

# Recyclers' Corner

## August 2008 Issue

[Editor's Note: Recyclers' Corner is a periodic news column sponsored by Denver Recycles, a program of Denver Public Works/Solid Waste Management. It includes updates on seasonal and ongoing activities related to the City and County of Denver's recycling programs. Editors are invited to publish all or part of the column; however, we request that you run major edits by our staff to ensure accuracy of the information. Questions may be directed to Charlotte Pitt or Tom Strickland at Denver Recycles, 720-865-6815.]

## Don't Flush Old Drugs! Instead, Properly Dispose of Expired Medication

**How do you dispose of old, unwanted or expired medications?** First, whatever you do, do not flush them down the toilet! Medications put into the water stream are raising worrisome questions about potential health and environmental effects. Testing has increasingly found antibiotics, hormones and other medications in waterways and other fresh water supplies. **The best solution is to save them up and include them in your Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection.** If you must dispose of them in the trash, be sure to make the medications unusable and that the trash is not accessible to children or pets. To help prevent having leftover medications, ask your doctor not to prescribe more than you need and try to use up all of the medications you purchase.



**HHW Collection:** The City & County of Denver's Household Hazardous Waste collection program now accepts expired medications. Call the HHW hotline (**1-800-HHW-PKUP**) to request a collection and let the operator know that you have expired medications you would like to include with your other household hazardous materials for disposal. A collection kit will be mailed to you and will include a small bag for expired pills or capsules. The HHW program is prohibited from collecting controlled substances or medications still in their bottles. Once collected, medications will be destroyed in a federally regulated furnace.

To make the most of the City's HHW collection budget, residents must have **at least three** different types of HHW materials such as paint, pesticides, cleaners, motor oil, and batteries to qualify for a collection. Please do not call just for a pick-up of outdated medications. Eligible Denver households may use this program once per year.

**Disposal Guidelines:** In 2007 the federal government issued the following guidelines designed to reduce the diversion of prescription drugs and protect the environment:

1. Remove drugs from the original container;
2. Mix drugs with an undesirable substance like used coffee grounds or kitty litter and put them in an impermeable, non-descript container such as a sealed bag to ensure that the drugs are not recovered by scavengers or accidentally ingested by children or pets; and
3. Throw in the garbage.

**Protect Your Identity:** Be careful with the personal information on your prescription drug containers. Whenever you throw an empty prescription bottle in the recycling bin make sure to black out your personal information on the container with an indelible marker.

For more information, visit us online at [www.DenverGov.org/DenverRecycle](http://www.DenverGov.org/DenverRecycle).

###

# FITTING MORE CARDBOARD IN YOUR RECYCLING CART

Cardboard is a very valuable recyclable material, but it can be bulky and quickly fill up a recycling cart. Only a fraction of the potential amount of cardboard that could be recycled is making into the purple carts. To ensure that you recycle all the cardboard you can, but also leave room in your cart for all the other valuable recyclable materials, just follow these simple guidelines for recycling boxes:

- ♻️ Breakdown and cut all cardboard and paperboard into pieces **no larger than 2 feet by 2 feet**.
- ♻️ Make sure the cut **cardboard lays flat in your cart**, so it doesn't create unusable space.
- ♻️ Consider leaving cardboard beside your cart until recycling day. Then **place it flat in the cart and close the lid**. This will help to ensure that cardboard doesn't get stuck in the cart.



Please:

- Do not place whole boxes in your cart.
- Do not leave cardboard outside your cart for collection. We cannot collect recyclables unless they are inside the cart.
- Do not place cardboard on top of your cart lid.

Please remember to remove wax paper and food debris when you recycle your pizza boxes. If the pizza box is heavily contaminated with food, please do not recycle it.

For more information about recycling call **3-1-1**, visit us online at **[www.DenverGov.org/DenverRecycle](http://www.DenverGov.org/DenverRecycle)**.

###