, so they're within reach before you head into the store. Reusable bags aren't just for groceries; they're perfect for all kinds of shopping. Similarly, carrying a reusable water bottle or coffee mug can eliminate the need for disposable cups, while reusable cutlery and straws are handy alternatives for meals on the go. Making these changes not only reduces waste, but it can also add a touch of

style to daily routines.

When it comes to electronics, taking care of your devices can extend their life and reduce the need for replacements. Proper charging habits, such as keeping batteries from fully draining and recharging them little by little, can prevent unnecessary wear. Regularly clearing your device's cache and deleting temporary files can help it run smoothly, as can uploading photos and videos to a cloud service or external hard drive to free up space.

Online shopping, while convenient, can quickly lead to wasteful habits. Impulse buys and expedited shipping options often bring excess packaging into our homes. To shop smarter, approach online stores as you would a physical one: make a list, set aside shopping time, and stick to your plan. Whenever possible, opt for combined shipping to minimize packaging waste. By making these changes, you'll not only reduce your waste, but you'll also foster habits that are better for your wallet! A sustainable year starts with small, intentional steps!

Break Down Those Boxes

Please break down and flatten all cardboard and paperboard boxes. First, it will save a lot of room in your recycling cart. Second, it keeps items from getting caught inside the box. At our recycle centers, staff members and machines work together to identify and sort materials as they travel rapidly over and through equipment. When other recyclables are inside boxes, they aren't visible and can't be separated by category, leading to contaminated bales of boxes and lost recyclable containers. Thank you for your help!



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Turner Talks Trash

from the Executive Director's Desk

District residents love to recycle! But sometimes it can be a bit confusing to know how and where to recycle each item. Help us recycle better by learning what goes into the recycling totes, what is collected at our offices for recycling, and what is collected at special disposal events.

TerraCycle and Other Collections at the Office – We collect a variety of hard-to-recycle items, including plastic bags and empty prescription drug containers, in special drop-off containers at our District office, located at 2857 West State Road 2 in La Porte. When you drop off items, please bring them into the lobby and place them into the correctly labeled boxes to ensure that they are recycled properly. Visit www.solidwastedistrict.com/recycling-dropoff-programs for an up-to-date list of materials accepted and more details. Note: These hard-to-recycle items are NOT accepted in curbside totes.

Yard and Green Waste Drop-Off – Residents can drop off yard waste at no charge at the Compost Facility, which is located north of the Fairgrounds, across from NIPSCO, at 724 Zigler Road in La Porte. Drop off residential grass clippings, leaves, brush, and logs only. NO landscape timbers or building materials are accepted. Yard waste must be unbagged or in PAPER bags (NO plastic bags). Please empty any plastic bags used to haul the yard waste and take them home with you. No trash is accepted.

7-in-1 Collections – In the spring and fall, we offer drop-off events at the Fairgrounds where you can recycle tires, appliances, electronics, Styrofoam, and cardboard; safely dispose of household hazardous waste (HHW); and have confidential documents securely shredded. We also provide additional mobile HHW collections throughout the spring, summer, and fall. Watch for event dates and more details in our spring newsletter or check our website, www.solidwastedistrict.com. Electronics are also accepted year-round at our drop-off sites in La Porte and Michigan City.

Clay

"NATURE DOES NOT HURRY, YET EVERYTHING IS ACCOMPLISHED."
~ LAO TZU

Keep Styrofoam Out of the Landfills

Here in La Porte County, community recycling drop-off programs enable residents to responsibly dispose of additional recyclable materials that are not accepted through our curbside recycling program. One common material that is not accepted curbside is Styrofoam.

While Styrofoam is lightweight and often used in packaging, it is not easily recyclable and can break down into harmful microplastics. Styrofoam can be brought to the Zigler Road Compost Site at 724 Zigler Road, La Porte, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and placed in the shipping trailer designated for Styrofoam.

For a complete listing of our



Credit: camerlenta | iStock | Getty Images Plus

programs, download our brochure at www.solidwastedistrict.com/recycling-dropoff-programs. Thanks for helping us reduce waste!

Give Your Yard Waste a Second Life

La Porte County residents may drop off yard waste at no charge at the Compost Facility, located north of the Fairgrounds, across from NIPSCO, at 724 Zigler Road in La Porte. Winter hours begin November 17 and the facility will be open Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. At this time, yard waste from businesses is not being accepted, and updates will be posted on our website and Facebook page when commercial drop-off becomes available again.

