

Hennepin County Landowner Guide

for
Conserving
Natural
Resources

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Managing Your Waste

Properly disposing of your trash is important for the health of land, water and wildlife. Today's garbage contains a lot of plastics and paper treated with chemicals, coatings and inks that can pollute the environment if not properly disposed.

Don't make your property a dumping ground

Unmanaged garbage disposal of any kind causes pollution, attracts nuisance animals, and can be dangerous for children, wildlife and livestock. Old equipment and vehicles can leak fluids into streams and the groundwater. Mercury and other hazardous components in electronics can pollute water and land, and tires can be a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Hire a waste hauler

Check with your local municipality for haulers licensed in your city, and choose garbage and recycling services tailored to your needs.

Ask potential haulers:

- What is included in the cost of service?
- What recyclables do they collect? Can you get additional containers if needed?
- When do they pick up your garbage?
- Do they offer yard waste pick-up service? What are the guidelines and cost of this service?

Eliminate burn barrels

Burning trash in large drums or piles is dangerous and illegal. When trash is burned, it produces low-temperature fires and a lot of smoke that often contains toxic substances. The smoke may contain dioxins, acidic gases and heavy metals such as mercury. The pollutants released into the air and close to ground level are easily inhaled, which could lead to serious health problems.

Because of the danger to human health, burning of household trash became illegal in Minnesota in 1969.

A burn permit is required to burn vegetative material such as leaves, brush and yard waste. Contact your city hall for information regarding the availability of this permit.

Composting is the environmentally preferred method for managing yard waste. Yard waste should be brought to a compost site. Your garbage hauler may offer yard waste pick-up. For a list of yard waste facilities, go to www.hennepin.us, search: yard waste.

Dispose of treated lumber safely

Never burn treated wood in stoves, fireplaces or recreational or cooking fires. Low-temperature burning of treated wood releases toxic chemicals into the air and concentrates them in the ash. Open burning of treated wood is prohibited by state law. Homeowners may dispose of treated wood waste in approved landfills



Reduce waste by reusing

Depending on the situation, you can repair, rent, buy/sell or donate used goods. Reusing items can save money, reduce waste and support local businesses.

Some items may be unsafe to reuse (for example, a toy that has been recalled, a damaged bike helmet or wood painted with lead-based paint). Electrical items, sports, medical and exercise equipment and children's goods should all be examined carefully before donating.

Recycle

Recycling saves energy and resources. All communities in Hennepin County provide curbside recycling service to residents. It is important to know what you can and cannot recycle.

Items you can recycle curbside

- **Paper** – newspaper and inserts, cardboard boxes, magazines and catalogs, mail, office and school papers, box-board (e.g., cereal boxes) and shredded paper (in closed paper bags)
- **Plastic** – plastic bottles and jugs
- **Glass** – Food and beverage containers and jars
- **Metal** – food and beverage cans

Items you cannot recycle curbside*

- **Paper** – food-soiled paper or boxes, boxes from refrigerated or frozen foods, paper towels, napkins, cups and plates, gift wrap

- **Plastic** – plastic tubs (e.g., margarine or cottage cheese tubs), yogurt, fruit and pudding cups, microwavable food trays, produce, deli and takeout containers, containers that held hazardous products, toys
- **Glass** – drinking glasses, dishware, cookware, pottery, vases, window and mirror glass, containers that held hazardous products
- **Metal** – paint cans, aerosol cans, containers that held hazardous products

* Some items that can be recycled (like plastic bags or mattresses) are not collected curbside but have drop-off locations. Check with Hennepin County for drop-off recycling options of additional items.

Collect your organic waste

Approximately 25 percent of an average household's garbage is organic waste. Organic waste, which includes food scraps and food-soiled paper products, can be recycled into compost.

Backyard composting

Backyard composting is an easy way to turn much of the waste from your yard and kitchen into a rich organic material that you can use to improve your soil. Using finished compost on your lawn and garden will add nutrients, suppress weeds and hold moisture in the soil.

The Quick Reference Guide for Earth Friendly Home Landscaping has more information on backyard composting.

Organics recycling services

In organics recycling programs, food scraps and food-soiled paper products are collected and sent to a composting facility. Instead of taking up space in a landfill or being burned, they are recycled into compost – a valuable resource used in landscaping and road construction projects.

