

HOUSTON-GALVESTON REGIONAL

Recycling Guide PDF

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Recycling in the Houston-Galveston Region

More Recycling Drop-Off Centers



We are moving in the right direction, but we need more people to recycle every day.

This guide, www.RecycleInfo.org, our partnership with www.Earth911.com and the City of Houston's 3-1-1 phone number can provide the information you need to recycle almost any item.

■ The Good News

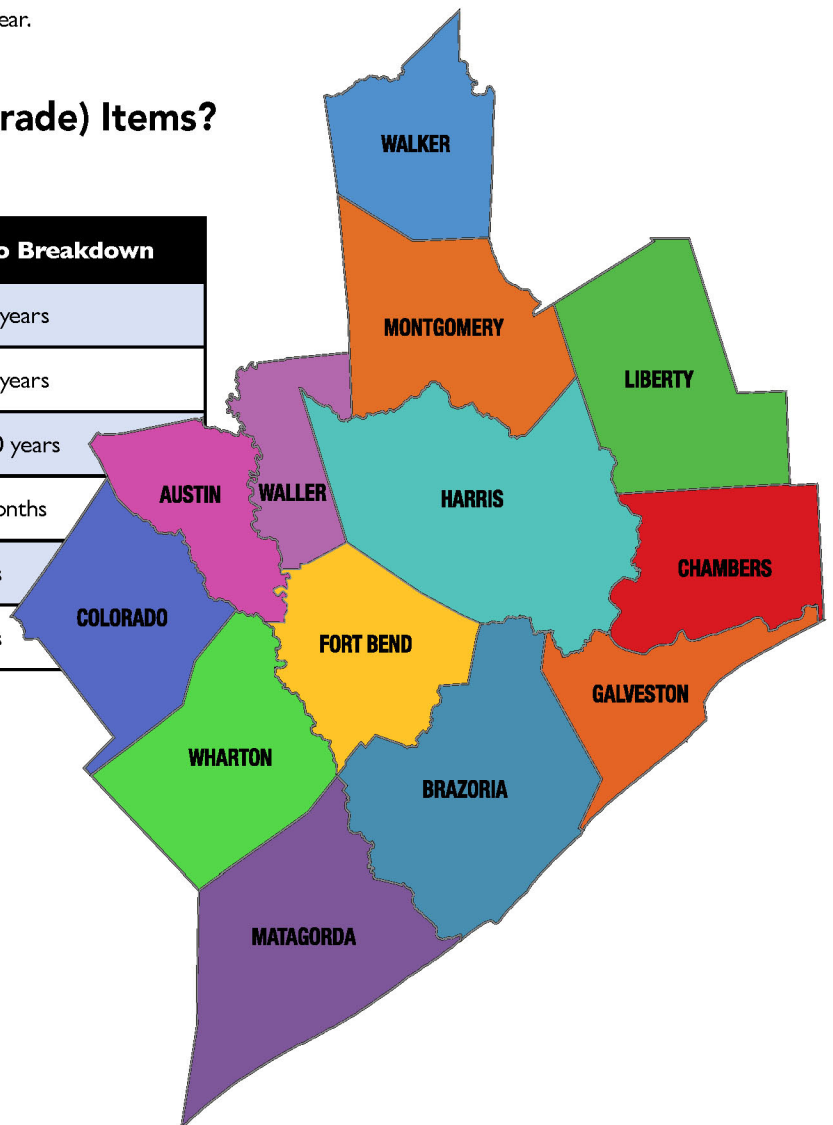
Recycling is one of the most important actions you can take. Only 1/10 of garbage gets recycled, but over half of it could be.

■ Too Much Trouble?

- The average person in our region creates **8** pounds of trash daily.
- That's **8.2** million tons of trash from our region in one year.
- Up to **70%** of this trash is buried in landfills.

How Long to Breakdown (Biodegrade) Items?

Product	Years to Breakdown
Plastic Bottles	1 million years
Glass	1 million years
Aluminum Cans	50 to 200 years
Paper	1 to 5 months
Disposable Diapers	500 years
Batteries	100 years



Recycling is Much Faster.

■ How Can You Help?

- One person makes a difference.
- If not you, who?
- When we combine efforts, we make a difference.



City of Houston Recycling Programs



■ Curbside Recycling

The curbside program collects paper, cardboard, aluminum and mixed metal cans, plastics #1- #5 and #7 (marked on the bottom) and motor oil. Residents place items in a green bin (the City provides), at the curb on their day of service (bimonthly).

