

# This is your 2012 Houston County Recycling/Trash Disposal/Household Hazardous Waste Information Newsletter

Inside you'll find information about disposing your household trash and recyclables. On the front and back are helpful articles on how to get rid of household hazardous waste and how to compost your yard waste into a natural mulch for your garden.

For more information on this and other topics, please call

Houston County Environmental Services  
507-725-5800

Houston County Recycling Center  
507-896-2535

Please don't throw me away!

# The 2012 Recycler

Important recycling information enclosed

## Home Composting: Reap a Heap of Benefits

### Why compost?

The best method for getting rid of yard waste is also the easiest. Composting is nature's way of turning your yard waste into a valuable soil conditioner. Composting helps your garden and lawn, saves water, benefits the environment, and saves you money on bags and commercial soil additives.

### What to compost

**DO Compost:** grass clippings, leaves, weeds & garden debris, small brush, twigs, wood ash, sawdust & wood chips, egg shells, and coffee grounds  
**DON'T Compost:** meat, bones, fat, dairy products, oils, whole branches, logs, pet or human waste, charcoal briquette ash, sawdust, or ash from treated wood

### How to compost

All you need to compost are some basic gardening tools, materials for a bin, and a bit of soil to start the process. Bins should be square in shape, usually measuring 2' x 2' x 2' or 4' x 4' x 4'. The bin needs to have air running through it, so snow fencing, bricks, and woven wire are excellent bin walls.

**Recipe:** Mix 1 part green yard waste with 2 parts brown yard waste in a pile. Mix in 1 inch of soil. Keep pile as moist as a wrung-out sponge. Turn pile every week to let air in. Within four weeks to a year, depending on how often you turn it and how moist the pile is kept, you will have a batch of compost.

### Uses for compost

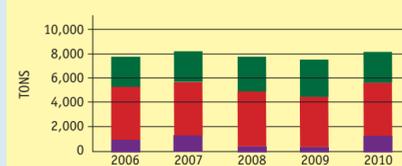
Finished compost is a crumbly, sweet smelling dirt-like substance. Mix it into the soil to help the seeding process and to help fight erosion or use it as mulch instead of commercial soil additives.

## Yard Care: Do Your Share and Grow a Healthy Lawn

- Rake up dead thatch before the grass grows in the spring.
- Let the grass grow out to 3 to 5 inches.
- Cut only the top third of the grass off at a time (about 1 inch)
- Leave clippings on your lawn.
- Water only every 1 or 2 weeks depending on your soil.
- Avoid over-fertilizing and have your soil tested every 3 to 4 years.

## Waste Diversion Rates

This graph illustrates the disposal and diversion of waste within the Houston County system. This includes all the waste sent to the Xcel Energy plant and the La Crosse County Landfill as well as tons that were recycled county-wide, both curbside and at the drop-off sites. In 2010 almost 5,000 tons of waste was sent to Xcel and over 1,000 tons to the landfill. The Solid Waste Department and Xcel Energy helped reduce the amount of waste going into the landfill by diverting this valuable resource into either energy production or recycling programs.



Some of these programs include converting used shingles from a waste product into material that can be used in reducing the amount of asphalt for roads. Clean wood waste is ground up and sold to Xcel Energy to produce energy, and waste concrete is crushed and used for other applications including a replacement for gravel on roads. Other wastes that are recycled include tires, scrap metal, yard waste, and cardboard.

Because of these successful diversion programs over 85 percent of all waste sent into the solid waste system in 2010 was recycled or reused. This reduces the impact of these wastes on our environment because they become a resource instead of a waste; this will also help keep our existing landfill space available for many more years, eliminating the need to locate another landfill within our region.

## Houston County Sharps Collection Program

Household generated "sharps" are accepted on Household Hazardous Waste Collection dates (see inside).

**Never place loose sharps in the garbage.**

The following sharps are accepted:

- Needles • Syringes • Lancets
- Test strips • PICC lines

### Procedure:

- Place the sharps in puncture resistant containers (either a registered red sharps container or a thick plastic container such as a laundry detergent or bleach bottle).



**NOTE:** If the sharps are in a container other than the two listed above, they will not be accepted.

- Label the container "SHARPS" and lock the lid.
- Take the container to the Household Hazardous Materials Facility in La Crosse or Winona or check inside for your area's Household Hazardous Waste Collection dates.

Because loose sharps are dangerous, a HHM technician cannot remove sharps from a container.

Call 507-725-5800 for more information.