Check with your garbage hauler to see if they have an organics recycling option, or check with Hennepin County for current organics recycling options.

Properly dispose of household hazardous waste

Some common household products may contain hazardous materials that should not be thrown in the trash. They may be flammable, corrosive, toxic or reactive. Household hazardous waste include appliances, automotive products, electronics, gas cylinders, tires, and household, lawn and garden products.

Drop-off facilities and collection events

Household hazardous wastes can harm human health and the environment if they are not properly treated, stored, transported and disposed. The county has two permanent, year-round drop-off facilities in Brooklyn Park and Bloomington that accept household hazardous wastes and problem materials as well as recycling.

For more information on the drop-off facilities and a full list of what is accepted, visit www.hennepin.us/dropoffs.

The county also holds community collection events at various locations throughout the year. Visit www.hennepin.us/collectionevents for more information.

Empty pesticide containers

Proper disposal of pesticide containers is required by law. Pesticide containers must be triple rinsed before they are thrown away. It is best to clean pesticide containers immediately after emptying them because timely rinsing will be more effective in removing all pesticide residues from the container. Empty pesticide containers should not be used for any other purpose.

To properly dispose of pesticide containers, follow these steps.

- Remove the cover from the container, and empty any residue into the spray tank or original container, allowing the container to drain for 30 seconds.
 1. Fill the container 20 to 25 percent full of water.
 2. Replace the cap and shake for 30 seconds.
 3. Pour the rinse water into the tank or spray rinse water out of original container.
- Repeat steps 1 through 3 two more times using fresh water each time. Pour rinse water into spray tank.
- Throw the empty container in the garbage.
- Spray contents of sprayer on target plants at rate specified on pesticide label.

For more information

- Hennepin County Environmental Services
www.hennepin.us/environment
612-348-3777
- RethinkRecycling
RethinkRecycling.com
- Recycling Association of Minnesota
www.recycleminnesota.org
651-641-4560
- Recycle More Minnesota
www.recyclemoreminnesota.org
651-641-4589
- American Environmental Health Studies
Project
www.burnbarrel.org
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency –
burn barrels
[www.pca.state.mn.us/oea/reduce/
burnbarrel.cfm](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/oea/reduce/burnbarrel.cfm)
- United States Environmental Protection
Agency's (U.S. EPA) Office of Solid Waste
www.epa.gov/osw
- *Pesticide Containers:
Management and Disposal*
Minnesota Department of Agriculture,
St. Paul, Minnesota. 2006.
[www.mda.state.mn.us/news/publications/
chemfert/disposal.pdf](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/news/publications/chemfert/disposal.pdf)



Resources

Resources

- Hennepin County Environmental Services
www.hennepin.us/naturalresources
612-348-3777
Hennepin County provides a variety of information and technical assistance for managing your land.
- University of Minnesota Extension – Hennepin County
www.extension.umn.edu/county/hennepin
612-596-2110
The University of Minnesota Extension provides outreach for the University of Minnesota and delivers educational programs and technical assistance on a variety of land management topics.
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture
www.mda.state.mn.us
651-201-6000
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
www.dnr.state.mn.us
651-296-6157
- USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov
763-241-1150, ext. 3
- Minnesota's bookstore
www.minnesotasbookstore.com
Minnesota's bookstore sells a variety of publications from Minnesota state agencies including many of the publications listed in this guide.
- Midwest Plan Services
www.mwps.org
Midwest Plan Services, based out of Iowa State University, sells a variety of low-cost agricultural publications.

Books & publications

- *A Quick Reference Guide for Earth Friendly Home Landscaping*
Hennepin County Environmental Services.
www.hennepin.us/sustainablelandscaping
- *Beyond the suburbs – A landowner's guide to conservation management*
Preece, Kathleen. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, St. Paul, Minnesota. 2001.
- *Guide to Rural Living*
University of Minnesota Extension, St. Paul, Minnesota. 2001.
www.extension.umn.//ruralliving
- *Living on Acreages*
Carroll, Natalie and Don Jones.
Midwest Plan Services, Ames, Iowa. 2006.
- *Small Scale/Small Field Conservation*
NRCS, Washington, D.C.
landcare.sc.egov.usda.gov



Hennepin County
Environmental Services
612-348-3777

www.hennepin.us/landownerguide

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