

RECYCLE RIGHT



A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO WASTE AND RECYCLING IN DELAWARE



Dear Delawareans,

Recycling in Delaware has never been easier. Thanks to Delaware's Universal Recycling Law, every home, workplace, school, and public space has access to simple, convenient recycling. In 2023, Delaware recycled 38% of its municipal solid waste, putting us ahead of the national average. But we know we can do better. With your help, we are striving to surpass the EPA's national goal of 50% by 2030—a milestone that will keep our communities cleaner, our economy stronger, and our environment healthier.

A few key things to remember about recycling in Delaware:

- One state, one system. Delaware operates a single-stream recycling program, which means all your acceptable recyclables go into one container—no sorting required. This guide will help you identify what can and cannot be recycled.
- Keep recyclables loose. Recyclables should never be placed in plastic trash bags, as they need to remain loose for proper sorting. Some materials require drop-off at designated locations, and you'll find those details in this guide.
- Businesses, schools, and restaurants must participate. Delaware's Universal Recycling Regulations require the commercial sector to maintain a comprehensive recycling program and keep recyclables out of the trash.
- Recycling services are included with waste collection. Waste haulers must provide both trash and recycling containers when residents or businesses sign up for collection services. Most Delawareans have access to curbside recycling, but for those who dispose of their own waste, this guide provides information on how to properly dispose of items across the state.
- Composting keeps valuable materials out of landfills. Yard waste and food scraps take up unnecessary space in landfills and can instead be composted into nutrient-rich material. Resources on composting are included in this guide.

Every item we recycle is one less item taking up space in our landfills. Recycling conserves natural resources, supports jobs in the recycling industry, and extends the life of our existing landfill infrastructure. By working together, we can continue building a cleaner, greener Delaware for generations to come.

This How to Recycle in Delaware guide is a collaboration between the Delaware Solid Waste Authority (DSWA) and the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC). I encourage you to use it as a resource, find ways to reduce waste, reuse what you can, and recycle responsibly. Thank you for doing your part to make Delaware a leader in sustainability.

Sincerely,



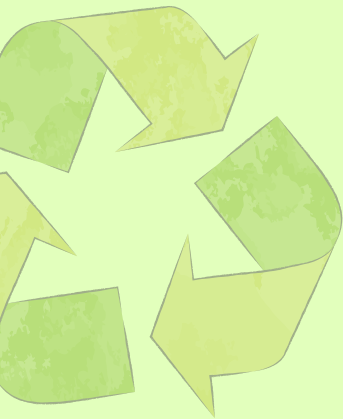
Governor Matt Meyer

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Understanding Recycling in Delaware



Recycling plays a vital role in Delaware by creating jobs, reducing landfill waste, and extending landfill lifespan. The state's recycling efforts are guided by the Universal Recycling Regulations (7 DE Admin Code 1305) and the Regulations Governing Solid Waste (7 DE Admin Code 1301).

HOW TO RECYCLE PROPERLY



EMPTY. CLEAN. DRY.

All items that you place in your recycling cart need to be emptied of their contents, cleaned of residue, and free of moisture.

Why?

Liquids and other residue can ruin paper, cardboard, and other materials in the recycle bin, making them unrecyclable.



DON'T USE A BAG!

Never bag recyclables. Items should be placed in the cart loose.

Why?

Plastic bags can get caught in the machinery causing delays, and damage to equipment. Recycling facilities are not able to efficiently or safely sort bagged materials.

DELAWARE'S PLASTIC BAG BAN

Since July 1, 2022, Delaware's enhanced plastic bag ban has prohibited plastic bags at checkout in all retail stores (except restaurants). Be sure to bring reusable bags when shopping!

RECYCLING REQUIREMENTS FOR HOMES, BUSINESSES, & SCHOOLS

Delaware's Universal Recycling Law ensures that:

- All residential waste haulers must provide recycling collection.
- Businesses, schools, nonprofits, and government offices must recycle.



RECYCLING IN DELAWARE



BASIC RECYCLING IS BETTER RECYCLING

PREPARING YOUR RECYCLING



PLASTIC



HARD PLASTIC CONTAINERS

Water bottles, milk jugs, etc.