If your neighborhood wants to be on the Curbside Waiting List, call 3-1-1 to learn the requirements. Neighborhoods are added as resources become available, but those that do not meet a minimum participation amount can lose their recycling service.

Not all items are collected curbside, due to costs, but may be accepted at City Recycling Drop-Off centers.

■ Yard Trimmings Recycling

Yard trimmings collection is offered to homes with automated garbage pick-up.

- Place grass, small branches and leaves in bags at your curb on garbage day.
- Do not put trimmings in the automated garbage can.
- Yard trimmings mixed with paper, plastic or other waste will NOT be collected.

■ Neighborhood Drop-Off Centers and Depositories

These centers are throughout the city and are a great alternative for neighborhoods without curbside recycling. In addition to the items collected curbside, the centers also accept:

- Glass, clear and colored (no ceramics or plate glass).

■ Westpark Consumer Recycling Center

5900 Westpark

This facility is the flagship of the City of Houston recycling programs. Residents drive through (enter on Westpark and exit on the Southwest Freeway feeder road). Westpark accepts all recyclables named above, plus electronics and **BOPA: Batteries, Oil, Paint (latex), Antifreeze.**

■ Environmental Services Centers

11500 S. Post Oak Boulevard & 5614 Neches Street

The City of Houston has two centers for Household Hazardous Waste (HHW). HHW are products with hazardous components: cleansers, pesticides, herbicides, oil paint, stains, varnishes, polishes and vehicle products.

Do not put HHW down the sink or in the trash. They are harmful to our water and the ground. Bring them to the City of Houston Environmental Service Centers.



Paper and Cardboard

Recycle All Paper All the Time

35% of paper is thrown away and sitting in landfills. This makes it the top material we trash. For every 100 pounds of garbage, about 35 pounds is paper.

■ The Good News

- ALL paper can be recycled: newspapers, catalogs, magazines, office paper, junk mail, envelopes, phone books, cardboard, paper egg cartons, cereal and tissue boxes, etc.
- Most paper can be recycled up to 8 times.
- Recycling paper uses 60% less energy than manufacturing from new material.
- If everyone used a canvas bag for groceries, over 60,000 trees would be saved yearly.

■ How Can You Help?

It's good to recycle paper, but it's even better to stop unwanted paper before it reaches you. Each American receives "junk" mail equal to 100 million trees each year.

■ Stop Unwanted Paper

Stop Junk Mail (\$1 fee):

DMA Mail Preference Service
PO Box 282, Carmel, NY 10512
www.DMAchoice.org

Stop Credit Card Offers (free):

Equifax, TransUnion, Novus Credit, Experian
1-888-567-8688 (1-888-5-OPTOUT)
www.OptOutPrescreen.com

Stop Sweepstakes Promotions (free):

Publishers Clearinghouse 1-800-645-9242

Stop Shopping Flyers (free):

Valpak Coupons 1-800-237-6266
www.coxtarget.com/mailexpression/s/DisplayMailSuppressionForm
Advo-Valassis 1-888-241-6760 www.advo.com/consumersupport.html
Harte-Hanks Mailers 1-800-422-4116 www.pennysaverusa.com/contactus

Stop Junk Faxes (free):

Contact the sender. If unsuccessful, file a complaint with Consumer Information Bureau (FCC) 1-888-225-5322
www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/unwantedfaxes.html

Stop Catalogs (free):

www.CatalogChoice.org





Metal

Every Can Counts

Every day, Americans use 200 million aluminum and 100 million steel cans. That's enough to rebuild our entire commercial airliner fleet every three months.

■ The Good News

- Aluminum and steel can be recycled over and over for new products.
- 95% less energy is used when recycling metal vs. manufacturing from new materials reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Decreases environmental damage caused by mining.

■ How Can You Help?

- Collect and recycle aluminum: soda cans, metal doors.
- Collect and recycle steel: tin cans, auto parts, appliances.

Glass


Clearly a Great Recyclable

Glass containers are 100% recyclable. Recycling "closes the loop," turning the glass containers you recycle into new bottles and jars.

■ The Good News

- Glass can be recycled and reused over and over again.
- Recycling glass saves landfill space.
- Recycled glass uses 40% less energy than manufacturing from scratch.
- Recycling glass reduces air pollution by 20% and water pollution by 50%.

