

# "one man's trash..."

Solid Waste District of La Porte County



Your guide to reducing, reusing, and recycling

## Recycling Tips for Success

Recycling properly begins with knowing what can and cannot be recycled. Acceptable items include clean, dry paper products, such as cardboard, envelopes, junk mail, magazines, newspapers, office and school papers, paperback books, paper grocery bags, and wrapping paper without metal. Metal cans, glass bottles and jars, and plastic bottles and jugs are also recyclable.

Proper labeling of recycling bins inside your home is another key step to successful recycling. Clearly marked labels can help remind everyone in the household what belongs in the bin and what does not. Simple, visible labels make a big difference in keeping the recycling stream clean.

To prepare items for recycling, ensure that all containers are emptied of residue, rinsed out, and air-dried. For larger items like cardboard, save space in your bin by breaking down and flattening boxes. If needed, cut cardboard into pieces no larger than 18 by 18 inches.

It's equally important to keep



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recyclables loose in the bin; never bag them. Bagged recyclables can interfere with processing and sorting equipment. Similarly, hazardous materials, such as hoses, cords, batteries, chemicals, or medical sharps, should never be mixed in with recycling, as they pose risks to workers and can damage equipment. Contaminants, like dirty recyclables, greasy pizza boxes, and diapers, must also be kept out of the recycling stream to prevent contamination.

For more information and additional recycling tips, visit [www.solidwastedistrict.com](http://www.solidwastedistrict.com).

## Why Recycle?

- Recycling creates jobs, leading to a healthy economy.
- Recycling supplies raw materials for many manufacturers in Indiana.
- Recycling keeps valuable commodities out of landfills, extending the life of landfills and ensuring disposal capacity will be available for our communities.
- Recycling reduces the need for newly mined or harvested raw materials, which may reduce costs.
- Recycling conserves energy and reduces pollution.



Credit: Portra | E+ | Getty Images

## Need a 2025 Recycling Calendar?

If you'd like a 2025 recycling calendar mailed or emailed to your address, please call 219-326-0014 or email [lwoodson@solidwastedistrict.com](mailto:lwoodson@solidwastedistrict.com).



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## Turner Talks Trash

from the Executive Director's Desk



As we step into a new year, it's natural to reflect on ways we can improve our lives and make a positive impact on the world around us. 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 2025, consider some of these ideas that will reduce 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 by making a list, setting aside shopping time, and sticking 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, the environment, and your community. A sustainable year starts with small, intentional steps!

Clay

"THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS 'AWAY.' WHEN WE THROW ANYTHING AWAY, IT MUST GO SOMEWHERE." ~ ANNIE LEONARD

## SCAM ALERT

WE HAVE BEEN MADE AWARE OF A SCAM WHERE SOMEONE IS CALLING TO SAY THAT YOUR RECYCLING BILL IS OVERDUE AND SERVICES WILL BE SHUT OFF IF YOU DO NOT PAY. RECYCLING IS PAID THROUGH YOUR PROPERTY TAXES IN LA PORTE COUNTY AND YOU WILL NEVER RECEIVE A BILL FOR RECYCLING FROM US.



219.326.0014 | [solidwastedistrict.com](http://solidwastedistrict.com)

## Reducing Food Waste at Home

Food waste is a problem that affects both our economy and the environment. A significant portion of food waste occurs at the household level. Reducing food waste at home is not just a personal responsibility, but it is also a step toward a more sustainable planet. Here are some practical strategies and tips for minimizing food waste in your home.

### Plan Your Meals

- **Create a Shopping List:** Plan your meals for the week, make a shopping list, and stick to it. This helps you avoid impulse buying and ensures you buy only what you need.
- **Use a Meal Planner:** Meal planning apps and tools can help you organize and plan your meals effectively.

### Store Food Properly

- **Use Proper Containers:** Store food in airtight containers to keep it fresh longer.
- **Understand Food Labels:** Learn the difference between “sell by,” “use by,” and “best by” dates, and don’t throw away food that is still good to eat.
- **Rotate Your Stock:** Practice the “first in, first out” method to ensure that older products are used before newer ones.

