

Introduction

What happens after you put your garbage in a trash can or dumpster? A garbage truck picks it up and takes it to either a resource recovery facility or a landfill.



A resource recovery facility is a place where garbage is burned to make electricity under controlled conditions to protect our air.



A landfill is basically a lined hole in the ground with a piping system to collect fluids to protect our water. Some landfills in Minnesota bury garbage and collect methane gas, then use the gas to make electricity. Creating electricity is an excellent way to use garbage when it can't be reused, recycled or composted.



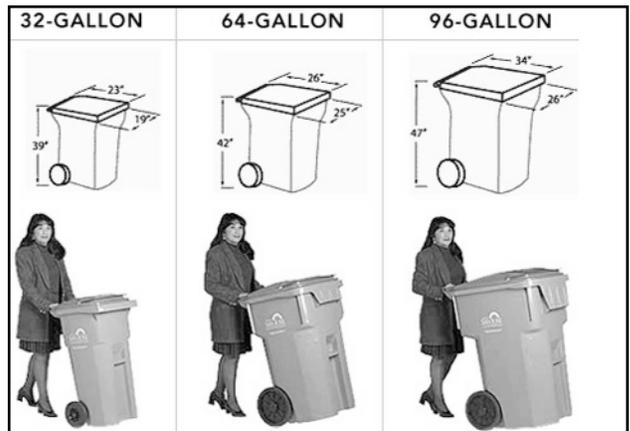
It's wasteful to burn or bury resources that can be used again. When we are not careful, we throw away things that can be reused or recycled. If we look at the trash the garbage truck picks up, we can see many things that can be reused or recycled.



We recycle a lot of paper, but we still throw away a lot of paper. We recycle a lot of plastic bottles too, but we throw a lot of them away. The State has conducted waste sorts and found that 40% of what we throw away is recyclable.



It costs a lot of money to pick up and dispose of our trash, and when we throw away valuable resources we are wasting money and natural resources. We pay more each week to throw away a large container of trash, than if we reduce the amount of waste and use a smaller one.



The best choice is to try to have “zero waste”, so there is no waste needing disposal. In the following exercises you will learn what you can do to reduce waste, what you can reuse and what you can recycle.



Please help us reduce the amount of garbage we throw away. It is important to keep Minnesota's air and water as clean as possible and conserve our resources for our children and grandchildren.