Drop off your grass clippings, brush, and logs, and we will transform them into nutrient-rich compost and useful mulch. If you collect your yard waste in large paper yard waste bags from home improvement stores, there is no need to empty them because the paper bags are compostable. If you use plastic bags or bins, please empty



the material and take the bags or containers home to reuse or dispose of properly. Leave only yard waste. Please follow all signs at the facility. No trash is accepted and all loads will be inspected before drop-off. When available, residents may purchase and self-haul compost for \$15 per cubic yard, and natural mulch is currently free for residents. Visit our website at www.solidwastedistrict.com for additional details.

Drop Off Your Plastic Bags For Recycling

Recycle plastic grocery bags, shrink wrap, case wrappers, bubble wrap, deflated plastic packing pillows, clean zippered plastic storage bags, bread bags, and other plastic bags at our office, located at 2857 W. State Road 2 in La Porte. We are now accepting plastic bags and films for recycling through the NexTrex Community Collaboration program. Bring items Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., and deposit them into the box marked for bag recycling.

Many grocery and home improvement stores also accept empty, clean plastic bags and films for recycling. Remember — no plastic bags in your blue curbside toters!



Our thanks go to WM, GIS Insurance, Al’s Supermarkets, Republic Services, NIPSCO, Tradebe, and Borden Waste-Away for supplying reusable shopping bags, which we’ve distributed to residents over the past year.

What Do I Do With Latex Paint?



NO LATEX PAINTS will be accepted for disposal at our household hazardous waste collection events. Latex paint is not considered hazardous waste. If you have a small amount of paint or it is unusable, allow the paint to dry out by leaving the lid off the can or by adding kitty litter or sand to harden it. Then dispose of the dried-out paint can, with the lid off, in your regular trash.

Local Programs Offered to Answer Recycling Questions

We offer free educational programs for schools, clubs, and community groups throughout La Porte County. Each program is designed to engage students of all ages in fun, hands-on learning about recycling, composting, and caring for our environment. Here are some of the activities and lessons available to bring to your classroom or organization:

- Boat Challenge (3-6) – Create a boat that can float using trash items.
- Eco-Sculptures (K-12) – Students will need to use their imagination to create a masterpiece using recyclables and glue guns.
- Edible Landfill (K-6) – Learn how a landfill is designed and all of the safety precautions that are put into place prior to the first piece of trash being placed in the landfill. Students will create their own landfill using tasty treats and will be able to enjoy an edible snack at the end.
- Garbology (5-8) – Be a detective and learn about others based on the trash that they have thrown away. Students will look through provided “clean” trash to see what clues they can gather about the person who produced the trash.
- Green Cleaning (7-12) – Learn about household hazardous waste and how to avoid it by making your own earth-friendly cleaning items.
- Junkbot (1-4) – How creative are you? Students will build a robot using reused items and learning how items that can’t always be recycled can still serve another function.
- The Lorax (PreK-2) – What do you think will happen next? Students read “The Lorax” by Dr. Seuss and then will draw pictures of what they think will happen now that the last Truffula seed has been planted.
- Microplastics (4-8) – Microplastics are everywhere in the environment. Students will see just how easily plastics can move from creature to creature through the food chain.
- Oh, Paper Tree (4-6) – Seasonal- Students create their very own Christmas Tree that is strong enough to hold ornaments, using only newspaper and tape.
- Packaging and Engineering (3-7) – Spend time being material scientists and learn what all goes into the designing of a package.
- Paper Recycling (K-12) – Students learn the process and importance of making recycled paper while also making their own paper to take home.
- Plastic, Plastic, Everywhere (2-5) – Younger version of microplastics class where students will learn how dangerous microplastics can be in the environment.
- Story In A Bag (2-12) – Can you come up with a story on the spot? Students work as groups to invent a story including all of the items included in a small bag that is given to each group.
- Superhero Sorters (PreK-2) – Great introduction to recycling during this presentation. Students will be reading a book on recycling and then will have a hands-on sorting activity to determine which items can be recycled, reused, composted, or need to be trashed.
- Trash to Treasure- Paper Bag Kite (4-7) – Learn about the young lady who created the design of the paper bag and how it came to be. The class will then make paper bag kites that they can decorate and fly outside.
- Worms; Earth’s Recyclers (PreK+) – In this program students will learn all about earthworms as well as have the opportunity to touch and examine earthworms.





Extend the Life of Your Devices

In a world where technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, it’s easy to fall into the habit of upgrading devices frequently without considering the environmental impact. Being mindful about how we purchase, use, and dispose of electronics can make a meaningful difference to the environmental footprint left by these devices.