LEAVE LIDS ON

GLASS



BOTTLES AND JARS

No window glass, dishes, or mirrors
REMOVE LIDS-RECYCLE SEPARATELY

PAPER



CARDBOARD, CARTONS, PAPER

Paper should be postcard-sized or larger

NO GREASE OR FOOD RESIDUE

METAL



ALUMINUM, STEEL, TIN CANS

Clean and empty

REMOVE LIDS AND PLACE INSIDE CAN

NOT ACCEPTED IN DELAWARE CURBSIDE RECYCLING PROGRAMS



PLASTIC BAGS



BATTERIES



GARBAGE



TANGLERS



FOOD WASTE



YARD WASTE



HOUSEHOLD PAPER PRODUCTS



DIAPERS



ELECTRONICS



SHREDDED PAPER



STYROFOAM



SCRAP METAL

Household Hazardous Waste



DSWA offers a free Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Program for all Delaware residents. Weekly events are held in each county, along with weekend events throughout the year.

To view the current schedule of HHW collection events, visit dswa.com.



WHAT'S ACCEPTED

Household Items

Full Aerosol Cans
Bleach
Nail Polish/Polish Removers
Perfumes
Disinfectants
Drain Cleaners
Floor Wax
Mercury Thermometers
Moth Balls
Oven Cleaner
Spot Removers
Toilet Cleaner
Fluorescent Bulbs
Pool Chemicals

Workshop Items

Oil Based Paints
Small Compressed Gas Tanks
Solvents
Stains/Varnishes
Strippers/Thinners
Wood Preservatives

Explosives

Ammunition
Gunpowder
Fireworks

Automotive

Used Mixed Fuels
Antifreeze
Auto Batteries
Degreasers
Waste Gasoline/Kerosene

Garden Items

Fungicides
Herbicides

Medical

Used Sharps



NOT ACCEPTED

Prescription Medications
Asbestos
Dehumidifiers
Unknown Substances
Containers with less than 1" of Material
Radioactive Waste
Freezers
Refrigerators
Air Conditioners

HELPFUL TIPS

BRING MATERIALS IN ORIGINAL,
SEALED CONTAINERS.

DO NOT MIX PRODUCTS!

TO PREVENT LEAKAGE OR BREAKAGE,
PACK SEPARATELY IN ABSORBENT
MATERIAL OR TRIPLE BAG.

BRING RAGS TO CLEAN UP ANY SPILLS,
AND DISPOSE OF RAGS AT THE
COLLECTION SITE.

LOCATE COLLECTION BOXES FOR
PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION IN
RECYCLOPEDIA.



Electronics Recycling



DSWA provides free drop-off locations in each county 6 days a week and hosts special Saturday collection events throughout the year.

Many electronics contain small amounts of lead, silver, barium, cadmium, and mercury, which can be harmful if not handled properly. However, these materials can be recovered and reused through de-manufacturing and recycling.

For a list of free drop-off locations and event schedules, visit dswa.com.

WHAT'S ACCEPTED

Examples of accepted items

Televisions	Modems
Printers	Hard Drives
Copiers/Scanners	Cell Phones
Fax Machines	Telephones
Laptops/Tablets	Computer Monitors
iPods/MP3 Players	Microwave Ovens
PC Speakers	Vacuum Cleaners
Keyboards	Video Game Systems
VCR and DVD Players	
CD Players	

HELPFUL TIP:

If it has a cord, it's accepted in electronics drop-off bins.



See the journey your recycled electronics take in Delaware

SCAN TO WATCH



Latex Paint



DSWA offers free latex paint collection for Delaware residents through a special monthly collection at our four recycling centers. This program helps keep paint out of landfills and ensures it is disposed of or repurposed in an environmentally responsible way.

Residents can drop off water-based (latex) paint only—oil-based paints, stains, and other hazardous materials should be taken to a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection event.

WHAT'S ACCEPTED

Quart, Gallon, or 5-Gallon Metal or Plastic Containers.

Containers with 1" or less of paint can be thrown away

Document Shredding



DSWA offers free paper shredding services for Delaware residents through monthly collections at our recycling centers and special Saturday events throughout the year. This service provides a secure way to dispose of sensitive documents, while promoting recycling and waste reduction.

WHAT'S ACCEPTED

2 File Boxes Per Person

Please double-check your documents before you arrive—removing any non-paper items helps keep the event safe and running smoothly!

