

Recyclers' Corner



September 2009 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.]

Residents & Recycling: Partners for Success

A City's recycling program is only as good as its participants and Denver Recycles depends on residents to help keep the recycling program running smoothly. By following the service guidelines below you can help to ensure that we can continue to provide the best possible service while maximizing program efficiencies.

- **Set your cart out by 7 AM** on your collection day. Returning to collect late set-outs is very inefficient and results in extra time, fuel and money wasted. In cases where we cannot return, waiting two weeks for your next collection can be burdensome to you.
- **Do not leave your cart in alley or on the street after your collection day.** By bringing your cart back onto your property you can help to prevent cart loss, cart damage, recycling contamination and scavengers in your neighborhood. This helps save time and money from having to be used to replace damaged or lost carts.
- Ensure that your cart is placed at least **4 feet away** from trash barrels, dumpsters, other purple carts, automobiles, poles or other obstructions. Clearance space around your cart is necessary for the automated collection arm on the recycling truck to safely empty your cart. Less than adequate clearance space can decrease collection efficiencies and increase the chances of damage to nearby property.
- **Maximize space in your cart by flattening all boxes** and crushing plastic bottles. Boxes that are not flattened can clog the truck mechanisms and prevent the trucks from being able to hold a full load resulting in trucks needing to be emptied more frequently, thus wasting time and fuel.
- **Do not leave cardboard or other recyclables outside your cart.** Materials left outside the carts will not get recycled and can blow away, increasing the amount of litter in your neighborhood.
- **Empty all cans, bottles and boxes** before putting them in your purple cart.
- Make sure your **cart's front faces out** towards the street or alley. Carts facing the backwards may not fully empty when lifted into the recycling truck.
- **Only place items in your cart that are on the list of acceptable recyclable items.** Contaminated loads increase the processing costs and energy used to separate recyclables from non-recyclables.
- Make an effort to set out your recycling cart on every scheduled recycling collection day and challenge yourself to recycle even more!



Following these guidelines will help us efficiently collect recyclables. Thus saving time and money and allowing us to do more with less. For more information on recycling cart service guidelines or what items are accepted for recycling, please call 3-1-1 or visit DenverGov.org/DenverRecycles.

###

Recycling Myth Busters: Learn the Truth.

Part 9 of 12

There are a lot of myths about recycling passed along from person to person. We are here to explain some of those myths, so you can be the best recycler possible.

- ***Myth: Recycling is the only way to make less trash.***

FALSE. Recycling is a great way to keep material out of the landfill, however, there are lots of other ways to reduce the amount of waste going into your trash that are also good for the environment and your wallet.

A great way to make less trash in the first place is to look at the products you are purchasing. By selecting products with **less packaging** or products with **no packaging** at all, you can significantly reduce your waste. The U.S. EPA estimates that \$1 out of every \$10 dollars spent on products goes toward the costs of packaging. So, if you can purchase products with less packaging you can save yourself money and help the environment. For example, in stores that sell items in bulk or by the pound, bring in your own reusable containers to fill them up and eliminate packaging waste all together.

Purchasing **reusable goods** and more **durable products** is another great way to keep materials out of your trash. Not only will this reduce your waste, but will also likely save you money in the long run. For example, avoid spending money over and over again on disposable tableware, such as paper plates and plastic cups. Reusable tableware will last longer, creates less waste and will cost substantially less over time.

When spring cleaning or moving, **donate unwanted furniture, clothing and other items** to local charities instead of throwing them away. Old clothes and linens can be recycled by most charities. Many charities will even take clothes no longer wearable or in bad shape, and recycle them as textiles or other markets. Also, think about giving old books to nursing homes, hospitals, schools or other charities. Remember to check with individual charities prior to delivering items for recycling. Items that are no longer useful to you can be used again by others.

Don't forget composting and grasscycling are two other ways to reduce your trash output. Here in Denver, as much as 57% of what residents put in the trash is organic waste. **Backyard composting** is a great way to reduce organic waste and save money by producing your own compost for your home garden, lawn or around the base of trees and plants. Don't forget some food scraps and kitchen waste can also be composted. **Grasscycling** is the natural way to recycle grass clippings and provide your lawn with the valuable nutrients and water that it needs. By grasscycling there's no need to pile bags of grass clippings out on your trash day.

For more information on reducing your waste, please visit us online at [DenverGov.org/DenverRecycles](https://denvergov.org/denverrecycles).

###