



# Reduce Your Use:

The Dos and Don'ts  
of Recycling in  
Hillsborough County  
2019



Hillsborough  
County Florida

Tampa Bay  
**Times**  
**NIE**  
newspaper in education  
tampabay.com/nie

# Educators

Share 100 words about how you used this resource in your classroom for a chance to win a \$15 gift card! Visit [tampabay.com/nie](http://tampabay.com/nie) for details and to enter.



## Newspaper in Education

The Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education program (NIE) is a cooperative effort between schools and the Times Publishing Co. to encourage the use of newspapers in print and electronic form as educational resources – a “living textbook.” Our educational resources fall into the category of informational text, a type of nonfiction text. The primary purpose of informational text is to convey information about the natural or social world.

NIE serves educators, students and families by providing schools with class sets of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Tampa Bay Times* plus award-winning original educational publications, teacher guides, lesson plans, educator workshops and many more resources – all at no cost to schools, teachers or families. In 2018-2019, NIE provided more than 1.4 million print copies and 10 million digital editions of the *Times* to area classrooms free of charge thanks to our generous subscribers and individual, corporate and foundation sponsors. NIE teaching materials cover a variety of subjects and are aligned to the Florida Standards.

For more information about NIE, visit [tampabay.com/nie](http://tampabay.com/nie), call 727-893-8138 or email [ordernie@tampabay.com](mailto:ordernie@tampabay.com). Follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/TBTimesNIE](https://twitter.com/TBTimesNIE). Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/TBTNIE](https://facebook.com/TBTNIE).

## NIE staff

Jodi Pushkin, manager, [jpushkin@tampabay.com](mailto:jpushkin@tampabay.com)  
Sue Bedry, development specialist, [sbedry@tampabay.com](mailto:sbedry@tampabay.com)

© Tampa Bay Times 2019

## Credits

Written by Sue Bedry, *Times* staff  
Curriculum activities by Jodi Pushkin, *Times* staff  
Designed by Lisa Schillinger, *Times* staff

## Florida Standards

**This publication and its activities incorporate the following Florida Standards for middle school students.**

**Science:** SC.6.N.1.5; SC.6.N.2.2; SC.7.E.6.6;  
SC.7.L.17.1; SC.8.N.4.1; SC.8.N.4.2; SC.68.CS-CC.1.1;  
SC.68.CS-CC.1.2 SC.68.CS-PC.2.1; SC.68.CS-PC.3.1;  
SC.68.CS-PC.3.3; SC.68.CS-PC.3.5

**Language Arts:** LAFS.68.L.1.1; LAFS.68.L.1.2;  
LAFS.68.L.2.3; LAFS.68.RH.1.1; LAFS.68.RH.2.4;  
LAFS.68.RH.3.7; LAFS.68.RI.1.1; LAFS.68.RI.1.2;  
LAFS.68.RI.1.3; LAFS.68.RI.2.4; LAFS.68.RI.3.7;  
LAFS.68.RI.3.8; LAFS.68.SL.1.1; LAFS.68.SL.1.2;  
LAFS.68.SL.1.3; LAFS.68.SL.1.4; LAFS.68.SL.1.5;  
LAFS.68.SL.1.6; LAFS.68.W.1.1; LAFS.68.W.1.2;  
LAFS.68.W.2.4; LAFS.68.W.2.5; LAFS.68.W.2.6;  
LAFS.68.W.3.7; LAFS.68.W.3.8; LAFS.68.W.3.9

Tampa Bay  
**Times**  
**NIE**  
newspaper in education  
[tampabay.com/nie](http://tampabay.com/nie)

## About Solid Waste Management

Hillsborough County's Solid Waste Management oversees waste collection, disposal and recycling for a service area that covers the unincorporated county and New Tampa areas. The completely integrated operation includes collection, transportation, disposal and reporting of all solid waste generated or brought into the system.

Hillsborough County residential solid waste customers receive curbside garbage, recycling and yard waste collection. Customers also have access to three Household Hazardous Waste collection sites, three yard waste drop-off sites and five Community Collection Centers.

The mission of Hillsborough County government is to provide effective quality service at a reasonable cost with courtesy, integrity and accountability in a manner that protects and enhances the quality of life of our diverse population.