■ How Can You Help?

- Recycle glass products (except for light bulbs, dishes, window glass).
- Sort your glass by color: clear, green, brown.
- Buy recycled glass products ('G' logo on some products: .



Street Gutters and Storm Drains

Rain in the Drain Goes into the Bay



Most streets have a 3 - 4 foot opening along the curb called the "storm drain."



■ The Good News

- Storm drains carry away excess rainwater to prevent street flooding.
- Some drains have a grate in front of the opening to prevent garbage from entering.

■ Storm Drain Water is Untreated

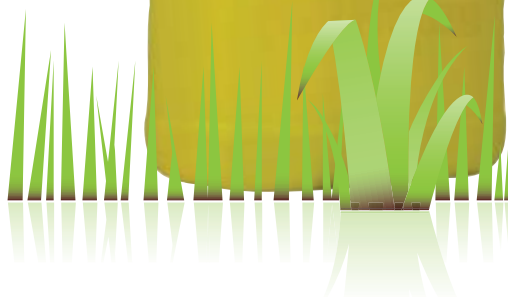
Unlike the water that goes down your home drain to the sewer, water flowing into storm drains is not treated or filtered for pollutants. If it is contaminated, it stays polluted. Any material on the street, such as leaves, oil, antifreeze or gasoline will be mixed with rainwater as it goes into the storm drain.

Contaminated water flows into creeks, bayous, then into Galveston Bay and finally the Gulf of Mexico. Anything, other than pure rainwater, is a potential contaminant to water quality.

■ How Can I Help?

- Do not put anything into a storm drain; no leaves, trash or pet waste. It will clog the drain and cause your street to flood.
- Never pour anything into street gutters or storm drains. Putting liquids into the drains is dangerous to the environment and is **ILLEGAL**.
- Avoid using excessive fertilizers, weed killers and yard products. Clean up all chemicals in your front yard. If not, rainwater run-off will carry the chemicals into the storm drain.

For more information visit www.CleanWaterways.org.



Plastic

The Fantastic Material

Plastic is the most used material in the world, but only 5% is recycled. It is made from petroleum, so the more petroleum burned for new products, the more greenhouse gases.

■ The Good News

- Look on the bottom of a plastic product. You'll see a small recycle symbol with a number 1-7 inside. The most common recyclable plastics are 1-5, and 7.
- Plastic bags (*film plastic*) can be recycled at many grocery stores.
- If we recycled all plastics, we could reduce oil consumption and save 25% of landfill space.
- The plastic recycling business creates over 200,000 American jobs.

■ How Can You Help?

- Know which plastics (*1-7*) are accepted by recyclers.
- Buy a personal glass or metal water container, wash and reuse.
- Buy recycled plastic products and plastics that can be recycled.
- Store food in glass containers to reduce buying plastic.

■ Look What Plastic Becomes

Plastic #1

Soda/water bottles, milk jugs, detergent and cooking oil bottles, food jars.

Becomes: Toys, pipes, lumber, flower pots, trash cans, oil and cleaning supply containers.

Plastic #2

Detergent bottles, milk/water/juice containers, grocery bags.

Becomes: New bottles, textiles, carpet, fiber filling, pillow fabric, quilts, jackets, shrink-wrap, grocery bags, food packaging.

Plastic #3

Plastic pipes, outdoor furniture, shrink-wrap, water bottles.

Becomes: New of the same.

Plastic #4

Food containers, dry-cleaning and produce bags, trash can liners.

Becomes: New of the same, plastic tubing and sheets, plastic lumber.

Plastic #5

Ketchup bottles, aerosol caps, drinking straws, yogurt containers.

Becomes: New of the same.

Plastic #6

Not widely accepted yet.

Plastic #7

Multi-gallon water bottles.

Becomes: New of the same and plastic lumber.



Yard Trimmings

Keep in Your Yard and Out of Landfills

Yard trimmings take up 30% of landfills.

■ The Good News

- Recycling yard trimmings is an easy way to slow down landfill consumption.
- When you mow, rake leaves, and trim plants and trees, you end up with a valuable natural fertilizer.

■ How Can You Help?

- Bag yard trimmings separately from trash in neighborhoods offering pick up.
- Practice 'GrassCycling': leave mowed clippings on the lawn to add organic matter and improve the soil.
- Landscape with heat and drought resistant local plants. They need less expense, water and upkeep.