FIND A COMPLETE SCHEDULE AT [DSWA.COM](https://www.dswa.com)

Yard Waste



Since 2007, yard waste has been banned from disposal in Delaware landfills to reduce waste and promote recycling. Alternatively, residents are encouraged to compost, mulch, or use designated drop-off sites for proper disposal.

WHAT IS YARD WASTE?

- Grass clippings
- Prunings
- Brush and shrubbery
- Christmas trees
- Tree limbs up to four inches diameter

WHAT IS NOT YARD WASTE

- Pet/animal waste
- Lumber
- Flower pots
- Construction debris
- Dirt/soil/potting soil

WHAT DO I DO WITH MY YARD WASTE?

Leave it: Use a mulching mower to chop leaves and grass for natural fertilizer.

Compost it: Turn leaves, grass, and small branches into nutrient-rich soil.

Chip it: Rent a chipper to turn branches into mulch.

Curbside Pickup: Some waste haulers offer pick-up options.

Drop-Off: Many locations in Delaware accept yard waste, including DSWA facilities.

Get More Information at de.gov/yardwaste



Composting

Composting yard waste and kitchen scraps reduces landfill waste while creating a nutrient-rich soil amendment for your garden.

Improves soil health- Enhances structure, texture, and aeration for stronger plant roots.

Provides nutrients- Releases essential elements slowly for steady plant growth.

Boosts beneficial organisms- Enriches soil life for a healthier ecosystem.

Reduces chemical use- Lowers the need for fertilizers and prevents runoff.

Conserves water- Helps soil retain moisture, reducing watering needs.

Cuts down waste- Keeps 20% or more of your trash out of landfills.

