

Be Part of the Solution

Keeping trash out of landfills saves the environment.

By Jane Schneider

Sorting and recycling trash each week is second nature for some people. But perhaps it's a practice you've never tried. Why is recycling so important? It's an easy, efficient way to help keep our environment healthy. By recycling, you send cans, glass, paper, aluminum, and plastic to companies that can reuse these commodities instead of letting them languish in landfills.

The City of Germantown recycles more than 2,600 tons of material annually. Yet you might be surprised to learn only 65 percent of residents currently participate weekly in the city's recycling program. Curbside pick-up has steadily grown since the mid-1990s, as residents have become familiar with the ease of recycling. But Neighborhood Services Manager Joe Nunes thinks the city can do better.

"We currently collect 414 pounds of recycled material per household per year, but my goal is to get that number to 450 pounds," he says. "I think we should strive for that."

Nunes also wants residents to understand the importance of not contaminating the recycling collection with materials that don't belong. This includes two of the biggest offenders: styrofoam and plastic grocery bags.

"People often put their recyclables in plastic bags, but they need to forget about the bag. Just use the bag to dump materials into the cart." If recyclables are kept in plastic bags, "they'll likely go to the landfill instead of recycling. And we're always looking for ways to

keep recyclables out of landfills."

To get more volume in the program, the city will be improving its education and outreach to residents. "We feel we've got good saturation of our message," says Nunes. "Now it's simply making sure everyone understands what can be recycled."

It's a small but simple step we can all take to be part of the solution.

The 411 on Recycling Pick-up

Get recyclables ready

House residents: Place recyclables in the city-issued blue recycle cart.

Condo residents: Place recycling in the city-issued 18-gallon bin.

When: Place cart on curb by 7 a.m. on your collection day or after 6 p.m. the day before collection. Waste Pro picks up recyclables by 7 p.m. on collection day.

Fees

The monthly fee for collection and disposal of trash, recyclables, and yard debris:

- Curbside collection - \$29.50
- Backdoor collection - \$36.50
- Condominiums - \$19

Your recycling cart awaits

Contact Neighborhood Services
NeighborhoodServices@Germantown-TN.
gov or call 757-7263

Optional 96-gallon cart available at no extra cost.



Joe Nunes (above)

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What Can Be Recycled

Aluminum beverage cans
 Aluminum foil trays - must be cleaned of food
 Cereal boxes and corrugated cardboard
 Glass bottles and jars
 Juice and milk cartons
 Metal food cans without lids
 Mixed paper (junk mail, catalogs, office paper, newspaper, phone books)
 Narrow-necked plastic bottles and tops
 Plastic food and beverage containers - #1 (PET, PETE), #2 (HDPE), #4 (LDPE), #5 (PP), and #7 (other).



What Cannot Be Recycled

Foam egg cartons
 Plastic bags
 Pots (clay flower pots)
 Styrofoam
 No take-out containers
 Plastic food & beverage containers #3 (PVC) or #6 (PS)



Other Outlets That Accept Recyclables

- Batteries (car, cell phone, camcorder and rechargeables)
 Batteries Plus, 465 N. Germantown Parkway #114, Cordova
- Cell phones: AT&T and Verizon stores
 Also, visit Verizon online or visit cellphonesforsoldiers.com
- Electronics (computers, cables, video game systems, flat screen TVs, monitors): ER2 | Electronic Responsible Recyclers, 670 S. Fourth St., Memphis • er2.com/memphis.html
- Furniture, and household items: Goodwill, Salvation Army,

Habitat for Humanity

- iPads and iPhones: Apple store, Saddle Creek
- Plastic grocery bags: All Kroger stores
- Printer cartridges: Office Depot (receive credit on a future purchase) and Walgreens (stores will refill cartridges)
- Used motor oil: Germantown Public Works Complex, 7700 Southern Avenue
- Cardboard boxes (flattened): Germantown Economic and Community Development, 1920 S. Germantown Road

Amnesty Dumpster and Recycling Day

April 21 and September 15 | 7:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.
 Germantown Public Works Complex and Johnson Road Park

Residents are encouraged to dispose of items not accepted for curbside pick-up. These include building materials, concrete, glass windows, tires, lawn mowers, gas-operated equipment, grills, empty paint cans, clay pots and more. At Johnson Road Park, the public can shred up to two bankers' boxes of personal documents. Cell phones, printers, computers, copy and fax machines and one television and computer monitor per household will also be accepted.

NOTE: Household hazardous waste (oil-based paint and chemicals) is handled by Shelby County.

Go to shelbycountyttn.gov and click on public works to learn more.