



Clean Recyclables, Better Results

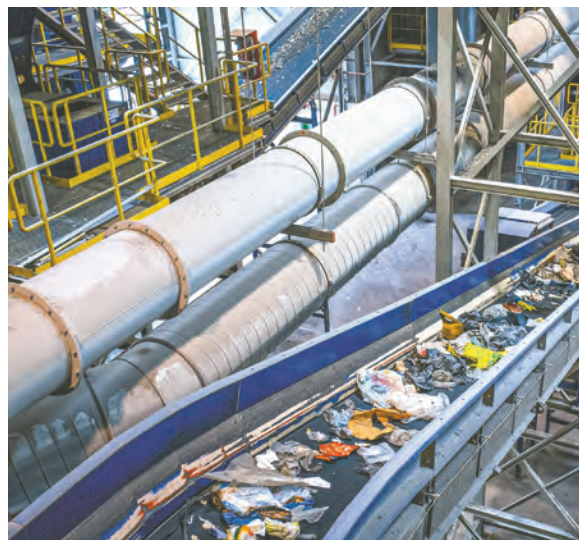
An essential part of recycling efforts lies within the Materials Recovery Facility, commonly referred to as a MRF. This facility plays a crucial role in processing and sorting recyclable materials collected. MRFs work by using a combination of mechanical and manual sorting methods to separate different types of recyclables, such as paper, cardboard, glass, and various plastics. As items travel along conveyor belts, they are sorted into different categories, eventually being processed and sold as commodities to be reused in manufacturing.

Recently, MRFs have been embracing new technologies to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness. Optical sorting has become a game-changer in identifying and separating materials based on their optical properties. This system uses light to detect and sort items at a high speed, ensuring a higher purity of recycled materials. In addition to optical sorting, artificial intelligence is increasingly being integrated into MRF operations. AI systems can learn and adapt to different types of waste, improving the accuracy of sorting processes and reducing the need for manual intervention.

However, the efficiency of MRFs is significantly hampered by contamination issues. Contamination occurs when non-recyclable materials or improperly cleaned recyclables are mixed in with the recycling stream. One of the biggest culprits is plastic bags. These bags can get tangled in the machinery, causing delays and even damage to the equipment. Another common problem is the presence of liquids and food residues in recyclable containers. When these items are not properly rinsed out, they can spoil entire batches of otherwise recyclable materials, leading to increased waste and higher processing costs.

Contamination doesn't just disrupt operations; it also affects the economic viability of recycling. When recyclable materials are contaminated, their value as commodities decreases. This devaluation means that MRFs might receive less revenue for the materials they sell, making it more costly to maintain recycling programs. Furthermore, the additional labor and processing needed to deal with contaminated materials add to operational expenses, which can strain the resources of our local recycling efforts.

For Fort Wayne residents, it's essential to understand the impact of contamination and to take steps to ensure that recyclables are clean and free from non-recyclable items. By doing so, we can support the efficiency and sustainability of our MRF.



Credit: Azman, L | E+ | Getty Images

Tips for Great Recycling

- **Label Bins Clearly** – Inside your home, label your recycling bins clearly to remind everyone what can and cannot be recycled. Simple, visible labels can make a big difference.
- **Empty, Clean, and Dry** – Empty bottles and other containers, remove excess residue, rinse them out, and allow them to air-dry.
- **Save Space in the Cart** – Break down and flatten boxes before recycling. If needed, cut cardboard into pieces no larger than about 18 by 18 inches.
- **Keep It Loose** – Don't bag your recycling. Recyclables should be loose as they go into the bin.
- **Avoid Hazardous Materials** – Never mix tangles, like hoses or cords, or hazardous waste, such as batteries, chemicals, or medical sharps, with your recycling. These items can endanger workers and damage equipment.
- **Steer Clear of Contaminants** – Keep "yucky" items out of the recycling cart! This includes dirty recyclables, greasy pizza boxes, and, especially, diapers.
- **Learn More** – For more tips about recycling, visit www.RecycleFortWayne.org.