## Request a Recycling Presentation

Hillsborough County offers free presentations to schools, businesses, homeowners' associations and community groups on the topics of recycling and waste reduction. Presentations can be tailored to accommodate available meeting times, different age groups and the needs of the target audience. Print and digital copies of educational materials are available at no charge.

To request educational materials or schedule a presentation, contact Travis Barnes, Hillsborough County Recycling Coordinator, at 813-209-3085 or [barnest@hcflgov.net](mailto:barnest@hcflgov.net).

## Recycling contacts

### Hillsborough County Solid Waste Management

[HCFLGov.net/recycling](http://HCFLGov.net/recycling)  
813-272-5680

### City of Tampa Department of Solid Waste & Environmental Program Management

[tampagov.net/solid-waste](http://tampagov.net/solid-waste)  
813-274-8811

### City of Temple Terrace Public Works Department

[templeterrace.com/182/Public-Works](http://templeterrace.com/182/Public-Works)  
813-506-6570

### Plant City Solid Waste Department

[plantcitygov.com/64/Solid-Waste](http://plantcitygov.com/64/Solid-Waste)  
813-757-9208

# Reduce

- Choose items that use less packaging.
- Purchase recycled or upcycled products when possible.
- Decline disposable straws in restaurants, or bring a reusable metal or glass straw.
- Bring your own "to go" container to a restaurant.
- Sign up for electronic bills and catalogs instead of receiving paper copies in the mail.

# Reuse

- Bring reusable bags to the store instead of using single-use plastic bags.
- Carry a refillable sports bottle instead of buying single-use plastic water bottles.
- Bring your own silverware and cup to work rather than using disposable items.
- Use glass or plastic containers with lids for food storage instead of plastic baggies or plastic wrap.
- Use washable sponges or cloth rags for cleaning instead of single-use paper towels.
- Donate reusable items such as unwanted clothing, appliances, books and furniture instead of throwing them out.

# Recycle

- Repurpose or upcycle materials when possible instead of throwing them out.
- Recycle aluminum cans, metal food containers, paper, cardboard, paperboard, plastic containers, cartons and glass bottles and jars by placing them in your blue recycling cart curbside.
- Recycle single-use plastic bags and Styrofoam™ containers at participating grocery or big-box stores.
- Recycle electronics and rechargeable batteries by bringing them to a Hillsborough County Community Collection Center or Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center.
- Compost your yard waste and food scraps.

## Upcycling

Upcycling is the process of recycling something in such a way that the resulting product is of a higher value than the original item. Examples include making a planter from an old wheelbarrow, trash can or chipped piece of china; using fabric scraps to make a quilt; creating a collage from newspapers and magazines; and making a bird feeder out of a milk carton. The Internet is full of creative upcycling ideas for adults and kids alike!

Sources: Hillsborough County Solid Waste Management, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

**Waste reduction:** the practice of using less material and energy to minimize waste generation and preserve natural resources.