# The 2012 Recycler

Vol. 3 No. 1 • 2012

Important recycling information for residents of Houston County, MN

## INSIDE

Large Household Item Disposal

Trash/Recycling Drop-off for Residents without Curbside Pickup

How to Prepare Materials for Recycling

Yard Waste Disposal

Contact Information



## Houston County Solid Waste & Recycling Information

Houston County Environmental Services  
507-725-5800

Houston County Recycling Center  
507-896-2535

## Household Hazardous Materials Collection

### LA CROSSE

**La Crosse County Household Hazardous Materials (HHM)**  
6502 State Road 16, La Crosse  
Call 608-785-9999

or visit [www.co.la-crosse.wi.us](http://www.co.la-crosse.wi.us) and click on Household Hazardous Material under Important Links

*Directions:* The HHM facility is located at the La Crosse County Landfill Complex. Take State Road 16 east toward West Salem. The facility is approximately 1/2 mile east of Interstate 90 on the south side of State Road 16.

**Hours**  
Mon. 11 am-4 pm & Thurs. 9 am-4 pm (call for appointment);  
Tues. 8 am-4 pm, Wed. 10 am-6 pm & 1st & 3rd Saturdays, 9 am-noon (no appointment needed).  
CLOSED FRIDAYS AND HOLIDAYS

### WINONA

**Winona County Household Hazardous Waste Drop-off**  
225 West 2nd Street, Winona, MN 55987  
Call 507-457-6462

Hours: Monday-Friday 8 am-4:30 pm year-round;  
Monday evenings until 7:00 pm (April-September).

Use of these facilities is free to La Crosse and Winona County residents, respectively. Houston County residents may use them for a fee. Please do not leave items at these locations when the facilities are not open—it's illegal and very dangerous.

### Garage & Workshop

Acetone	H
Artist's paint & media	H
Antifreeze	H
Autobody repair products	H
Automobile oil	H
Battery acid	H
Brake fluid	H
Car wax, solvent-based	H
Compressed gas cylinders (freon)	U
Contact cement	H
Driveway sealer	H
Explosives	U
Fiberglass epoxy	H
Fluorescent light bulbs	H
Gasoline/oil mixtures	H
Gasoline & other fuels	H
Glue, solvent-based	H
Glue, water-based	H
Joint compound	H
Kerosene	H
Lighter fluid	H
Nonautomotive oils	H
Oil filters	H
Paint, latex	H
Paint, oil-based	H
Paint thinner	H
Paint stripper	H
Parts cleaner	H
Photographic chemicals	H
Rust remover	H
Shellac	H
Stain	H
Transmission fluid	H
Turpentine	H
Varnish	H
Windshield washer solution	D
Wood filler	H
Wood preservative	H

### E-Waste Recycling

You may recycle electronic waste (e-waste) at the supervised drop-off sites. Acceptable items include:

Printers	Circuit boards	Stereos
Fax machines	Computer accessories	Microwaves
Copiers	Telephones	CB and ham radios
Computer monitors	Cameras	Computer gaming items
CPUs	VCRs/DVD players	Walkmans, iPods, MP3 players
Laptops	Cable/satellite TV equipment	Television sets
Keyboards/Mice		
Disk drives		

### Home & Garden

Aerosol cans, full	H
Batteries, alkaline	T
Batteries, button	H
Batteries, rechargeable	H
Dry cleaning solvent	H
Fertilizer (without pesticides)	T
Fertilizer (with pesticides)	H
Fungicide	H
Furniture polish	H
Insect spray	H
Light ballasts	H
Metal polish, solvent-based	H
Mothballs	H
Pesticides	H
Pool chemicals	H
Rat poison	H
Shoe polish	H
Spot remover	H
Stump remover	H
Thermostats (mercury)	H
Weed killer	H

### Other

Infectious/biological waste	U
Radioactive materials	U
Shock- or heat-sensitive materials (peroxide, picric acid)	U
Hazardous waste from businesses*	U

### Kitchen/Bathroom

Alcohol-based lotions (perfume, aftershave)	D
Bleach	D
Cleaners, ammonia-based	D
Cleaners, solvent-based	H
Cosmetics	T
Disinfectants	H
Drain cleaner	D
Floor care products	H

### Pharmaceuticals Drop-Off

**Don't flush them or put them in the trash!** This can have negative effects on fish and other aquatic life. **Don't keep them!** This can lead to accidental poisonings and make you a target for pill seekers. Houston County will accept pharmaceuticals and over-the-counter medications during their scheduled Household Hazardous Waste collection events (see inside for dates).