COMMUNITY RECYCLING DROP-OFF SITES

*This service is free to all Allen County residents.
All items must be Clean, Empty & Dry!*

MONROEVILLE

110 1/2 South St
Daily 8am-6pm

NORTHWEST

2 Fort Recovery Rd
Tues-Sat 8am-1pm,
1:30-4:30pm

REPUBLIC SERVICES MRF

5209 E Pontiac St
Mon-Fri 8am-5pm

REPUBLIC SERVICES LANDFILL

6231 MacBeth Rd
Mon-Fri 8am-4pm

ACCEPTED FOR RECYCLING:



Cardboard,
flattened



Aluminum cans



Steel cans



Paper



Plastic bottles, jugs,
& food containers,
remove lids



Glass food &
beverage containers,
remove lids

Donation Over Disposal

In a world where consumerism often reigns supreme, the question of what to do with our possessions when they're no longer of use frequently arises. The knee-jerk reaction for many is to simply toss them away, relegating them to the fate of a landfill. However, a more conscientious approach lies in donating these items.

By donating, we extend the lifespan of these items and lessen our impact on the planet. Additionally, donating can benefit those in need. What might be clutter to us could be a valuable resource to someone else. Clothes, furniture, books, and other household items can find new life in the hands of those who can't afford to buy them brand-new. Donating allows us to contribute to our communities and support those who are less fortunate.

Fortunately, there are several ways to begin. One option is to donate to local charities or non-profit organizations. There are many thrift stores and donation centers where you can drop off your gently used items. These organizations often support various causes, such as homelessness, education, or healthcare.

Another possibility is to donate online. Several websites and apps facilitate the donation process by connecting donors with individuals or organizations in need. Whether it's clothing, electronics, or household goods, there's likely a platform where you can find someone who could benefit from your donations. You can also consider organizing a donation drive in your neighborhood or workplace. Encourage others to join you in decluttering their homes and donating items to those in need.



Credit: wichayada suwanachan | iStock | Getty Images Plus

Great American Cleanup

This spring, Fort Wayne proudly participated in the Great American Cleanup on May 4. We provided safety green volunteer T-shirts, gloves, bags, and waste collection services to all participants. Additionally, we supplied some groups with roll-off containers for neighborhood cleanups. This year's event had an impressive turnout with 4,200 volunteers. Together, we collected 85 tons of debris, including 175 tires and 90 TVs. Thank you to everyone who contributed to making our city cleaner and greener!

Bulk Item Pickup

Do you have large items to dispose of that won't fit into your garbage cart? If so, the City of Fort Wayne Solid Waste Department provides bulk trash pickup for residents. However, you must schedule this service at least two business days prior to your regular garbage day. We will accept up to three bulky items per pickup appointment.

To schedule a bulk trash pickup, you may use the online service request form by clicking on "Contact 311" in the menu bar at www.cityoffortwayne.org. Simply choose "Solid Waste," then the "Bulk Trash Pickup" option. If you prefer, you may call 311 to schedule this service.

These items are accepted during bulk trash pickups:

- Furniture
- Mattresses/bed springs (These items must be completely wrapped in plastic. Plastic mattress bags are available at hardware and home improvement stores, as well as online.)
- Non-refrigerant appliances, such as washers, dryers, stoves, and dishwashers

These items will not be accepted during a bulk trash pickup. Visit www.acwastewatcher.org for disposal options.

- NO tires, batteries, or concrete
- NO appliances that contain refrigerants (Freon), such as refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners, water coolers, and dehumidifiers
- NO remodeling debris

If possible, residents should place bulk items at least 3 feet away from their garbage cart so that the garbage truck arm doesn't get caught on bulk trash.



Credit: Joe_Potato | iStock | Getty Images Plus

Back-to-School Savings

As the back-to-school season approaches, it's time to gear up for another academic year. However, this doesn't mean you'll have to break the bank. With proper planning and smart choices, you can navigate back-to-school shopping while saving money and reducing waste.

