

# *So where does your recycling go?*

SAINT LOUIS COUNTY  
**ENVIRONMENTAL**  
**SERVICES**  
BETTER WASTE SOLUTIONS

*Meeting Your Waste Material  
& Septic System Needs*



You put your recyclables out at the curb,



And someone takes it away.

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



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Or at one of our solid waste disposal sites.



Then you ask yourself “where does this stuff go?” or maybe you don’t recycle at all because you think, “doesn’t it all just go to the landill?”

Come along and take a tour of the St. Louis County Recycling Processing Facility, located next to the Regional Landfill just east of Virginia, MN.

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Before the curbside trailer or roll-off container drops off your recyclables, it gets weighed on the scale at the landfill.



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

Once a trailer or container is weighed, materials are dumped into two areas on the tipping floor of the Recycling Processing Facility. One area is for paper, the other is for plastics, metal cans, and cartons. Cardboard is dumped in a separate area of the building.



Keeping paper separate from other materials speeds up the processing and keeps the paper clean. Workers on the tipping floor will remove 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 5,000

tons of material is sorted at our facility. About 8% of that is material we cannot recycle.



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Materials are loaded onto a conveyor belt. This belt moves material up to the sorting area of the Recycling Processing Facility.



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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 or items aren't properly sorted the workers need to take extra time to sort out the recyclables. This is why it's important to put the right materials in the right bins!

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 bins at the drop-off sites. To find a drop-off location near you give us a call at 800-450-9278.

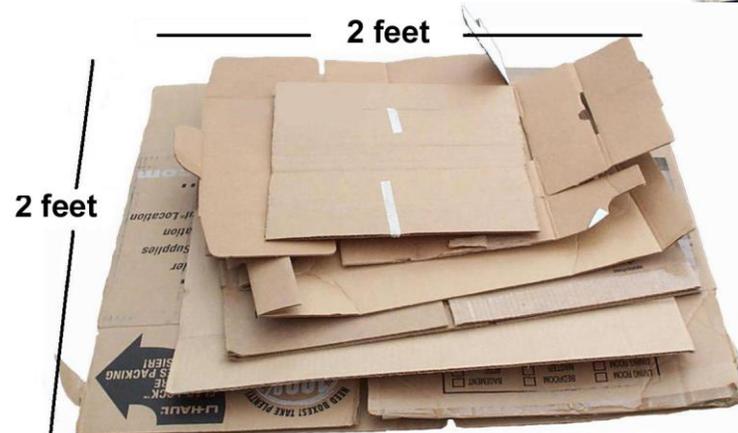
**#1 and 2 plastic containers, metal cans, and cartons**



