

So where does your recycling go?



You put your recyclables out at the curb...



And someone takes it all away.



Or you drop it into one of the County's blue collection bins in your town...



or at one of our solid waste disposal sites.



Then you ask yourself, “Where does this stuff all go?”

Or maybe you don’t recycle at all because you think,
“Doesn’t it just get buried in the landfill?”



Come along and take a little tour of the St. Louis County Recycling Processing Facility. It's located next to the Regional Landfill, just east of Virginia, MN. Before the curbside trailer or roll-off container drops off your recyclables it is weighed on the scale at the landfill.



We keep track of all of the materials recycled and where they come from so we can report to the State and the residents of St. Louis County, and make program improvements where they are needed.

Once it's weighed the materials are dumped into two areas on the tipping floor of the Recycling Processing Facility. One area is for papers, the other is for bottles and cans. Cardboard is dumped in a separate area of the facility.



Keeping the paper separate from other materials speeds up the processing and keeps the papers clean. Workers on the tipping floor will remove some of the larger non-recyclable items that are placed in the collection bins by mistake. **It's important to keep trash out of the recycling.** On an annual basis, about 5,500 tons of material is sorted at our facility. About 8% of that is unacceptable material that is not recyclable.



Recycled materials are loaded onto a conveyor belt.

This belt moves material up to the sorting area of the Recycling Processing Facility.



On the sorting line, workers hand-sort the recyclables as they pass by. The speed of the conveyor belt can be adjusted. If there is a lot of trash mixed in with the recycling the workers need to take extra time to pull the recyclables out of the garbage. So make sure you put the right materials in the right bins.

Mixed Paper



Corrugated cardboard



Plastic bottles and jugs, and metal cans.



Glass bottles and jars



Your recyclable materials should be sorted into these categories before you recycle them. Put them in separate paper bags at the curb, or in the correct blue bin at the drop-off sites. For drop-off locations near you give us a call at 800-450-9278.



If you have curbside collection, your hauler will dump your recyclables into separate compartments of their truck or trailer. If you drop off your recyclables at one of the County's blue collection bins they should be loose (not in bags) when you put them in the bin, and always make sure you put them in the correct bin.



The sorters pick out the different types of plastics, cans and bottles and toss them into their respective chutes. A large magnet pulls out the steel and tin cans and drops them in another chute.

Garbage and other non-recyclable materials go off the end of the conveyor belt and are hauled to the landfill.



Below the sort line chutes are a series of bunkers that hold the sorted materials in large cages.



One is for #1 HDPE plastic, another for #2 PET plastic, one for aluminum, and so on. When they are filled there will be enough material to send on to the baler.



The cages are dumped directly on to the conveyor that brings them up to the baler intake.



At our Recycling Processing Facility we have one sort line and one baler. Here are a couple of bales of old corrugated cardboard compressed and baled.



Here is a new bale of cans.



Bales of recycled material are stored until they can be loaded on to semi trailers.



When ever possible, the bales of recycled materials are loaded directly onto semi trailers positioned at the loading dock of the Recycling Processing Facility.



Haulers take the materials either to end-markets or to a recycling broker. Mixed paper goes directly to the USG facility in Cloquet to be made into ceiling tile. Recycled cardboard goes directly to the Rocktenn mill in St. Paul. Other materials go to a broker to be combined with materials from other recycling programs and sold to end markets.

So where does your recycling go?



So now you know where your recyclables go in St. Louis County.

We know there is a large volume of recyclable material that never makes it to the curb or into the collection bins. It ends up being buried in the landfill. This keeps those valuable resources from being used again. So help spread the word. **Let's all recycle more!**



For more information on what can be recycled in
St. Louis County go to

www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle

Or contact the St. Louis County Environmental
Services Department at **800.450.9278** or e-mail
esdinfo@stlouiscountymn.gov