

# What Happens to Our Waste?

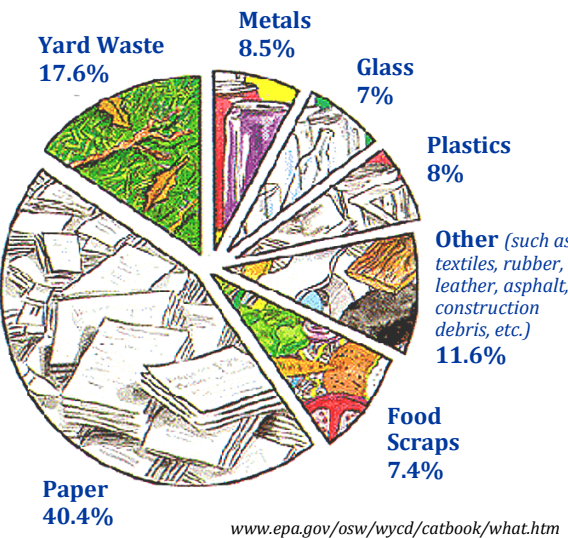
Throwing something away may be very convenient but it is also permanent, as Frederick County’s current waste disposal method is landfilling. Materials deposited in landfills tend to last a very long time. Landfills are not designed to break down trash but to bury it. Even biodegradable items have a long lifespan once placed in a landfill (where little or no air, water or light penetrates.) Excavations of closed landfills have found buried organic materials—such as newspapers, hot dogs and apple cores—that remained readily identifiable decades after burial.

Most of the waste we generate in Frederick County is transferred by truck to another disposal facility out of state. This long-haul landfilling system is costly and less efficient than other disposal options and certainly not preferred to creating less waste in the first place.

More than 1,035,000 pounds of waste are disposed in Frederick County every day.

# What’s In Our Trash?

Much of the waste we produce could be prevented or diverted to resource recovery programs. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, America’s trash consists primarily of:



# More Recommended Resources for Reducing Waste

The following books are all available through Frederick County Public Libraries

**Adult Reference and Learning:**

**Garbology; by Edward Humes.** The author investigates the trash we make, how much we pay for it, how we generate so much of it and how some families, communities and even nations are managing to create less.

**National Geographic Green Guide.** The complete reference for consuming wisely, with best practices, quick tips and hard facts on how your impact adds up.

**Garbage Land: On the Secret Trail of Trash; by Elizabeth Royte.** An in-depth, investigative look at what happens to your waste after it leaves the curb.

**Don’t Throw It Out.** From the editors of Yankee Magazine, a guide to help you recycle, renew and reuse to make things last!

**Adult Crafting:**

**Creative Juice: 45 Re-Crafting Projects to Make With Recycled Stuff; by Cathie Filian.** A crafty do-it-yourself guide to recycling ordinary items into extraordinary art.

**Rubbish: Reuse Your Refuse, by Kate Shoup.** How to give household items new life the hip craftster’s way.

**Youth Reference and Learning:**

**Recycling: Reducing Waste; by Buffy Silverman.** This book is full of not only facts but also experiments and activities to help students understand the subject fully.

**Garbage! Where It Comes From, Where it Goes; by Evan Hadingham** Documents the waste system and what can be done to manage ever-increasing amounts of garbage.

**Youth Crafting:**

**Earth-Friendly Crafts for Kids: 50 Awesome Things to Make With Recycled Stuff; by Heather Smith.** Not only a craft book– also educates on making decisions about how products are purchased, used and discarded.

**Recycled Crafts Box: Sock Puppets, Cardboard Castles, Bottle Bugs and 37 More Earth-Friendly Projects and Activities You Can Create; by Laura Martin.** Encourages creativity and environmental awareness with more than 35 projects that transform trash into art.

# Waste Reduction

A Guide to “Precycling”:  
Creating Less Waste in the First Place

## Frederick County Division of Solid Waste and Recycling

9031 Reichs Ford Road  
Frederick, MD 21704  
Phone: 301-600-2960  
Email: [recycle@FrederickCountyMD.gov](mailto:recycle@FrederickCountyMD.gov)

[www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/recycle](http://www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/recycle)

# Recycling Is Not the Answer!

Well, recycling *alone* cannot solve the problem of too much waste. Recycling is good; it diverts resources that would otherwise be lost through disposal. But even the “green” process of recycling has a carbon footprint, creates emissions and relies on valuable resources like fuel, money and time. So, recycling is one *part* of the solution; another key strategy is to **create less waste in the first place!**

Rather than managing the waste we have, **waste reduction** is a strategy for tackling the problem at its source by preventing waste before it even occurs. Think of it as “**precycling**”— all the steps to take *before* there is something left to recycle.

This brochure offers a few tips to help you get into the **waste reduction** mindset. To create less waste, just remember the “4 R’s” of wise waste management:

- **Reject**
- **Reduce**
- **Reuse**
- **...then Recycle**

Look inside for more information on each of the 4 R’s !

**Did You Know?**  
According to the Maryland Department of the Environment, our residents generate an average of 7 pounds of trash per day, per person!