- Take inventory of what you already have. Many items, like backpacks, binders, and calculators, can be reused from previous years, saving you money and reducing unnecessary purchases.
- Shop secondhand. Thrift stores and online marketplaces are treasure troves for affordable and gently used school supplies. From clothing to textbooks, buying secondhand not only saves money, but it also reduces the demand for new production.
- Invest in durable, high-quality items that will last longer. While they may have a higher upfront cost, they will save you money in the long run by eliminating the need for frequent replacements. Look for products made from sustainable materials, like recycled paper.
- Take advantage of sales and discounts by planning your shopping in advance. Start looking for deals early and consider bulk-buying essentials like pencils and notebooks to save both money and packaging waste.
- Try DIY. Get creative and make your own school supplies whenever possible. From decorating plain notebooks to sewing your own pencil case, DIY projects are not only fun, but they are also eco-friendly and budget-friendly.
- Pack a waste-free lunch. Invest in reusable containers, water bottles, and utensils to pack your lunch. Not only does this reduce single-use plastic waste, but it also saves money compared to buying pre-packaged meals every day.
- Be a mindful consumer. Before making a purchase, consider if you really need it.



Credit: skynesher | E+ | Getty Images

Borrow-A-Bin

Recycling at your event has never been easier with Fort Wayne's Borrow-A-Bin program. Local organizations can borrow up to 50 recycling containers with bags for free. These containers attach to garbage carts and are perfect for festivals, fundraisers, concerts, and more. To participate, confirm availability and pre-register at least one week before your event by contacting 311 or emailing borrowabin@cityoffortwayne.org.

You'll need to coordinate transporting recyclables to a recycling facility with your trash hauler and handle the pickup and drop-off of containers from the city, which must be done on weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Containers should be picked up one day before and returned within two days after the event. Ensure containers are returned clean to avoid a \$20 cleaning fee and note that replacements cost \$60. Plan ahead by estimating the number of containers needed and designating a recycling leader to manage the process. Promote recycling with announcements and banners to maximize participation.

For more information, visit cityoffortwayne.org/publicworks/180-solid-waste-management/3583-borrow-a-bin.html.

Total Garbage

Total Garbage by Edward Humes is an eye-opening examination of a pervasive problem that plagues modern society: waste. From overflowing landfills to the exploitation of natural resources, Humes paints a vivid picture of the destructive path we've paved in pursuit of convenience and excess.

One of the most poignant aspects of *Total Garbage* is Humes' exploration of the psychological and emotional toll of our disposable lifestyle. Through insightful analysis and anecdotes, he delves into the sense of emptiness and disconnection that accompanies our relentless pursuit of the next new thing. By exposing the hidden costs of our disposable mindset, Humes challenges readers to confront the true value of their possessions and experiences.

Humes also offers a compelling vision for a more sustainable future, presenting actionable solutions and inspiring examples of individuals and communities striving to break free from the cycle of waste. From innovative recycling initiatives to grassroots movements advocating for change, *Total Garbage* serves as a beacon of hope in an otherwise bleak landscape.

While *Total Garbage* may be a sobering read, it is ultimately a testament to the power of awareness and collective action. By confronting the uncomfortable truths of our throwaway culture, Humes empowers readers to embrace a more conscientious way of living — one that prioritizes stewardship over squandering and connection over consumption.

2024 SATURDAY EVENTS



Tox - Saturday

In partnership with the City of Fort Wayne

October 12, 9am-2pm

2260 Carroll Road, FW 46818



Electronic Recycling Event

September 14, 8am-12pm

2911 Meyer Road, FW 46806



Tire Recycling Event

October 5, 8am-12pm

2911 Meyer Road, FW 46806

Visit www.acwastewatcher.org for full event details including guidelines, list of accepted items, and fees. Cash or check only.



ALLEN COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
**ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT**



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