Sustainability starts with the choices we make at the point of purchase. More manufacturers are now offering devices built with recycled materials, energy-efficient components, and modular designs that allow for easier repairs. Choosing electronics from companies that prioritize environmental responsibility helps reduce the demand for raw materials and lowers the carbon footprint associated with production. Once a device is in use, extending its life is one of the most effective ways to reduce waste. Simple habits like keeping software updated, using protective cases, and avoiding overcharging batteries can help

electronics last longer. When something breaks, repair is often a better option than replacement. Many communities have repair cafés or local technicians who can fix common issues, and some manufacturers provide guides and parts to support DIY repairs.

Eventually, every device reaches the end of its useful life. When that happens, disposal should be handled with care. Electronics contain materials that can be harmful to the environment if not processed properly. Instead of throwing away old or broken devices, recycle them. In La Porte County, electronics are accepted at two convenient locations: at the Zigler Road Compost Facility at 724 Zigler Road in La Porte, and at 1801 Kentucky Street along the side of the Street Department in Michigan City. Both sites are open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. These centers ensure that valuable materials are recovered and hazardous components are safely managed.

Battery Safety Protects Homes and Workers

We rarely notice batteries until they stop working. They sit quietly in our phones, laptops, tools, and toys, storing the energy that keeps daily life running. Yet the same power that makes them so useful can also make them dangerous. When a battery is damaged, mishandled, or tossed into the wrong bin, it can spark fires that spread fast and burn hot, putting people, property, and the environment at risk.

Across the country, waste facilities and collection trucks have battled fires linked to batteries discarded in trash or recycling bins. Once punctured or exposed to heat, a lithium-ion battery can ignite almost instantly and may continue burning for hours or even days. These fires are difficult to contain, and they are becoming more common as the number of battery-powered devices grows. Beyond fire hazards, batteries thrown in landfills can leak harmful substances into soil and water, while safe recycling allows valuable materials to be recovered and reused. The best way to reduce these risks is through proper handling. Store batteries in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight or heat sources. Do not mix different types together, and keep them out of junk



drawers where contact with metal objects can cause sparks. Protect terminals with clear tape or original packaging and take extra precautions with swollen or leaking batteries by placing them in non-flammable material until they can be dropped off safely.

Here in La Porte County, please do not place batteries of any type into your recycling. Batteries require special handling and should be delivered to our office, to one of our electronics drop-off trailers, or to a household hazardous waste collection event. These safe disposal options protect workers, facilities, and neighborhoods from fires and environmental hazards and help keep our community safe.

Best Wishes, Lyn!

We recently said goodbye to Lyn De Groote, who was the District’s controller for nearly 10 years. Typically working behind the scenes to keep our programs running smoothly, Lyn was an essential part of our team and valued colleague.

“I enjoyed my years with the District,” said Lyn. “I want to thank Executive Director Clay Turner, my friends in the office, and our residents for the opportunity to serve in this way.”

Clay Turner added, “Thanks, Lyn, for your many years of service. We wish you the best in retirement!”



Recycle Your Christmas Tree

If your family enjoyed a real Christmas tree, you can recycle it with us this winter. Simply remove all ornaments, lights, garlands, and tinsel, as well as the stand, and deliver the bare tree to the Zigler Road Compost Facility. These trees will be chipped and turned into mulch, so make sure that your tree is totally bare.

Trees must be unbagged, so if you put the tree into a bag to transport it, please remove it from the bag and take the bag home to discard or use again next year. We cannot accept flocked trees for recycling



since the chemicals used to create the snow effect will contaminate mulch. Christmas trees will be accepted during our normal winter hours, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. (The facility is closed on Saturdays, Sundays, and all government holidays.)

The Washington Park Zoo in Michigan City and many local livestock farmers accept bare Christmas trees, as well. Visit the Zoo’s website or check with a farmer you know for details. If you live in a city or town, your local street department or trash hauler may pick up your tree at the curb, so check with them for the schedule and setout requirements.

If you have a pre-lit artificial tree to discard, you can recycle it at one of our electronics recycling trailers. The trailers are in La Porte at 724 Zigler Road (at the compost site) and in Michigan City at 1801 Kentucky Street (on the side of the Street Department). Please do not bag trees. Only pre-lit artificial trees will be accepted. Unlit artificial trees should be placed into the trash for landfill disposal.

2026 Household Hazardous Waste Schedule



Household hazardous waste (HHW) is any product in your home that could be poisonous or dangerous if thrown into the trash. HHW includes car and lawn care products, paints and paint thinners, cleaning supplies, solvents, and more. Never toss HHW into the trash. HHW can endanger children or pets, result in spills in your neighborhood, or cause fires in collection trucks if it is placed into curbside carts.