**Mixed paper**



**Glass bottles and jars**



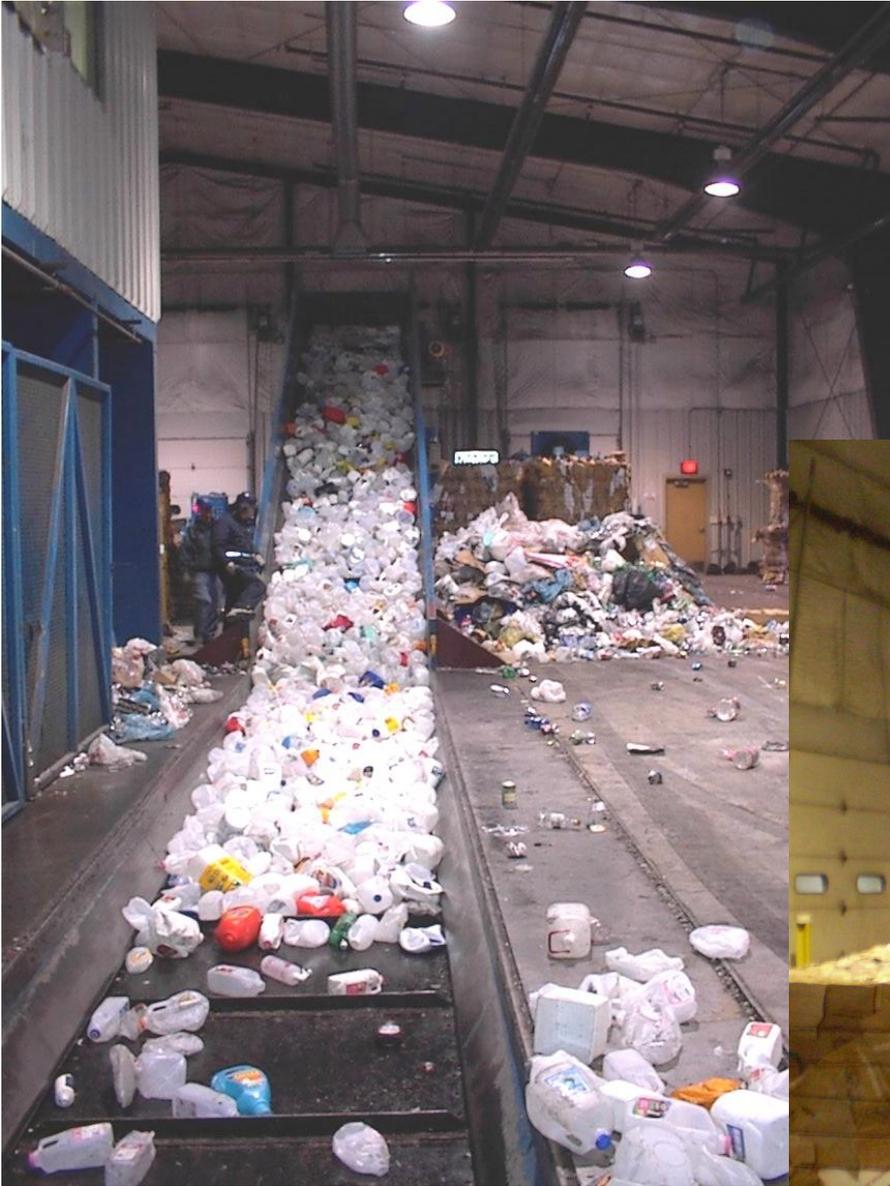
**Flattened corrugated cardboard**

The sorters pick out the different types of plastics, cans, bottles, and cartons, 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 brought 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 PET plastic, one for #2 HDPE plastic, one for cans, and so on. When they are filled there will be enough material to bale.



The cages are then dumped onto a conveyor that brings them up to the baler intake that will compress and bale sorted material.



Bales of recycled material are stored until they can be loaded on to semi-trailers. Some materials can be stored outside for short periods of time, but recycled paper needs to be kept dry. Typically, within the month that your recyclables are delivered they will be moved on to a plant to be made into new products.





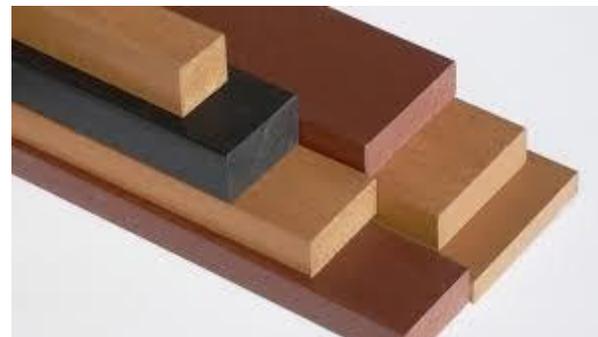
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Bales of recycled materials are loaded onto semi-trailers to be taken to end markets where they will be made into new products or to a recycling broker who will sell the material to an end market.



- Mixed paper goes to the USG facility in Cloquet to be made into ceiling tile.
- Recycled cardboard goes to the RockTenn mill in St. Paul to be made into corrugated sheets for new cardboard.
- Cartons go to Fox River Fiber in De Pere, Wisconsin to be made into high quality paper pulp that will someday be new paper or tissue.
- Aluminum cans go to a brewer to be made into new beverage cans.
- Some plastics go to St. Cloud to be made into plastic lumber.
- Glass is crushed and used here in St. Louis County as a gravel additive at our solid waste sites.



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, where valuable resources are never used again. Help spread the word. *Let's all recycle more!*



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For more information on what can be recycled in St. Louis County go to [www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle](http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle)

Or contact the St. Louis County Environmental Services Department at **800-450-9278** or email **[esdinfo@stlouiscountymn.gov](mailto:esdinfo@stlouiscountymn.gov)**