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www.solidwastedistrict.com

Summer 2025

"one man's trash..."

Solid Waste District of La Porte County

Your guide to reducing, reusing, and recycling

Know What Goes in Your Bin



Credit: Oleh_Slobeniuk | E+ | Getty Images

Recycling is one of the most impactful ways to protect our environment, conserve resources, and support the local economy here in La Porte County. When we recycle correctly, we help ensure that valuable materials like paper, cardboard, metal, and plastic get a second life instead of ending up in the landfill.

But recycling right is just as important as recycling itself. Contamination continues to be one of the biggest challenges in the recycling process. When items that don't belong in the bin, like greasy pizza boxes, diapers, cords, or plastic bags, are mixed in, they can ruin an entire load of otherwise good recyclables. This not only wastes resources, but it also drives up costs and puts recycling workers at risk.

That's why it's so important to stick to the basics and recycle only clean, accepted materials. A few simple habits at home can make a big difference. First, make sure all

recyclables are empty, clean, and dry. Rinse food and beverage containers and let them air dry before tossing them in the bin. Keep all recyclables loose, not bagged. Bagged materials are difficult to sort and often end up in the trash. Flatten cardboard boxes to save space and, if needed, cut them down to fit more easily into your bin. Make it easier to recycle right by labeling your bins clearly inside your home. Visible reminders help everyone know what belongs and what doesn't. And remember to double-check plastics to ensure they are between 1 and 7.

Keep in mind that recycling is more than a chore; it's a way to invest in our future. Recycling extends the life of our landfills by keeping usable materials out. Here in La Porte County, we all benefit when the recycling stream is clean and efficient. For more information and additional recycling tips, visit www.solidwastedistrict.com.

Free Use of Recycling Stands for Events

This summer, we are pleased to offer ClearStream portable recycling containers for La Porte County residents to reserve for their events. To reserve a recycling container, follow these guidelines:

- You are responsible for pickup and return.
- The District requires a minimum 24-hour notice for pickup.
- A contact name and number must be registered at checkout time.

For drop-off locations of collected recyclables, you can visit:

- La Porte County Highway Barn, Highway 30 & 421, Hanna
- Michigan City Central Services, 1801 Kentucky Street
- Solid Waste District Compost Site, 724 Zigler Road

To reserve your ClearStream portable recycling container, contact Sacha Gee-Burns at 219-326-0014 or sgeeburns@solidwastedistrict.com.



Turner Talks Trash

from the Executive Director's Desk

Whether you're spending a weekend at a nearby campground or heading out of town for a family reunion, it's easy to slip out of our everyday routines, including recycling. But no matter where your trip takes you, making the right choice for the environment still matters. That empty bottle, soda can, or plastic cup doesn't suddenly lose its impact just because you're away from home.

Recycling while on the go takes just a little extra planning. Bring a small container or reusable bag to collect recyclables in your car or at your campsite, and drop them off once you return. If you're attending or hosting a local event, it's even easier. La Porte County Recycling offers free ClearStream portable recycling stands for residents to use at gatherings like reunions, graduation parties, festivals, and more.

These stands are lightweight and easy to set up, making it simple to collect bottles and cans in any outdoor or indoor setting. You just need to reserve one in advance and pick it up at the District office. Once your event is over, the recyclables can be dropped off at any of our three locations.

Taking small steps to recycle right wherever you are helps keep our community clean and cuts down on waste. Need a recycling stand for your next event? Call 219-326-0014 or email sgeeburns@solidwastedistrict.com to reserve one today.

Clay

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

See What We Recycled This Year

In 2024, La Porte County made strides in reducing landfill waste, with over 12,150 tons of materials successfully recycled or composted through local programs and special collections. These efforts reflect the ongoing commitment of residents and the Solid Waste District to protect natural resources and keep the community clean.

Key highlights from 2024 include:

- Curbside Recycling – 5,859 tons
- Yard Waste and Composting – 5,971 tons
- Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) – 42.17 tons collected from 1,599 households
- Electronics Recycling – 157.52 tons
- Tire Recycling – 89.3 tons
- Appliance Recycling – 13.32 tons
- Paper and Shredding Events – 12.88 tons
- Plastic Bag Recycling – 162,000 bags recycled (equivalent to about 1 ton)

- Fair Week Recycling – Estimated 3 tons
- 7-in-1 Event Cardboard Collection – 3.1 tons
- 7-in-1 Event Styrofoam Collection – 0.42 tons
- TerraCycle Donations – \$209.89 raised

Each of these efforts played a part in the District's total of 12,152.71 tons diverted from the landfill in 2024. With continued community participation, these programs will remain a strong foundation for sustainable growth in the year ahead.