La Porte County residents can dispose of HHW safely at the following

community collection events scheduled throughout the year:

May
Saturday, May 16 – 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
La Porte County Fairgrounds
2581 W. State Road 2

June 7-in-1 Collection
Saturday, June 13 – 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
La Porte County Fair Grounds
2581 W. State Road 2

www.solidwastedistrict.com

www.wasteawaygroup.com

RECYCLING 101



LAPORTE COUNTY
RECYCLING
Solid Waste District

THE MATERIALS THAT WE ALWAYS ACCEPT	THE MATERIALS THAT WE NEVER ACCEPT
 <p>Glass Bottles and Containers</p>	 <p>No Organic Items, Food Items, or Medical Items</p>
 <p>Cardboard, Paper, Newspaper, Junk Mail (No wax covered cardboard)</p>	 <p>No Films, Cables, or Bags (Never Bag Recyclables)</p>
 <p>Metal Cans and Soda Cans</p>	 <p>No Electronic Items (LaPorte Residents can take electronics to: 724 Zigler Rd. LaPorte, IN, or, 1801 Kentucky St. Michigan City, IN.)</p>
 <p>Plastic Bottles, Detergent Bottles, Milk Jugs</p>	 <p>NEVER put Batteries in your Recycling Cart</p>

HELPFUL HINTS TO AVOID IMPROPER RECYCLING

“WISHCYCLING” IS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE

Tossing items into the recycling without checking whether they are recyclable causes significant issues at our plant. In many cases, these unacceptable items will be sent to the landfill regardless.

ACCEPTED PLASTICS

1 PET	2 HDPE	3 PVC	4 LDPE	5 PP	6 PS	7 OTHER
Polyethylene Terephthalate	High-Density Polyethylene	Polyvinyl Chloride	Low-Density Polyethylene	Polypropylene	Polystyrene (NO STYROFOAM)	Other Plastics
Clear tough plastic such as soft drink, juice, and water bottles	Common white/colored plastics such as milk jugs and shampoo bottles	Hard rigid clear plastic such as squeeze bottles and window cleaner bottles (NO PVC PIPING)	Soft flexible plastic e.g. squeezable sauce bottles (NO FILM)	Hard but flexible plastics such as prescription bottles, yogurt cups, drink cups	Rigid brittle plastics such as small tubs and butter containers	All other plastics Ex: sports bottles, baby bottles, clear water coolers, etc.
						

Greener Cleaning Made Simple

Cleaning your home doesn’t have to come at the expense of the environment. By making a few simple changes, you can reduce chemical use, minimize waste, and make your cleaning routine more sustainable.

Start by thinking mechanical first. A good scrub brush, a dish scrubber, or even an old toothbrush can provide plenty of cleaning power without the need for harsh chemicals. Preventing messes in the first place can also cut down on the need for strong cleaners—using drain baskets, for example, helps keep debris from clogging your pipes. Before purchasing new cleaning products, take inventory of what you already have. Many homes have cleaning supplies stored in multiple places, from the laundry room to under the kitchen sink or even in the garage. Using up what you already own before buying more reduces waste and saves money.

Another great option is to make your own cleaners using simple household ingredients. Vinegar, baking soda, salt, lemon juice, and mineral oil can be combined to create effective and budget-friendly alternatives to store-bought products. Many homemade cleaner recipes are available online, but it’s important to handle all cleaning solutions, whether homemade or store-bought, with care since some can still cause irritation to the skin and eyes.

If you prefer to purchase cleaning products, opt for the mildest and safest option available. Choose products that clearly list their ingredients and provide straightforward

instructions without requiring special safety measures for use or disposal. The EPA’s Safer Choice program provides a helpful guide to environmentally friendly products, which can be found at www.epa.gov/saferchoice.

When selecting products and containers, consider their environmental impact. Look for recycled-content packaging, and choose reusable cloth towels or old rags instead of disposable paper towels. If paper towels are necessary, select those made from recycled materials. Buying concentrates is another way to cut down on packaging waste. Some cleaning products are sold in concentrated forms, allowing you to add water at home, while others, like laundry detergent, are designed to be used in smaller amounts. If you have softened water, you may be able to use even less detergent for the same cleaning power.

Proper storage and disposal of cleaning products are just as important as choosing the right ones. Always keep cleaning solutions in their original, labeled containers and never transfer them into food or beverage containers. Store them out of reach of children and pets, and avoid placing potentially hazardous materials near heat sources or in direct sunlight.

Our District also offers free Green Cleaning classes where participants can make their own cleansers to take home. Call our office or email Sacha at sgeeburns@solidwastedistrict.com for more information.



LAPORTE COUNTY
RECYCLING
Solid Waste District

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We want your suggestions, questions, and comments!

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PLEASE RECYCLE AFTER READING.