

RANDOM RECYCLING & WASTE DISPOSAL INFORMATION

1. The Winneshiek County recycling center processes between 2400→2700 tons (4.8→5.4 million pounds) per year and has the capacity to do a lot more.
2. Revenue not used to offset the expense of recycling, it is returned to the Winneshiek County General Fund for property tax relief. **Everyone has a financial stake in this program.**
3. If there are no viable markets for something, it can not be recycled. A viable market means there are multiple financially stable established outlets worldwide for the material. The recycling business is in many ways a lot like farming. Farmers don't grow crops they can not sell.
4. Cats are a very important part of our recycling operation.
5. The largest cardboard recycling mill in the United States is in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.
6. It is OK for cardboard to be wet. Paper should stay dry.
7. Collection bins are emptied on an as needed basis. They are monitored and emptied when full.
8. Plastic water bottles are usually made into carpet or textiles. They are a form of polyester.
9. We ship out about 215 tons of baled textiles and 30,000 lbs. of used shoes every year.
10. Hard cover books should be directly delivered to the recycling center because they have to be processed separately from other paper types. Pulping machines at the paper mills do not get along with hard cover books, but they deal with paper back books just fine. Same for wire bound notebooks.
11. Plastic bags are our greatest expense that can not be measured. The recycling plant is designed for high speed processing of loose material. Having to open bags slows down the processing significantly. Plastic bags are also a major expense at the landfill because they become wind blown debris.
12. Recycling presentations are available to any school, business, church or other organization. There is no charge for this service. You can tour the recycling center, too.
13. There is no difference in the smell of one unrinsed milk jug or 10,000.
14. It is widely believed that plastic is made from oil. It can be, but very little actually is. Most plastic is made from natural gas.
15. Everything at the recycling center is public information and you have the right to know about it.
16. Tin cans often go to steel mills that make the steel siding and roofing you can buy locally. The drop-off building at the recycling center is made from your tin cans.
17. The coated paper milk and juice cartons can not be recycled because the coating can not be removed from the paper fibers. The paper mills really hate them.
18. It is not legal to put electric motors in a landfill. You can bring them to the recycling center.
19. If you got in trouble and were given community service time instead of a fine, there is a possibility you can do your time at the recycling center. You will be treated with respect and your time will go quickly.
20. We restrict the intake of glass because there are no viable markets for it. The probability of any developing in the future is somewhere between zero and none. Glass is a very small percentage of the overall waste stream. Glass that ends up in the landfill has an insignificant impact on the overall life of the landfill. It is inert and creates no methane gas. It compacts very well and is basically the equivalent of burying a rock.
21. Nearly all gift wrapping paper is not recyclable because of the various coatings on it. A lot of it has no paper fiber content in it at all. Please do not put it in the recycling bins.
22. A landfill should be compacted to 1100→1200 lbs. per cubic yard or more. As far as financially, this is one of the most important equations of our time. The people that operate the Winneshiek County Landfill have a tremendous amount of financial responsibility and they manage it very well.