Congratulations to La Porte County's newest Master Recycler graduates! From left to right: Erica Schultz, Bob Nowak, Karen Behenna, Cat Houchins, Janet Gourlie, and Joanna Daskocil.

Cutting Food Waste Starts at Home

Wasting food may seem like a small issue from one household to the next, but across the country it adds up in ways that are hard to ignore. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently updated its estimate on the cost of food waste, finding that each American throws away about \$728 worth of edible food every year. For a family of four, that loss grows to nearly \$2,913 annually.

And it is not just money going to waste. It is also the energy, water, labor, and transportation invested in getting that food from the farm to your kitchen.

While fresh produce and grain products are commonly wasted in terms of weight, it is actually meat, seafood, and dairy that create the biggest financial loss when discarded. These items often have shorter shelf lives and higher prices, so when they spoil or get overlooked in the fridge, the cost is especially steep. What may look like a forgotten cut of steak or expired yogurt quietly represents a meaningful chunk of a household’s food budget.

Even with the best of intentions, food waste often happens because of overbuying, poor storage, confusion about labels, or a lack of planning. Once food is thrown away, it usually ends up in landfills where it



Credit: RudanDashinsky | E+ | Getty Images

produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas. That makes food waste not just a matter of dollars but also an environmental concern. In fact, food is the single largest category of material found in municipal landfills in the United States.

Reducing food waste at home does not require a major lifestyle change. Awareness is the first step. By shopping more thoughtfully, preparing meals based on what is already in the kitchen, and understanding that “sell by” and “best by” dates do not always mean unsafe, families can cut back on waste and stretch their food dollars further. Preventing food waste is not only a smart financial decision. It also supports a more sustainable future by easing pressure on natural resources and reducing unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions.

Where Should Your Batteries Go?

Batteries make modern life possible. They power our phones, laptops, e-bikes, power tools, toys, and even backup systems for homes. But behind their convenience lies a growing danger. When damaged, overcharged or thrown away improperly, batteries, especially lithium-ion types, can cause fires that are extremely difficult to control.

Fires linked to lithium-ion batteries are no longer rare. In cities across the country, warehouse blazes, truck fires, and even residential incidents have been traced back to batteries that were improperly stored, damaged, or discarded. These types of incidents are happening more often as the number of battery-powered devices increases. Fires sparked by batteries have forced evacuations, damaged trucks and facilities, and injured workers. Most of these fires begin when used batteries are tossed into regular trash or recycling bins. Once compacted, punctured, or exposed to heat during collection or processing, they can ignite quickly.

Proper handling is the best defense. Overcharging can cause batteries to overheat, so it is important to unplug



Credit: Vitalii Petrushenko | E+ | Getty Images

devices once fully charged. Batteries should be stored in a cool, dry place and kept away from anything that could damage them. When it comes time for disposal, the most important thing is to keep them out of the curbside bin. Never toss them in the trash or recycling.

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.

2025 Household Hazardous Waste Schedule



Credit: Anchiy | E+ | Getty Images

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:

August
Saturday, August 16 – 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Kankakee Valley REMC
8642 W. Hwy 30, Wanatah

Electronics & Household Hazardous Waste (including batteries, fluorescent bulbs, oil-based paint, sharps & medication)

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

Tires, Appliances, Electronics, Shredding, Styrofoam, Cardboard & HHW (including batteries, fluorescent bulbs, oil-based paint, sharps & medication)

October
Saturday, October 18 – 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Michigan City Marquette Mall
West Parking Lot

Household Hazardous Waste ONLY (including batteries, fluorescent bulbs, oil-based paint, sharps & medication)

www.solidwastedistrict.com



Credit: MT Stock Studio | 5+ | Getty Images

Choose Reusable over Plastic Bags

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 in special bins at our office, located at 2857 W. State Road 2 in La Porte. 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 to WM, GIS Insurance, Al’s Supermarkets, Republic Services, NIPSCO, Tradebe, and Borden Waste-Away for supplying reusable shopping bags that we’ve given to residents over the past year.



Fun Crafts from Everyday Items

Long summer days are perfect for crafts, and you don't need a trip to the store to get started. With a little imagination, everyday items from around the house can be turned into fun projects that help kids stay busy and learn the value of reuse at the same time.

Empty cereal boxes, toilet paper rolls, scrap paper, and used gift wrap are all great materials to start with. These items are often tossed out without a second thought, but they can be the base for a homemade puzzle, puppet theater, or even a new board

game. An old sock can become a puppet with the help of some buttons and glue. A used egg carton can turn into a caterpillar, flower tray, or paint palette.