- tablets & capsules
- aerosols & inhalers
- liquids
- patches

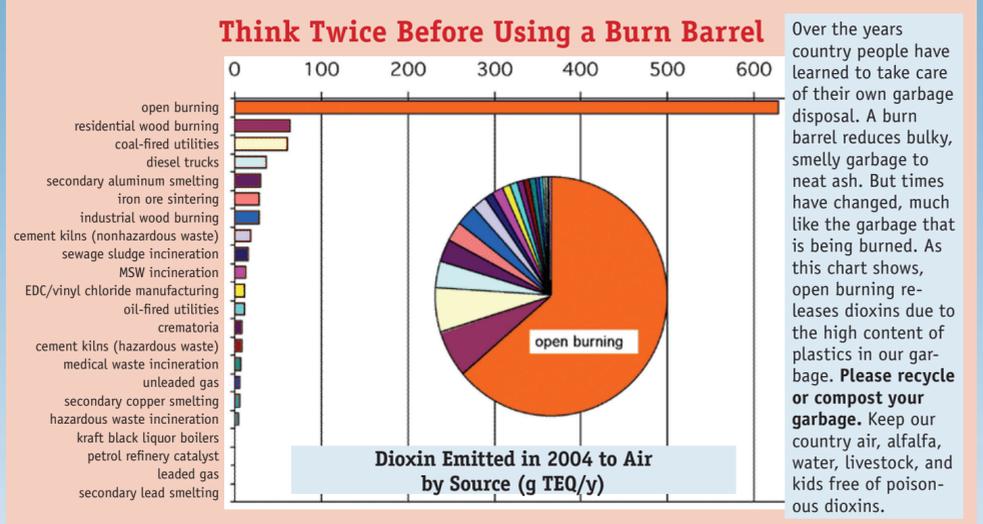
### Disposing of Latex Paint

Latex paint is NOT hazardous waste, but dumped illegally, it can plug septic fields, overload sewage treatment plants, and create a mess. Here's how to dispose of it:

- **10 cans or less:** Use a commercial paint hardener available at hardware and home improvement stores (\$1-\$2 per pack) OR expose opened cans with small amounts of paint to the sun and warm temperatures. Place the hardened paint in the trash.
- **More than 10 cans:** Line a medium-size box with thick plastic sheeting. Pour contents of cans into the box and add an absorbing agent like kitty litter, vermiculite, or ground corn cobs. Place the boxes in the sun or a warm area and stir frequently until the paint hardens. Put in the trash when dry.

Houston County residents may dispose of latex or oil paints and related items at their scheduled Household Hazardous Waste collection events (see inside for dates). Completely empty paint cans may be properly disposed of at the drop-off sites.

\* Note: Businesses that qualify as Very Small Quantity Generators (VSQG) can use the HHM program for a fee. VSQGs must pre-register and schedule an appointment before bringing materials to the collection facility. Call 608-785-9999 to receive a pre-registration and VSQG qualification packet.



# Houston County Household & Business Waste—How to Dispose of It

## Hazardous Waste

See page 1

## Recyclables

Glass • Tin Cans • Plastic • Paper Products

- **City curbside pickup:** Prepare recyclables and put them out for pickup as directed by your city (city contact info is at bottom of next page).
- **Rural recycling:** Take recyclables to the most convenient drop-off site and place them in the appropriate bin.

### What Can Be Recycled?

GLASS	TIN CANS	PLASTICS	PAPER/FIBER PRODUCTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Food and beverage glass only</b> (soda, beer, wine and liquor bottles; food containers)</li> </ul> <p><i>Rinse clean and discard metal or plastic caps. Labels can remain. Put in paper grocery bags.</i></p> <p><b>NO</b> broken glass, window glass, mirrors, light bulbs, dishes, ceramic dishes or beer/wine caps, flower pots, crystal, heat-resistant ovenware, drinking glasses.</p>	<p><i>Rinse clean and flatten if possible. Labels can remain.</i></p> <p><b>NO</b> aerosol cans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Empty bottles and jugs with necks. Number 1 or number 2 code must be stamped on the bottom of the container</b>—for example, milk jugs and pop bottles</li> </ul> <p><i>Remove and discard caps. Drain, rinse, and flatten. String bottles or jugs together when possible.</i></p> <p><b>NO</b> plastic bags or wrap, film containers, plastic pails, dishes, bubble wrap, butter containers, storage baskets, flower pots.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Office paper, computer paper:</b> Envelopes can have labels. <i>Bag, box, or bundle and tie with string. NO window envelopes or self-carbon paper.</i></li> <li>• <b>Corrugated cardboard, cardboard egg cartons, cereal and juice boxes:</b> <i>Flatten. NO styrofoam egg cartons.</i></li> <li>• <b>Newspapers (including glossy inserts), phone books:</b> <i>Remove covers from phone books. Bag, box, or bundle and tie with string.</i></li> <li>• <b>Books:</b> <i>Paperback—bag or box; no need to remove covers. Hardcover—discard covers and bag or box pages. Also, see Alternative Recycling Sources</i></li> <li>• <b>Magazines, catalogs:</b> <i>Bag, box, or bundle and tie with string.</i></li> <li>• <b>Brown paper bags:</b> <i>Bag, box, or bundle and tie with string.</i></li> </ul>