### Cook Smarter

- **Cook in Appropriate Portions:** Cook



Credit: Marcos Elihu Castillo Ramirez | iStock | Getty Images Plus

only the amount you need to avoid leftovers that may go to waste.

- **Repurpose Leftovers:** Be creative with your leftovers by transforming them into new meals.
- **Freeze What You Can’t Eat:** If you have excess food, freeze it for later instead of tossing it out.

### Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

- **Use Food Scraps:** Utilize peels, stems, and other parts of vegetables and fruits in broths or as part of other recipes.
- **Compost Your Scraps:** Add fruit and vegetable scraps to your backyard compost or vermicompost bin.
- **Recycle Packaging:** Be mindful of packaging, and choose products with recyclable or minimal packaging.

## 2024 Master Recyclers



The 2024 Master Recyclers celebrated the graduation of six individuals including Randa, Linda, Olga, and Anu (pictured), as well as Margaret and Alice, who completed our program focused on sustainability and waste management. Over the course of five classes, participants explored topics ranging from Waste Flow Processing to Composting and Hazardous Waste.

The program was enriched by hands-on learning opportunities, including field trips to local facilities in the recycling and waste management industry. Highlights included visits to Tradebe, where household hazardous waste is processed, Pratt Industries’ paper mill and box factory,

Borden Recycle Works, Tri-Power Recycling (specializing in Styrofoam recycling), and the South East Berrien County Landfill.

To cap off the experience, the class toured the La Porte County Waste Water Treatment Facility, guided by Master Recycler alumnus Matt Amor, offering an insightful look into local water treatment processes. The graduating class of 2024 has gained valuable knowledge and skills, empowering them to champion recycling and waste reduction efforts in their communities. Congratulations to our newest Master Recyclers!

## 2025 Household Hazardous Waste Schedule

**Saturday, May 17,** 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., La Porte County Fairgrounds – 7-in-1 (Tires, Appliances, Electronics, Shredding, Styrofoam, Cardboard & Household Hazardous Waste)

**Saturday, June 14,** 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., La Porte County Fairgrounds – Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) ONLY

**Saturday, July 12,** 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Michigan City Marquette Mall, West Parking Lot – HHW ONLY

**Saturday, August 16,** 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Kankakee Valley REMC, Wanatah – HHW & Electronics

**Saturday, September 13,** 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., La Porte County Fairgrounds – 7-in-1

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

Learn more at: [www.solidwastedistrict.com/household-hazardous-waste](http://www.solidwastedistrict.com/household-hazardous-waste)



## Drop Them Off 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.

## Year-Round Styrofoam Recycling Now Available



We are excited to announce the launch of our year-round Styrofoam recycling program! Clean and bagged Styrofoam can now be dropped off at the Styrofoam recycling trailer located at our compost site at 724 Zigler Rd., La Porte, which is open

Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please note that packing peanuts or pellets are not accepted. If you have any questions or need more information, call our office at 219-326-0014. Thank you for helping us keep Styrofoam out of landfills!

# Prevent Fires by Properly Disposing of Batteries

Batteries and other ignitable materials can start fires inside curbside bins, collection trucks, and recycling facilities. Lithium-ion batteries, commonly found in rechargeable devices like cell phones, laptops, and headphones, are the most frequent cause of these fires.

Lithium-ion batteries can easily ignite when damaged, and during the collection and processing of curbside trash, they are likely to be mangled. Mechanized trucks typically crush waste when picking it up. At materials recovery facilities (MRFs), items travel across conveyors and tumble through a series of sorting machines. At landfills, waste is compacted by heavy equipment.

Fires sparked by lithium-ion batteries not only damage vehicles and facilities, but they also result in injuries to firefighters, monetary losses, and service disruptions in the community. Additionally, when we discard portable devices and their batteries, we lose the chance to reuse the valuable and often rare materials they contain.

To reduce the risk of fires from lithium



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batteries, battery buckets will be removed from community collection sites. Instead, drop-off containers will now be available at the compost site, located at 724 Zigler Road in La Porte, which is open Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Batteries can also be brought to any of the household hazardous waste events.

We can all do our part to ensure proper battery disposal, keeping our community safe while preserving valuable resources for reuse.