Water Conservation

A Fluid Resource

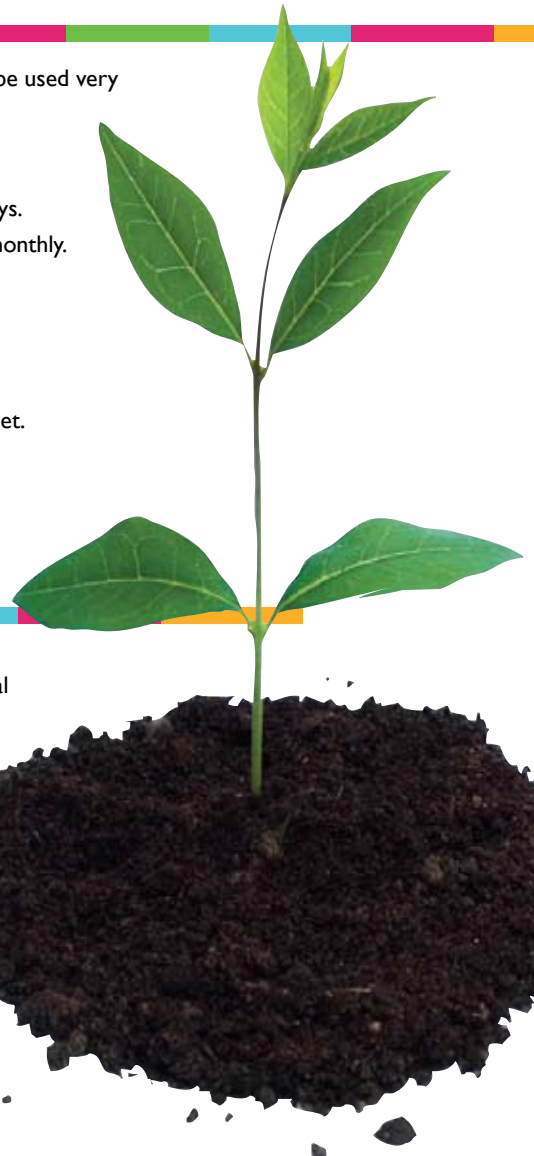
Water is a limited natural resource and should be used very conservatively.

■ The Good News

- Lawns only need one inch of water every 5 days.
- Trees, shrubs and ground covers need water monthly.

■ How Can You Help?

- Water early in the morning.
- Use drip irrigation.
- Avoid wasting water on sidewalks and the street.



Composting

Mother Nature Knows Best

Trees drop leaves; plants die; grass clippings stay on the lawn. Over time, the organic matter breaks down and decomposes. The result is a rich, dark brown, soil-like material called compost.

■ The Good News

Composting is a great way to:

- Retain soil moisture and save water and fertilizer.
- Improve the yield of fruits, vegetables, flowers, herbs.
- Recycle nutrients into soil and protect plants from disease.
- Reuse trimmings and save landfill space.

■ How Can You Help?

- Start and maintain a compost pile.
- Visit www.Compost101.com for more information.

Electronic Waste (E-Waste)

E-Cycle Your E-Waste

Small consumer electronics (*computers, monitors, televisions, printers, keyboards, mice, scanners, faxes, phones, VCRs, cell phones*) are referred to as E-Waste.



Every year, 3.2 million tons of electronic scrap is thrown away in our country. E-Waste is America's fastest-growing waste and is a huge percentage of toxic waste in landfills. Electronics contain the toxic chemicals lead oxide, mercury, nickel, zinc and cadmium. They are very hazardous to humans and the environment.

■ The Good News

- Electronics can be refurbished, reused or recycled.
- Working TVs, monitors, computers can be sold or donated.
- Recycling electronics recovers valuable metals for reuse.
- Many companies recycle computers and cell phones when you purchase a new one.

■ How Can You Help?

- Keep cell phones as long as possible before replacing.
- Donate old phones to organizations for repair and distribution.
- Maintain computers as long as possible.
- Buy only what you need. For example, do you need a new computer or only a hard drive or memory?



Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)

Careful with Household Chemicals

HHW are household products with hazardous components: cleansers, pesticides, herbicides, batteries, oil paint, stains, varnishes, polishes and vehicle products. These products contain toxic or flammable chemicals. NEVER put HHW in the trash, drain or burn it. HHW can hurt people and contaminate ground, water and air.

