



Thank you for your interest in information about recycling in Chicago. This information is provided by the **Alliance for a Greener South Loop**. We are an all-volunteer group working to make our community a more earth-friendly place to live, work, and play. You can read all about us by visiting www.greensouthloop.org. One of our initiatives is to help Chicago residents recycle as effectively as possible.

Why Recycle?

If you signed up to receive emails from us, you probably are familiar with all the earth-friendly reasons why recycling is important. We have included a summary of why we all should recycle at the end of this note, in case you want to share this document with neighbors, friends, and family.

Recycling in Chicago

Recycling in Chicago now doesn't work for most of us. The good news is that will be changing soon as Chicago gets closer to figuring out an effective recycling program that works for everyone. They are working on it, and we are optimistic that what recycling will be far better than what we have now. But we don't have to waste valuable resources while we wait. A few neighborhoods are participating in pilot programs that are promising. If your neighborhood has blue trash bins for residents to use, or if you live in a multi-unit building that does "single-stream" recycling – Lucky You! If not, here are some tips to help you do the right thing.

Recycling from a single-family or small multi-unit building

If the City has not provided you with blue trash cans to use as part of a pilot program, you can:

- 1) Use the City collection service and "blue bag" your recyclables. In other words, separate your recyclables from your trash, put them in blue bags, and put the blue bags out with the rest of your trash for collection by the City. (We don't have confidence of what happens next.)
- 2) Do a little extra work and have a lot more confidence that your recyclables will be recycled for maximum effectiveness. See "Do-It-Yourself" options below.

Recycling From Your Apartment or Condominium

If you live in a building of five units or greater, you are serviced by a private waste hauler, which is mandated by law to recycle applicable materials. Your building management is also required to offer you an effective recycling program, which is defined by three things: source reduction and separation, an education program and a written recycling plan. Many buildings don't comply with this requirement and it is not being enforced. If your building does not comply, or you suspect it does not have an effective recycling program, what can you do?

- 1) Organize your neighbors to do something. If you live in a condo building, introduce yourself to your condo association board and explain what you'd like to see. See "About Multi-Unit Building Single Stream Recycling" below.
- 2) Take your recycling someplace where it will be treated effectively. See "Do-It-Yourself" options, below.

Do-It-Yourself Recycling Options

We believe that Chicago will have effective recycling soon, but in the meantime, here are some options for you:

- (A) Take your recycling to a City of Chicago Blue Bin dumpster. There are about 20 of these around town. [Click here](#) to find the nearest one near you. If you live in the South or West



Loops, or on the near south side, the Blue dumpsters at 17th & Clark (west side of Clark, in utility yard next to train tracks) is probably the closest one. You can fill up your car with your recyclables, drive over, pull up, and toss. You do not need to separate your paper, glass, plastic or metal from each other. Only Plastics # 1&2, please. And no plastic bags.
OR

(B) Take your recyclables to one of 4 drop-off recycling facilities operated by The Resource Center, a private, non-profit recycler, it accepts separated material. For more information about what/how/where /when, please visit <http://www.resourcecenterchicago.org/> OR

(C) Arrange for The Resource Center to pick up recyclables from your single-family home, apartment or business.

AND

(D) Recycle your hazardous household products and electronics/ computer components at the City's Household Products & Electronics Collection & Training Center; 1150 N. North Branch

About Multi-Unit Building Single Stream Recycling

We can help you and your fellow condo owners/residents get Single Stream Recycling in your multi-unit building.

Here is how to get started

- 1- Become familiar with single stream recycling for multi-unit buildings (see attached file)
- 2- Start thinking about what will work for your building (see attached file: MultiUnitRecycling_Questionnaire.xls)

Other Action Items that Will Help:

1. Become even smarter about single-stream recycling – the future of recycling in Chicago . We recommend this site <<http://www.conservatree.com/learn/SolidWaste/bestpractices.shtml>>
2. Let your Alderman know you want real recycling soon! Chicago cannot really call itself a “green” city until it has a recycling program that works.
3. Do not throw the following items in the trash: batteries, electronics including cellphones and computers, paint and other hazardous waste. Take them to the City's Household Products & Electronics Collection & Training Center; 1150 N. North Branch

Online Recycling Resources

To learn more about the history of recycling in Chicago and recommendations from the Chicago Recycling Coalition, please visit: <http://www.chicagorecycling.org/index.php>

The Resource Center – private non-profit recycler and more (including compost and urban gardening): <http://www.resourcecenterchicago.org/>

City of Chicago Recycling Information:

<http://egov.cityofchicago.org/city/webportal/portalEntityHomeAction.do?entityName=Recycling+Chicago&entityNameEnumValue=148>

Single Stream Recycling Basics

<http://www.conservatree.com/learn/SolidWaste/bestpractices.shtml>



Why Recycle? (summary provided by State University of New York at Buffalo's Website: <http://wings.buffalo.edu/ubgreen/content/programs/recycling/whyrecycle.html>)

RECYCLING ...

CONSERVES VALUABLE RESOURCES

- Recycling paper reduces tree cutting and spares our forests. *Did you know:* If all of the Sunday papers were recycled, more than 500,000 trees a week could be saved.
- Recycling metal, plastic and glass reduces resource extraction for raw materials and the ecosystem destruction associated with mining and drilling.

CONSERVES ENERGY

- It generally takes much less energy to produce new products from recycled materials than from virgin materials. *Did you know,* for example: making a new aluminum can from recycled aluminum saves 95% of the energy required to make a new can from virgin aluminum (bauxite).

REDUCES AIR AND WATER POLLUTION

- Recycling reduces mining and drilling, both of which cause air and water pollution.
- By saving energy, recycling reduces the air pollution associated with burning fossil fuels - which means less smog, acid rain and global warming.
- Recycling is also an alternative to incinerating waste, a procedure which can produce emissions containing heavy metals and dioxins as well as also contribute to acid rain and global warming. The toxic ash produced by incinerating may also end up polluting ground water after being placed in a landfill.

AVOIDS LANDFILLS

- Existing landfills are filling up. By recycling we can slow that process down.
- Reducing reliance on landfills is desirable because they tend to leak, polluting ground water.
- Landfills also produce methane gas which is a powerful greenhouse gas which contributes to global warming.

SAVES MONEY AND CREATE JOBS

- As the market for products containing recycled materials grows, the market for recyclable waste materials will increase. Providers of these recyclables may be able to sell them or at least dispose of them for less cost than land-filling or incinerating.
- Recycling is labor intensive, thus creating local jobs.