# Keeping Electronics Out of the Trash

- **Extend the Lifespan of Your Devices:** Protect your electronics with cases, clean them regularly, and repair them when necessary to keep them running longer and reduce the need for replacements.
- **Recycle Devices Beyond Repair:** When devices can no longer be repaired or reused, research local recycling options. Many manufacturers and retailers offer trade-in programs or discounts for returning old devices.
- **Donate or Sell Old Devices:** Instead of discarding electronics you no longer need, consider donating or selling them. Many individuals and organizations can benefit from used devices, keeping them in use and reducing waste.
- **Be Aware of Hazardous Materials:** Electronics often contain substances like lead, mercury, and cadmium, which can harm the environment if not disposed of properly. Recycling prevents these materials from



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- contaminating soil and water.
- **Choose Manufacturer Recycling Programs:** Many companies offer convenient take-back programs to recycle old devices, sometimes even providing incentives like discounts on new purchases.

## How to Safely Dispose of Your Batteries

- Tape the terminal ends of your lithium-ion batteries.
- Bag lithium-ion batteries individually in sealable plastic bags.
- Do not place lithium-ion batteries inside your trash cart/can or recycling toter!
- Take electronic devices with non-removable batteries to one of the electronics recycling trailers or a 7-in-1 collection.

# Simple Steps Toward Sustainable Living

*Sustainable Home: Practical Projects, Tips and Advice for Maintaining a More Eco-Friendly Household* by Christine Liu is an inspiring guide to making your home greener and more sustainable. With practical advice, Liu empowers readers to take actionable steps toward reducing their environmental impact, starting in their own living spaces.

One of the standout aspects of *Sustainable Home* is its focus on practicality and adaptability. Liu recognizes that no two households are the same and offers solutions that can be tailored to fit diverse lifestyles. Whether you're a seasoned environmentalist or just beginning your sustainability journey, the book provides approachable projects and tips that feel achievable rather than overwhelming.

Liu's exploration of the connection between our homes and the planet is insightful. She reveals how everyday choices, from the cleaning products we use to the energy we consume, contribute to a larger environmental footprint. Her explanations and engaging anecdotes shed light on the often-hidden impact of our habits, encouraging readers to rethink their relationship with the spaces they inhabit and the resources they depend on.

What sets *Sustainable Home* apart is its positive and empowering tone. Instead of dwelling on the scale of environmental



Photo courtesy of Christine Liu

challenges, Liu focuses on small changes that, when combined, make a meaningful difference. From DIY projects using upcycled materials to practical tips for conserving energy, the book is packed with ideas that not only benefit the planet but also enhance the comfort and functionality of your home.

While *Sustainable Home* acknowledges the urgency of environmental issues, it remains hopeful and uplifting. By showing that sustainability starts at home, Liu inspires readers to take their first steps toward a lifestyle that values simplicity, stewardship, and harmony with the planet. Whether you want to reduce waste, conserve energy, or live more mindfully, this book serves as both a practical guide and a source of inspiration.

## Electronics Recycling Drop-Off's

Electronics are accepted at these locations Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.:

- 724 Zigler Road, at the Zigler Road Compost Facility, La Porte
- 1801 Kentucky Street, along the side of the Street Department, Michigan City

## AVAILABLE PRESENTATIONS

- Recycling Basics
- Your Solid Waste District
- Paper Recycling
- Composting Basics
- Make your Own Household Cleansers
- Master Recyclers

CALL 219-326-0014 TO SCHEDULE

# LAPORTE COUNTY RECYCLING

Solid Waste District

# Report Illegal Dumping



Discarding trash or other unwanted items in empty lots, along highways, or in other nonapproved locations is considered illegal dumping, and it is against the law. Dumped items frequently include furniture, appliances, tires, construction waste, household trash, and hazardous materials. Oftentimes these illegally dumped items attract curious children — posing significant health and safety risks. Dirty diapers and food trash attract rodents, insects, and other vermin. Dumping items pollutes the soil

and water and destroys Indiana's natural beauty. Please be sure to landfill or recycle items you no longer want or need.

To report illegal dumping, please contact the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) online at [www.in.gov/idem/5274.htm](http://www.in.gov/idem/5274.htm) or call 800-451-6027 and select option 3. All reports are confidential. Keep our environment clean, safe, and healthy — now and for generations to come.