### Alternative Recycling Sources

- **Eyeglasses and hearing aids:** *Lions Club.* Deposit in containers around town or at supervised drop-off sites.
  - **Books** (hardcover and paperback): *Houston County Historical Society, Caledonia.*
  - **Metal tricycles and wagons:** *Charlie Bubbers, La Crescent* (repaired items are donated to Care & Share)
  - **Greeting cards** (front only): *St. Jude's Children's Ranch.*
  - **Used oil, oil filters, antifreeze:** *Local oil stations* (call first).
  - **Household items and furnishings** (clean, in good condition): *Houston County Women's Resources.* Call 507-894-2676. Tax receipt provided.
- For further information call  
**Houston County Environmental Services Office**  
 507-725-5800  
 or  
**Houston County Recycling Center**  
 507-896-2535

## General Trash

Nonrecyclable paper, plastic, and glass; styrofoam; other household trash.

- **Curbside pickup:** Use official bags or garbage totes and put them out for pickup as directed by your city.
- **No curbside pickup:** Fill bags and take to the most convenient drop-off site (see next page).

NONRECYCLABLE PAPER	NONRECYCLABLE PLASTIC	STYROFOAM	NONRECYCLABLE GLASS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kleenex, paper towels, napkins</li> <li>• Self-carbon paper (NCR)</li> <li>• Posters/tagboard</li> <li>• Window envelopes</li> <li>• Padded shipping bags</li> <li>• Wax paper/coated paper</li> <li>• Gift wrap/bags</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Containers not marked #1 or #2</li> <li>• Plastic containers (film, pill, ice cream, paint, Cool Whip, butter/margarine)</li> <li>• Plastic wrap/bags/gift bags/bubble wrap</li> <li>• Dishes/eating utensils</li> <li>• Credit/calling cards</li> <li>• Storage baskets</li> <li>• Toys</li> <li>• Flower pots</li> <li>• 12-pack beverage containers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coolers</li> <li>• Insulation</li> <li>• Packing peanuts</li> <li>• Egg cartons</li> <li>• Fast-food containers</li> <li>• Cups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broken glass</li> <li>• Window glass</li> <li>• Mirrors</li> <li>• Light bulbs (nonfluorescent)</li> <li>• Cooking/ovenware</li> <li>• Beverage glasses</li> </ul> <p><b>CERAMICS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ceramic items</li> <li>• Clay flower pots</li> <li>• Dishes</li> </ul>

## Q Why are we required to remove caps on plastic bottles and jugs?

**A** After plastic bottles are collected by recyclers, they are squeezed into bales that in turn are shipped to the companies that process the plastic into pellets that are then sold to manufacturers. The key is to squeeze as many bottles into the bale as possible in order to keep transportation costs low. When caps are left on, the equipment has to work much harder to create the bale. Also, the caps are made of a different type of plastic than the bottle itself and aren't recyclable.

## Drop-off Site Materials

Large household items, metal, construction materials, appliances, tires, e-waste, rural refuse

### Houston

Sat. 8 AM–3 PM; Mon. 10 AM–6 PM  
 5154 County 9 (Go ¼ mile east on County 9 just off Hwy 76 north.)

### Caledonia

Sat. 8 AM–3 PM; Wed. 10 AM–6 PM  
 14750 Richard's Road (Turn west off Hwy 44 by Evergreen Cemetery. Go approximately 1 mile; take private driveway off curve.)

### Spring Grove

Sat. 8 AM–3 PM; Wed. 10 AM–6 PM  
 631 E. Main (East of Spring Grove on Hwy 44 at Houston County Highway Shop.)

### Houston County Drop-off Site Locations



### La Crescent

Sat. 8 AM–3 PM; Thurs. 10 AM–6 PM  
 160 South 3rd St (Take Chestnut St. to south side of Commodore; take F St. across the railroad tracks to site.)