■ The Good News

- More and more regional drop-off centers accept HHW.
- Most HHW can be reused.

■ HHW Accepted Items

Cleaners, solvents, fertilizers, paints (*oil and latex*), stains, varnishes, wood-metal strippers and preservatives, pesticides herbicides, poisons, aerosols, fluorescent tubes, rechargeable batteries, pool chemicals, acid and vehicle supplies: gasoline, fuels, motor oil/filters, antifreeze, brake and transmission fluids, batteries. Some collection centers only accept HHW called:

BOPA: Batteries, Oil, Paint (latex), Antifreeze.

Call to make sure what your collection center accepts.

■ Not Commonly Accepted Items

Explosives, ammunition, radioactive waste, medical waste.

■ How Can You Help?

- Buy the least hazardous product, follow instructions and use it up.
- Buy only what you need and donate leftover product.
- If unable to donate leftover, bring to a collection center.
- Use safer methods for cleaning such as micro-fiber cloths with vinegar, lemon or baking soda.
- Buy rechargeable batteries and dispose properly. They take the place of hundreds of regular batteries. Americans throw away 3 billion batteries every year—125,000 tons.

Paint

Use it Up or Pass It Forward

Almost 2 gallons of paint per person is sold every year. The dangerous news is that much of it ends up as liquid in landfills, potentially contaminating soil, water and air.

■ The Good News

- There are natural paints made from citrus and other botanicals. They are free of biocides and preservatives.
- Milk paints (*casein paints*) are popular because of their healthy and eco-friendly properties.
- Latex paint is water-based and less toxic than oil paint (*petroleum-based*).
- Paint, if stored correctly (*upside down with a tight seal around the lid*), can last years.

■ How Can You Help?

- Always buy latex paint (*not oil*).
- Use up stored paint before buying new paint.
- Donate leftover paint to neighbors, friends, family or groups that can use it.
- Never pour paint down the drain or on the ground.
- Let latex paint dry completely before putting into a trash can.



Heavy Trash

Too Big for the Garbage Can?

Heavy trash are items too big to put in the garbage, such as refrigerators, stoves, air conditioners, washers, dryers, damaged furniture or mattresses. Some of these products also contain toxins that contaminate water and soil if not properly thrown away.

■ The Good News

- Many local cities offer heavy trash collection once a month.
- Appliances contain metals, glass and plastic that can be recycled into other products.

■ How Can You Help?

- Only buy new appliances when necessary.
- When buying new, ask the store if it will recycle your old one. If not, hire a legitimate recycler or waste hauler.
- If your appliance works, donate it to charity or find someone who has a use for it. (*Maintained appliances can last 10-20 years.*)
- Place items out on heavy trash days in areas that offer pick-up.



Illegal Dumping

A Public Health Hazard

Illegal dumping is putting trash on property without permission from the owner or city. Appliances, furniture, vehicle parts and garbage are commonly dumped.

- Dumps attract rats, mosquitoes and pests who can transmit diseases to humans.
- If you dump it, you'll drink it! Chemicals and toxic materials that are dumped contaminate groundwater.
- Illegal dumping is ugly, a dangerous health hazard, and expensive to clean with tax dollars.

■ The Good News

If caught, the dumper can be fined money and/or receive jail time.

■ How Can You Help?

Report illegal dumping (*Texas only*) 1-888-777-3186.



Tires

Reinvent the Wheel

290 million tires are trashed every year. 55 million are either in landfills or illegally dumped. Used tires are breeding grounds for mosquitoes and rodents. Many people illegally burn tires. Tire fires burn for months, releasing toxic chemicals into the air.

■ The Good News

Tires can be recycled into new products: carpet padding, flooring, running tracks, gravel and rock landscaping substitutes, roads, parking lots - to name a few.

■ How Can You Help?

- Keep tires properly inflated monthly. This is critical for tire life and fuel economy.
- Have tire stores dispose of old tires (*usually requires a small fee*).
- Buy recycled tire products for landscaping jobs.



Why Recycle?

- Recycling creates 4 jobs for every 1 job in the waste disposal industry.
- Recycling programs cost less than waste disposal programs.
- Recycling saves landfill space.
- Recycling saves energy by reducing mining and refining new raw materials.
- Recycling preserves air and water quality.



www.RecycleInfo.org