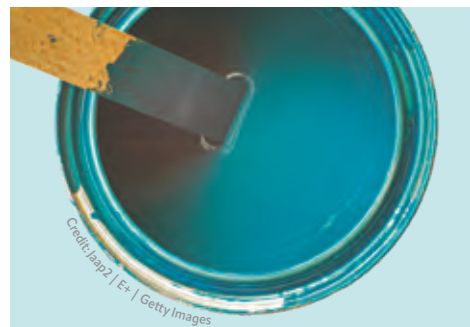
# Clean Recycling Saves Valuable Resources

Contamination in recycling and trash might seem like a small issue, but its consequences reach far and wide, impacting our environment, economy, and efforts toward sustainability. When non-recyclable items end up in the recycling bin, they contaminate the entire batch of recyclables. This can render entire loads unsuitable for recycling, forcing them to be sent to landfills instead. Not only does this waste valuable resources, but it also undermines the efforts put into recycling and contributes to overflowing landfills.

Contamination poses risks to recycling facilities and workers. Hazardous materials, such as chemicals or sharp objects, can cause injuries or damage to equipment during the sorting process. These incidents not only endanger the safety of workers, but they also incur additional costs for repairs.

To mitigate the negative effects of contamination, follow these rules:

- **Label Bins Clearly** – Inside your home, label your recycling bins clearly to remind everyone what can and cannot be recycled. Simple, visible labels can make a big difference.
- **Empty, Clean, and Dry** – Empty bottles and other containers, remove excess residue, rinse them out, and allow them to air-dry.
- **Know the Number** – Look to see whether the plastics you are placing in your bin have the recycling triangle with the number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7
- **Save Space in the Bin** – Break down and flatten boxes before recycling. If needed, cut cardboard into pieces no larger than about 18 by 18 inches.
- **Keep It Loose** – Don't bag your recycling. Recyclables should be loose as they go into the bin.
- **Avoid Hazardous Materials** – Never mix tanglers, like hoses or cords, or hazardous waste, such as batteries, chemicals, or medical sharps, with your recycling. These items can endanger workers and damage equipment.
- **Steer Clear of Contaminants** – Keep "yucky" items out of the recycling! These include dirty recyclables, greasy pizza boxes, and, especially, diapers.
- **Learn More** – For more tips about recycling, visit [www.solidwastedistrict.com](http://www.solidwastedistrict.com).



## 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.

## Tackling Textile Waste

Textile waste is a growing challenge that impacts both the environment and our communities. From overfilled landfills to the resources consumed in making and disposing of clothing, the effects of discarded textiles are far-reaching. As fashion trends evolve quickly and more clothing is produced than ever, the need to address this issue has become clear. While the problem is significant, there are practical ways to reduce our waste with our clothing.

One of the key drivers of textile waste is the rise of fast fashion. This industry promotes a cycle of cheap, rapidly produced clothing that often lacks durability. As a result, garments are quickly discarded, piling up in landfills where they take hundreds of years to decompose.

Reducing textile waste starts with action, and one effective step is finding new homes for unwanted clothing. Donating gently used items to local charities and nonprofit organizations can make a meaningful difference. Many thrift stores and donation centers welcome contributions, using them to support causes like homelessness, education, or healthcare. By giving clothing a second life, you can help reduce waste while addressing social needs.

For those looking to extend their impact, online platforms provide a convenient way to connect with individuals or organizations in need. Various websites and apps now allow donors to share clothing, electronics, and household items with recipients who can make the most of them. This digital approach to donation expands the possibilities for reuse and redistribution, ensuring that fewer items end up discarded.

Another way to reduce textile waste is by adopting more sustainable habits when it comes to clothing. Investing in well-made garments over fast, disposable options reduces the need for frequent replacements. Proper care and maintenance, such as washing in cold water, air-drying, or repairing minor damages, can also prolong the lifespan of clothing and reduce the overall demand for new production.



## LAPORTE COUNTY RECYCLING

Solid Waste District

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**We want your suggestions, questions, and comments!**

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[www.solidwastedistrict.com](http://www.solidwastedistrict.com)

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PLEASE RECYCLE AFTER READING.