### Hokah

Sat. 8 AM–3 PM; Tues. 10 AM–6 PM  
 5650 State 16 (Go 1 mile west of junction of Hwys 44 and 16 on Hwy 16.)

These sites have been established for Houston County Residents only.

Households without curbside pickup may drop bagged garbage at the drop-off sites for a fee: **30-gallon bag: \$2.00, 45-gallon bag: \$2.50 (\$1.25 minimum).** If you have curbside collection, please use it. You will be charged the normal disposal fee for garbage in a city or township bag if deposited at the drop-off site. Those without curbside recycling pickup may use drop-off site recycling containers at no charge.

### Aluminum Cans



Houston County buys aluminum cans at the drop-off sites in Caledonia, Hokah, Houston, La Crescent, and Spring Grove; the Houston County Recycling Center, 105 N. Grant Street in Houston; and at Woodland Industries, 521 Old Highway Drive in Caledonia.



### ITEMS HOUSTON COUNTY RESIDENTS CAN DROP OFF AT NO CHARGE

#### Large household items

- Furniture
- Carpet & padding
- Appliances
- Mattresses
- Mirrors
- Floor tile/linoleum

#### Electronic items

- Bathroom fixtures
- Small household appliances
- Lead acid car batteries
- Tires without rims

#### Metal items

- Lawn mowers
- Window frames
- Bicycles
- Furnaces
- Pots & pans
- Tools

- Bed springs
- Poles & pipes
- Siding & sheeting
- Downspouts
- Engines & parts
- Fencing & gates

### ITEMS HOUSTON COUNTY RESIDENTS OR BUSINESSES CAN DROP OFF FOR \$18/CU.YD.

- Clothing/textiles
- Wood/plastic fencing
- Countertops
- Plywood

- Shutters
- PVC pipe
- Cabinets
- Styrofoam peanuts

- Pickup toppers
- Treated lumber
- Wooden shelving
- Doors, windows, & frames

- Demolition/remodeling debris including sheetrock, shingles, lumber, insulation, plaster, paneling

### ITEMS HOUSTON COUNTY BUSINESSES CAN DROP OFF FOR A FEE

Businesses may drop off tires, electronic items, and commercial and standard appliances. Fees are based on disposal costs charged to Houston County and subject to change as necessary.

### ITEMS THAT ARE NOT ACCEPTED BY DROP-OFF SITES OR HAVE SPECIAL COLLECTION DATES

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ashes/cinders</b> (Contact your city.)</li> <li>• <b>Cement sidewalks</b> (Contact your city.)</li> <li>• <b>Yard waste</b> (Contact your city.)</li> <li>• <b>Gas tanks, fuel oil barrels</b> (Contact a salvage yard.)</li> <li>• <b>Cement blocks</b></li> <li>• <b>Gas cylinders</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Household hazardous waste</b> will be collected at the <b>Houston Recycling Center June 21, 2012, from 1 to 6; the Caledonia Fairgrounds July 26, 2012, from 1 to 6; and at the Hokah Firebarn August 30, 2012, from 1 to 6.</b> In addition to household hazardous items (see list on front page), <b>pharmaceutical items</b> and <b>residential agricultural chemicals</b> will be collected. A fee will be charged for all items accepted for collection. Houston County will cost-share 50 percent of the total disposal costs for each resident of the county. Watch your local paper for 2012 dates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Unusable and unwanted farm agricultural pesticides</b> will again be collected in 2012. The program is offered free of charge through Houston County Environmental Services and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (contact Rick Frank). Watch your local paper for dates, times and sites.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fluorescent and HID bulbs</b> will be collected at each of the supervised drop-off sites on Saturday, April 14, 2012 only during regular hours of operation (8:00 am to 3:00 pm).</li> </ul>
---	--	---	--

For further information on special collections, contact the Houston County Environmental Services office at 507-725-5800

## Yard Waste

Each city has its own yard waste policies and programs. Contact your city hall for information (numbers provided below).

Brownsville 507-482-6732	Caledonia 507-725-3450	Eitzen 507-495-3313	Hokah 507-894-4990	Houston 507-896-3234	La Crescent 507-895-2595	Spring Grove 507-498-5221
-----------------------------	---------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	-----------------------------	------------------------------

### CALL THESE NUMBERS FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT RECYCLING AND WASTE DISPOSAL

Houston County Solid Waste Office  
 507-725-5800

Houston County Recycling Center  
 507-896-2535