## REJECT

Waste reduction and “thinking green” shouldn’t feel like burdens; these are practical concepts that can bring independence, efficiency and improved economy to our homes, schools and workplaces.

For instance, wouldn’t everyone like a little less “junk” in their mail? About 4 million tons of unwanted mail is sent in America each year...and much of it is never even opened. **Try this:**

- Online bulk mail reduction services, such as the nonprofits [catalogchoice.org](http://catalogchoice.org) or [41pounds.org](http://41pounds.org), will contact direct mail marketers to remove you from their lists.
- You can sign up to opt out of credit card pre-approved offers at [www.optoutprescreen.com](http://www.optoutprescreen.com).
- Sign up for electronic account maintenance for utilities, banking and other services. If all the nation's households managed bills online, 16.5 million trees could be saved each year.

**You can shop green too!** When you think about waste reduction as you make purchasing decisions, a lot of waste can be eliminated right at the source. When possible, try to avoid the following:

- single-use or disposable products
- products with excessive packaging
- individually wrapped or single-serve foods
- disposable bags
- non-recyclable materials
- expanded polystyrene/Styrofoam®



## REDUCE



### Cut Your Trash In Half!

Lots of folks spend time trying to reduce their waist ...but what about their waste? It's time to slim down our trash cans too! **Try these tips:**

- Paper towels are not recyclable, so reduce your use of these disposable items by placing them out of reach and creating a countertop holder for reusable sponges, cloth wipes and towels instead.
- Reduce food waste by taking an inventory of your refrigerator or pantry and posting a *reverse* shopping list of items you *don't* need to buy.
- When possible, buy products in concentrate, bulk, and in refillable containers. They reduce packaging waste (and can save you money!)
- Eliminate the need for non-recyclable, disposable containers by taking your own carryout containers along when dining at a restaurant.
- Limiting your consumption of bottled water will save both resources and money.
- Cancel subscriptions to magazines or newspapers you don't actually read, especially if you could read them at the local library.
- Nearly 3.7 million tons of copy paper are used annually in the U.S. Print on both sides of the page, and only print the documents, emails and web pages of which you truly need to have a hard copy.
- Yard and food waste constitute a large part of the solid waste stream. **One of the very most useful things you can do to reduce waste is to maintain a home compost pile.** And, the end-product is a valuable resource for your landscape!

## REUSE

**Think Before You Throw!** There are many organizations that can help residents save landfill space, protect the environment, contribute to the local economy, conserve resources and avoid being wasteful. *(The following is only a sampling and is not an endorsement for any particular business or service.)*

### THE FREDERICK RESCUE MISSION

The Rescue Mission provides free clothing and furniture to our community's working poor. Donations are accepted at 419 West South Street in Frederick, or pickup from your home can be arranged by calling: 301-695-6633. [www.therescuemission.org](http://www.therescuemission.org)

### freecycle

This nonprofit enables anyone to find new homes for old goods as well as acquire good, used items for free. Their mission is to build a worldwide gifting movement to reduce waste, save resources and ease the burden on landfills. [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)

### Goodwill Industries

By donating to or buying things from Goodwill, you not only reuse items but also support job training and placement programs for people with disabilities and disadvantages. There are stores located in Frederick, Thurmont and Middletown. [www.goodwill.com](http://www.goodwill.com)

### Habitat for Humanity ReStore

Provides quality, used and surplus building materials and home furnishings at a fraction of normal prices. Proceeds help local affiliates fund the construction of Habitat houses within our community. To buy or donate useable construction materials, windows, doors, furnishings and appliances, visit 622 N. Market Street in Frederick or call 301-662-2988. [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org)

### TOT SWAP & KIDS

### CLOSET CONNECTION

These local consignment sales events feature children's clothing, baby equipment, bedding, furniture, toys, books, videos, sports gear and more. For more information visit [www.totswap.net](http://www.totswap.net) and [www.kidscloset.biz](http://www.kidscloset.biz).

### craigslist

This website offers free ads for buying, trading, selling or giving away just about anything. [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org)

## THEN RECYCLE!

That last step is to recycle everything that is accepted in our single-stream program. You'll be conserving resources as well as contributing to the economy! **Recycling:**

- **Conserves Energy** - It generally takes less energy to make recycled products; recycled aluminum, for example, takes 95% less energy to make than new aluminum from bauxite ore.
- **Saves Natural Resources** - Making products from recycled materials conserves land and reduces the need to drill for oil and dig for minerals.
- **Helps Preserve Clean Air and Water** - In most cases, making products from recycled materials creates less air pollution and water pollution than making products from virgin materials.
- **Saves Landfill Space** - Turning old products back into new ones reduces the need for disposal.
- **Creates Jobs** - More than 56,000 recycling and reuse enterprises employ 1.1 million workers nationwide.

**Did you know that you can recycle a lot more than just bottles, cans, boxes and jars in Frederick County?** In addition to our curbside recycling program, many other materials can be dropped off at the DSWM facilities on Reichs Ford Road:

- Flexible Foam, yard waste, wood pallets, appliances, oversized/bulky plastics, scrap metal, tires, motor oil, antifreeze and lead acid batteries as well as computers and electronics.

For more information please visit our website: [www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/recycle](http://www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/recycle)

