



Recycler

Houston County Environmental Services
507-725-5800

Houston County Recycling Center
507-896-2535

2016 - 2017

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.

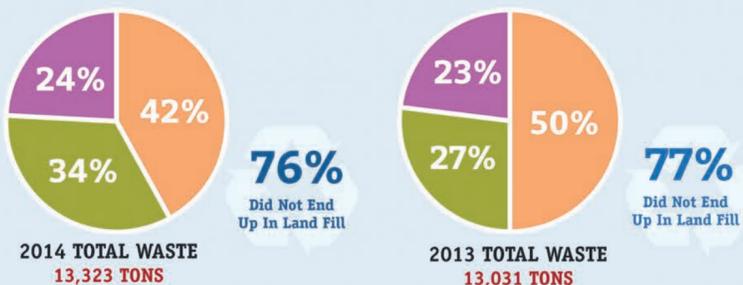
Uses for compost

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



2014 TOTAL WASTE
13,323 TONS

2013 TOTAL WASTE
13,031 TONS

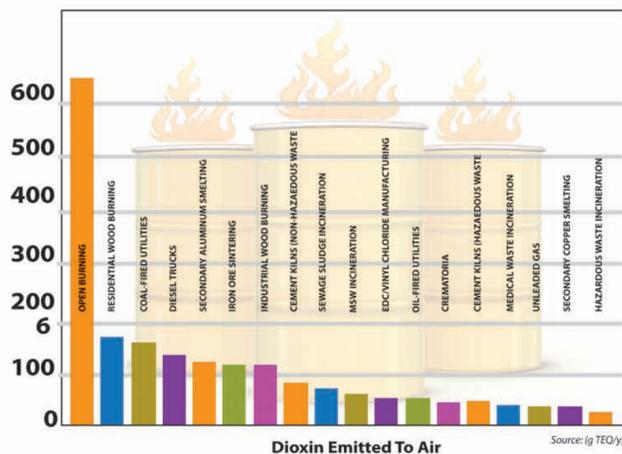


2012 TOTAL WASTE
14,129 TONS

2011 TOTAL WASTE
12,378 TONS

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 2016 almost 6,700 tons of waste was sent to Xcel and over 3,000 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 approximately 80 percent of all waste sent into the solid waste system in 2014 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.

THINK TWICE BEFORE USING A BURN BARREL



Over the years country people have learned to take care of their own garbage disposal. A burn barrel reduces bulky, smelly garbage to neat ash. But times have changed, much like the garbage that is being burned. As this chart shows, open burning releases dioxins due to the high content of plastics in our garbage. Please recycle or compost your garbage. Keep our country air, alfalfa, water, livestock, and kids free of poisonous dioxins.

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 Waste 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.



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

The 2016-2017 Recycler

Vol. 4 No. 1 • 2016

Important recycling information for residents of Houston County, MN

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 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 (business only) and Thurs. 12 pm-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 6:00 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.

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 | CB and ham radios |
| Copiers | Telephones | Computer gaming items |
| Computer monitors | Cameras | Walkmans, iPods, MP3 players |
| CPUs | VCRs/DVD players | Television sets |
| Laptops | Cable/satellite TV equipment | |
| Keyboards/Mice | | |
| Disk drives | | |

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). A drop box for medication only is located in the main lobby of the Criminal Justice Center. Sharp containers and inhalers not accepted at drop box.



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

Alternative Recycling Sources

- **Eyeglasses and hearing aids:** *Lions Club.* Deposit in containers around town or at supervised drop-off sites.
 - **Beverage pull tabs:** *Ronald McDonald Homes.* Deposit in containers around town or at supervised drop-off sites.
 - **Books (hardcover and paperback):** *Houston County Historical Society, Caledonia.*
 - **Greeting cards (front only):** *St. Jude's Children's Ranch Recycled Card Program, 100 St. Jude Street, Boulder City, NV 59005*
 - **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"> • Kleenex, paper towels, napkins • Self-carbon paper (NCR) • Posters/tagboard • Window envelopes • Padded shipping bags • Wax paper/coated paper • Gift wrap/bags 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Containers not marked #1 or #2 • Plastic containers (film, pill, ice cream, paint, Cool Whip, butter/margarine) • Plastic wrap/bags/gift bags/bubble wrap • Dishes/eating utensils • Credit/calling cards • Storage baskets • Toys • Flower pots • 12-pack beverage containers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coolers • Insulation • Packing peanuts • Egg cartons • Fast-food containers • Cups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broken glass • Window glass • Mirrors • Light bulbs (nonfluorescent) • Cooking/ovenware • Beverage glasses
			CERAMICS
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceramic items • Clay flower pots • Dishes

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.)

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.)

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.)

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.)

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.)

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 (\$1.50 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawn mowers • Window frames • Bicycles • Furnaces • Pots & pans • Tools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bed springs • Poles & pipes • Metal Siding & sheeting • Downspouts • Engines & parts • Fencing & gates |
|--|---|---|---|

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

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clothing/textiles • Wood/plastic fencing • Countertops • Plywood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shutters • PVC pipe • Cabinets • Styrofoam peanuts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pickup toppers • Treated lumber • Wooden shelving • Doors, windows, & frames | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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"> • Ashes/cinders (Contact your city.) • Cement sidewalks (Contact your city.) • Yard waste (Contact your city.) • Gas tanks, fuel oil barrels (Contact a salvage yard.) • Cement blocks • Gas cylinders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household hazardous waste will be collected at the Houston Recycling Center May 19, 2016, from 1 to 6 pm • Caledonia Fairgrounds July 7, 2016, from 1 to 6 pm • Hokah Firebarn Aug. 25, 2016, from 1 to 6 pm. In addition to household hazardous items (see list on front page), pharmaceutical items and residential agricultural chemicals will be collected. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unusable and unwanted farm agricultural pesticides will again be collected in 2016. The program is offered free of charge through Houston County Environmental services and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (contact Rick Frank). Collection will be held at the same time as the household hazardous waste collection. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluorescent and HID bulbs will be collected at each of the supervised drop-off sites on Saturday, April 9, 2016 during regular hours of operation (8:00 am to 3:00 pm). |
|---|---|---|---|

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