Learn More About Composting at de.gov/composting



DSWA Facilities

For Use By Delaware Residents Only



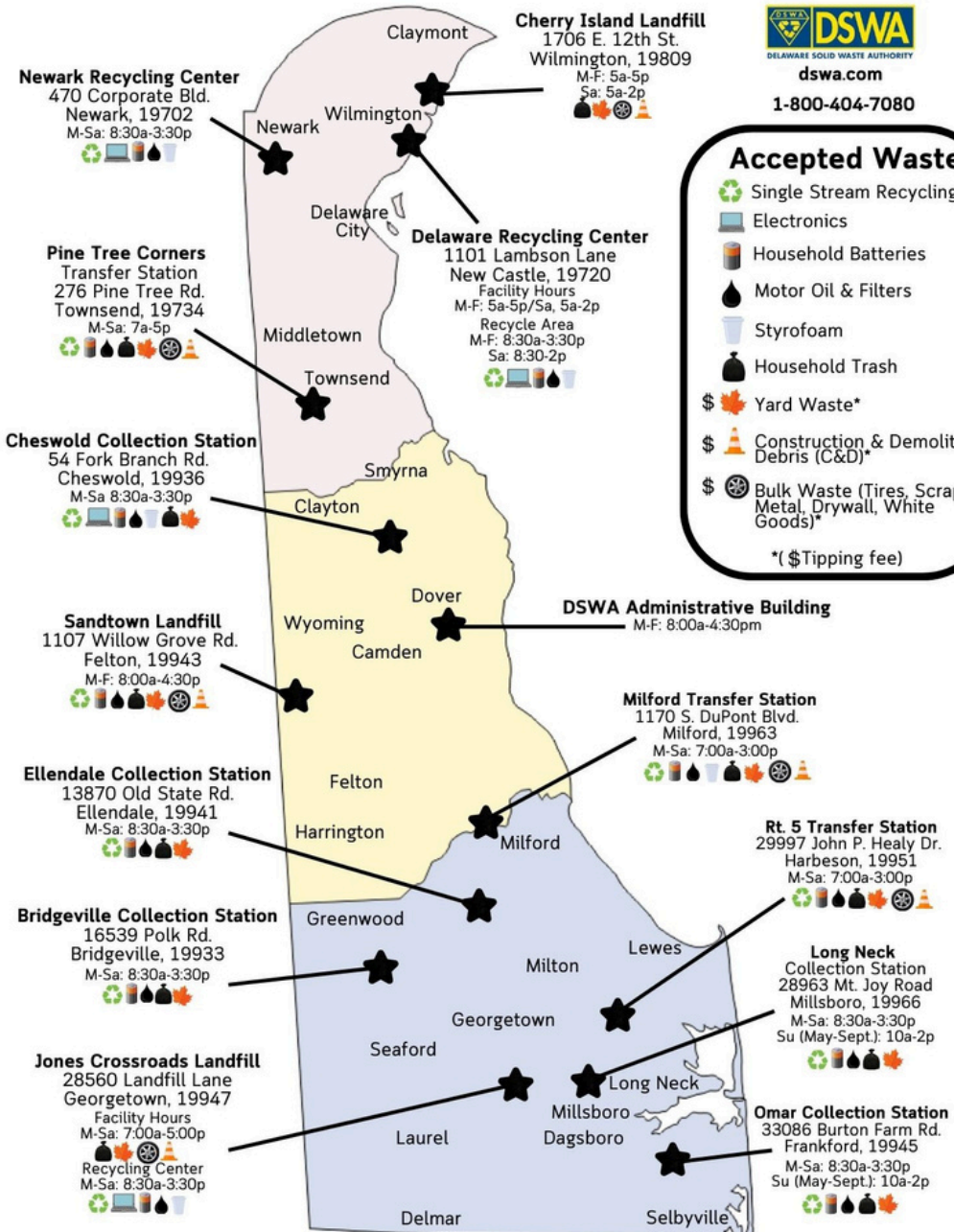
dswa.com

1-800-404-7080

Accepted Waste

- Single Stream Recycling
- Electronics
- Household Batteries
- Motor Oil & Filters
- Styrofoam
- Household Trash
- Yard Waste*
- Construction & Demolition Debris (C&D)*
- Bulk Waste (Tires, Scrap Metal, Drywall, White Goods)*

*(\$Tipping fee)



Other Items



BATTERIES

DSWA partners with Call2Recycle to provide household battery recycling collection points for Delaware Residents. These drop off points allow residents to recycle both rechargeable and single-use batteries.



FLUORESCENT BULBS & TUBES

Take fluorescent bulbs and tubes to a DSWA Household Hazardous Waste collection event for safe disposal. They contain mercury, which can be harmful if released into the environment.



INK AND TONER CARTRIDGES

Contact an office or electronics store for recycling option services. Some retailers and suppliers offer take-back programs and may provide toner cartridge collection boxes for your office or school.



MOTOR OIL AND FILTERS

Oil that has not been mixed with other fuels or contaminants is accepted at specific DSWA recycling drop-off centers. Visit dswa.com to locate a center near you.



PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION

Unused portions of medicines must be disposed of properly to avoid harm. Permanent medication collection boxes are available in Delaware for safe disposal. Locate collection boxes for prescription medication in Recyclopeda.



STYROFOAM

Styrofoam is not accepted in curbside recycling but, DSWA has partnered with DART Container to provide collection of Styrofoam at specific DSWA recycling drop off centers.

Bulky Waste



APPLIANCES

Recycle appliances like window air conditioners, refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, washers, dryers, dehumidifiers, and water heaters at DSWA landfills or transfer stations for a fee. Visit dswa.com or call 800-404-7080 for details.



CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION DEBRIS

Up to 80% of mixed construction waste can be recycled. Accepted materials include cardboard, carpet, ceiling tiles, concrete, drywall, pallets, paper, plastic, rubble, metal, shingles, and wood. Learn more at revolutionrecovery.com or call 302-356-3000.

SCRAP TIRES



Delaware households can dispose of scrap tires at DSWA landfills and transfer stations. Up to four scrap tires may be disposed of at one time for the standard user fee. Households that need to dispose of more than four tires will pay the tire user fee. For more information, please visit dswa.com.

DNREC has a program to remove historic piles of scrap tires in quantities of 50 or more. For more information, please contact DNREC at 302-739-9403.



Important Recycling Tips



Here are some of the most important recycling tips to help keep the process smooth and efficient. By following these simple guidelines, you'll ensure that your recyclables are properly sorted.

NO PLASTIC BAGS IN RECYCLING BINS!

They jam and clog machines.

All recyclables are to be put into recycle bins loose, empty, clean, and dry.

Plastic bags won't be opened at the center and will be sent straight to the landfill.

Plastic bags can be returned to grocery stores or put into the trash.

KEEP LIDS ON PLASTIC BOTTLES

Leaving caps on plastic bottles helps improve the sorting process.