Creating something new from items you already have is a great way to keep materials out of the trash while giving kids a creative outlet. Encourage kids to come up with their own ideas by setting out a small box of clean recyclables and letting them explore what they can build. Add some crayons, glue, tape, and scissors and see what they come up with.

Clear the Clutter this Summer

If your spring cleaning left you with piles of clothes, household items, or other clutter, summer is the perfect time to finish the job. Before sending anything to the landfill, try these simple tips to sort, donate, and recycle what you no longer need.

- Sort by condition and type. Group items into what can be reused, what can be recycled, and what needs disposal. Items in good condition may be accepted by donation centers or thrift stores.
- Donate usable goods. Gently used clothes, toys, books, and household items are often welcome at local nonprofits and reuse centers. Always check ahead for what they are currently accepting.
- Recycle responsibly. Electronics, batteries, and scrap metal should never be placed in trash bins. Look for local drop-off locations or recycling events for proper disposal.
- Use bulky item services. Many

communities offer scheduled bulky item collection or drop-off services for broken furniture and large household items. This helps ensure they are handled correctly.

- Keep items clean and organized. Bag clothing, box fragile goods, and separate electronics to make drop-off or pickup easier and more efficient.

Decluttering can feel rewarding when you know your items are going to the right place. With just a little planning, your summer cleanup can make space at home and a positive impact on your community.

And if you are looking for more ways to keep La Porte County clean, consider joining us for beach cleanup at Washington Park. We are now leading cleanups every Monday evening beginning at 5:30 p.m. Buckets, gloves, and a few litter grabbers will be available for use. To sign up or to donate supplies for this event, contact Sacha Gee-Burns at 219-326-0014 or sgeeburns@solidwastedistrict.com.



Need Mulch?

As of April 1st, 2025
mulch is free for La Porte County
residents (up to 25 cu. yards)

Contractors/Businesses
1/2 price mulch

Bring your own containers or we can
load your truck/trailer

Open Monday–Saturday 8am–4pm
Solid Waste District Compost Site
724 Zigler Road, La Porte



219.326.0014 | solidwastedistrict.com

Picnic Without Plastic

In the warm weather, many families and friends head outdoors to enjoy picnics in parks, backyards, and on beaches. While summer gatherings are a time to relax and connect, they can also lead to a surprising amount of waste, especially from single-use plastics. From utensils and straws to food containers and plastic wrap, the convenience of disposable items often comes at the cost of long-term environmental harm. Fortunately, with just a bit of planning, it's easy to enjoy a picnic that's both fun and friendly to the environment.

Start by thinking about what you really need. Reusable picnicware like lightweight dishes, cups, and silverware can be packed ahead of time and used again for future outings. Cloth napkins and washable food containers help cut down on trash and reduce your reliance on plastic wrap and bags. Many people already own these items at home, and simply bringing them along can make a big difference.

Food and drink choices matter too. Buying in bulk and packing snacks or meals into reusable containers helps eliminate excess packaging. Instead of bottled water or juice boxes, refillable bottles keep drinks cold and waste low. Even simple changes, like skipping the pre-packaged fruit and slicing your own at home, reduce plastic waste without adding much effort.

If your picnic includes grilling or takeout, consider bringing your own reusable takeout kit. This could include containers, a few serving tools and a small cooler to carry leftovers back home. Leftovers packed this way tend to stay fresher and are less likely to be forgotten or wasted.

A plastic-free picnic doesn't mean giving up convenience or enjoyment. With a few small changes, you can still celebrate the season with less waste.



www.wasteawaygroup.com

RECYCLING 101



THE MATERIALS THAT WE **ALWAYS** ACCEPT



Glass Bottles and Containers



Cardboard, Paper, Newspaper, Junk Mail (No wax covered cardboard)



Metal Cans and Soda Cans



Plastic Bottles, Detergent Bottles, Milk Jugs

THE MATERIALS THAT WE **NEVER** ACCEPT



No Organic Items, Food Items, or Medical Items



No Films, Cables, or Bags
(Never Bag Recyclables)



No Electronic Items
(LaPorte Residents can take electronics to:
724 Zigler Rd. LaPorte, IN, **or**,
1801 Kentucky St. Michigan City, IN.)



NEVER put Batteries in your Recycling Cart

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 plastics 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.

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.



Need Help?

We are available to visit businesses, clubs, classrooms, and organizations within our District to provide free programs on recycling and composting. Some of our most popular programs are How to Recycle Right, Composting 101, and Green Cleaning. However, we can design a program that fits your needs and answers your specific questions. We can even provide free employee training about recycling to area businesses. Contact Environmental Educator and Public Outreach Coordinator Sacha Gee-Burns at sgeeburns@solidwastedistrict.com or 219-326-0014 for details.



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.