

Recycling Facts

Recycling, in its broadest sense, is a comprehensive term that includes reduction and reuse in addition to recycling. On average, each American throws away about four and a half pounds of waste per day, and at year's end, 210 million tons of trash makes its way into landfills. This is nearly twice as much trash as most other large countries.

Reducing one's intake or consumption of hazardous, non-recyclable, and unnecessary goods is the most effective method of waste prevention. Purchasing and using products that are environmentally friendly and sustainable will help you to reduce waste, minimize environmental impact, and save you money. For instance *the energy saved from recycling one aluminum can, is enough to run your TV for three hours.*

In the case of **aluminum**, the more that is recycled, the less bauxite ore— the mineral used to create aluminum- is extracted from the earth- which results in less destruction to the land and water- and slower depletion of the finite mineral. The process of reformulating used aluminum into new products takes 95 % less energy than it does to produce aluminum from scratch.

The fact is that we are slowing running out of space to put our ever-growing trash mounds and no one wants a landfill anywhere close to them. What's worse is that *over 90 percent of what makes it into landfills is recyclable or reusable.*

- ~ About 40 percent of landfill waste is paper
- ~ 20 percent is yard waste
- ~ 9 percent is food waste
- ~ another 9 percent is metals
- ~ 8 percent is glass, and
- ~ 7 percent is plastics.

Our society has become one that is wasteful. Populations need to closely examine the the products we purchase and how we can grow in waste prevention. Virtually every material can be recycled in some form or fashion. In fact, there are many industries recognizing this concept and who are generating high profits. Start helping society and become a steward of your community by recycling!

When possible, try to:

- Buy cloth napkins and towels instead of disposable paper ones.
- Buy products in bulk, in concentrate or in reusable containers.



- Use rechargeable batteries.
- Use a reusable bag when grocery shopping. Here in Houston, Whole Foods provides these bags to customers.
- Regularly maintain your large appliances to extend their lives.
- Purchase compact fluorescent light bulbs that last years longer and require two-thirds less energy than regular incandescent bulbs.
- Buy natural pesticides and non toxic products
- Buy products that can be recycled.
- Buy products that contain recycled content including:
 - ~ Paper products like notepads, tissues, paper towels, cardboard boxes, and printing and letter paper
 - ~ Plastic products like trash bags, fleece jackets, and sleeping bags
 - ~ Home Building and Repair products like recycled-content siding, recycled content-asphalt and aluminum roof shingles, and wooden doors and wallboard.

Decomposition Rates

Paper	2-4 weeks
Leaves	1-3 weeks
Orange Peels	6 months
Milk Carton (VOC)	5 years
Plastic Bag	10-20 years
Plastic Container	50-80 years
Aluminum Can	80 years
Tin Can	100 years
Plastic Soda Bottle	450 years
Glass Bottle	500 years
Styrofoam	Never

Source: Citizens League for Environmental Action Now (CLEAN)

Printed on recycled paper