REMOVE METAL LIDS FROM GLASS JARS BUT RECYCLE BOTH

If lids are not removed, they will end up mixed with the glass.

NO DIRTY PIZZA BOXES

Tear in half and recycle clean top if the bottom has grease, cheese, or sauce.

NO SHREDDED PAPER

Items should be larger than a postcard.
Items that are too small can not be sorted.

NO BATTERIES OR ELECTRONICS IN RECYCLE BINS

These items can cause fires in trucks or at recycling facilities.

Bring to a DSWA Recycling Drop-Off Center.

NO CORDS, WIRES, HOSES, STRING LIGHTS

These are called "tanglers" and can jam machines.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

Use the Recyclopeda search tool to find out if something is acceptable to recycle at home, if you need to drop it off, or if it is trash.

Download the Delaware Recyclopeda App or visit de.gov/recyclopeda



FAQs

Q: What requirements does Delaware's universal recycling law impose on waste collectors?

A: Delaware's universal recycling law requires waste collection services, whether municipal or commercial, to (1) remove trash for landfill disposal and (2) collect single-stream recyclables, with all items placed loose in the same container.

Q: Why ban yard waste from landfills?

A: Yard waste makes up a large portion of discarded waste and is easily compostable. Composting it saves landfill space, reduces disposal costs, and produces valuable mulch and compost.

Q: How do I dispose of sharps?

A: Place all sharps in a rigid, plastic container (red medical bin, laundry detergent container, etc), screw lid back on container, duct tape lid to container, and bring to a free household hazardous waste collection event.

Q: What happens to my paper at shredding events?

A: A worker will remove paper from your vehicle and dump it into a large bin. Once filled, the bin is dumped into a shred truck, where paper is immediately and securely shredded and remains in the truck. At the end of the collection event, the truck drives all shredded paper to a paper mill to be recycled. Please double-check your documents before you arrive—removing any non-paper items helps keep the event safe and running smoothly!

Q: How do I dispose of 1" or less of paint?

A: If there is less than one inch in your paint can, mix it with kitty litter/sand to soak it up, and throw away in regular trash. If the paint can has more than one inch left, bring it to a latex paint or household hazardous waste collection event.

Q: What electronics can I recycle?

A: Anything with a cord such as household countertop appliances, wires, TVs, string lights, etc. are accepted in electronics drop-off bins. Hard drives, laptops, cellphones, and any other data-bearing devices are also accepted and will be securely wiped.

Q: What happens to my electronics?

A: They are stored safely in our locked containers until they are picked up. All data from all devices is wiped at the facility, and materials will either be refurbished or shredded.

Q: How can I dispose of my large home appliances?

A: Large home appliances such as refrigerators, freezers, dehumidifiers, window air conditioners, dishwashers, etc. can be disposed of at a DSWA landfill or transfer station for the tipping fee.



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS



New Castle, DE



Dover, DE

WHAT WE OFFER...

- Free field trip and outreach programs for all grade levels.
- Lessons focused on recycling, trash, and composting
- Programs are aligned with Next Generation Science Standards.
- Content is adaptable to any classroom curriculum.

CONNECT WITH US...

dswaeducation.com

1-800-404-7080

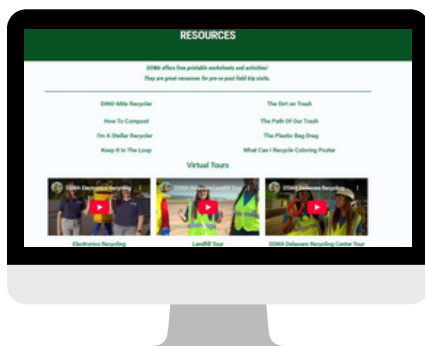


RESOURCES

DSWAEDUCATION.COM



Virtual Tours
Program Booking
Teacher Resources



RECYCLOPEDIA



Download the
Delaware Recyclopedia App
or visit de.gov/recyclopedia



Use the Recyclopedia search tool to find out if something is acceptable to recycle at home, if you need to drop it off, or if it is trash.

Contacts

DNREC- Delaware Recycles
302-739-9403
de.gov/recycling

Delaware Solid Waste Authority
1-800-404-7080
dswa.com





**DELAWARE
RECYCLES**
It's second nature.