—Encyclopedia.com

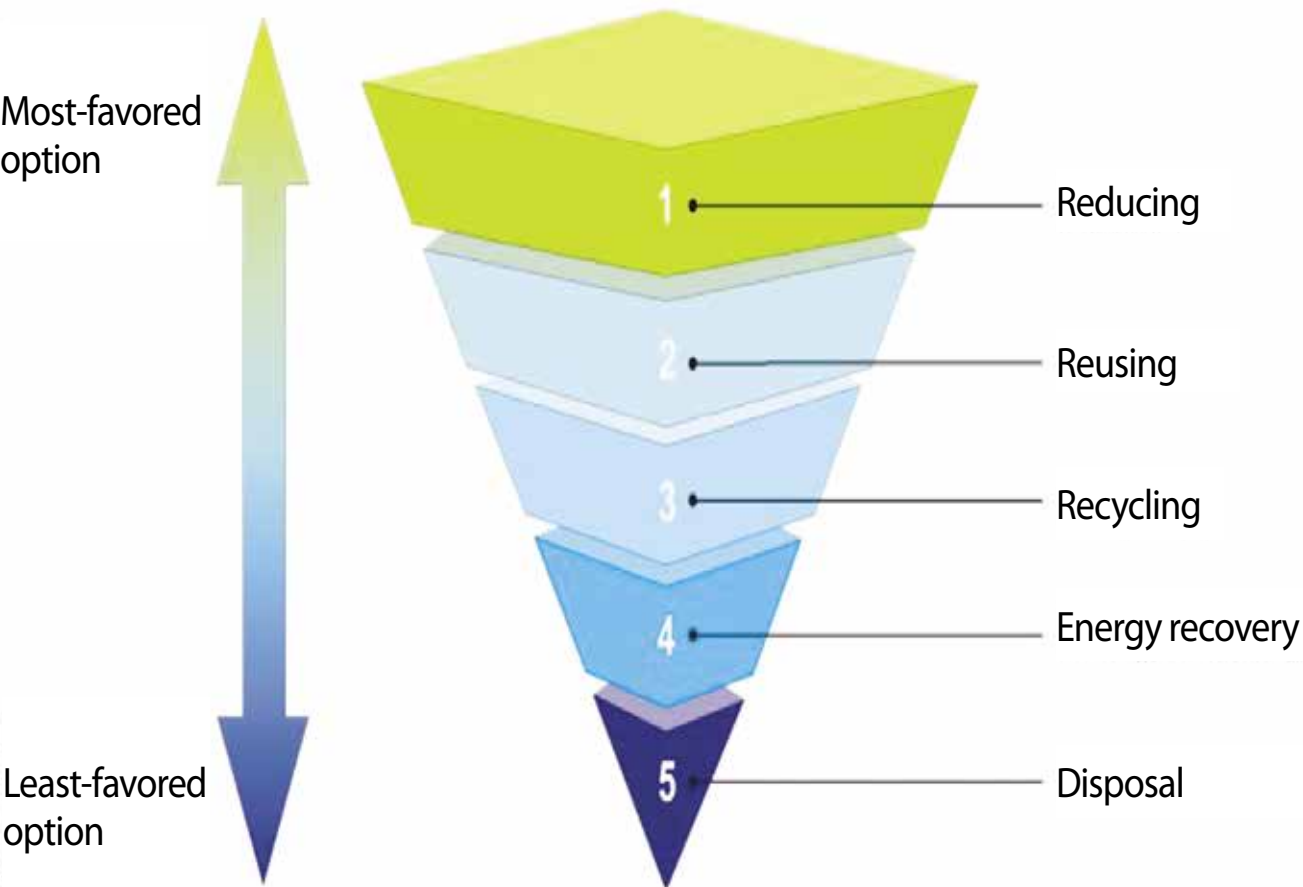
## Waste reduction

The concept of waste reduction is simple – to reduce waste by using less in the first place.

By following the three steps of reduce, reuse and recycle, you can save money, reduce your carbon footprint and preserve natural resources. This is known as the waste hierarchy. The waste hierarchy emphasizes reducing, reusing and recycling to reduce the amount of waste that must be incinerated or landfilled.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

## How Should We Manage Waste?



## Going beyond the text Waste management hierarchy

The Environmental Protection Agency developed the nonhazardous materials and waste management hierarchy in recognition that no single waste management approach is suitable for managing all materials and waste streams in all circumstances. The waste hierarchy emphasizes the first four steps, but all parts are important. The seven steps are reducing, reusing, recycling, composting, incinerating and creating energy, landfilling and incineration with no energy production. Ask students to free write about ways they can help with solid waste management in their own homes, schools and communities. Which of the seven steps do the students think they can practice the most? Will students' efforts help decrease waste for Steps 6 and 7? Challenge the class to reduce the trash that they produce and help one other person reduce his/her trash, as well. Next, have students split into small groups and look through the *Tampa Bay Times* advertisements and point out items they have in their homes or they see in school. Have students explore the concept of "reducing" solid waste and how this relates to product packaging. Have the students make a chart or infographic with the information they have discovered and then present them to the rest of the class.

Sources: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and regents of the University of Colorado

# You've been tagged

If you place items in your blue cart that are not recyclable, your cart may not be emptied and an "Oops!" recycling cart notification tag will be placed on it to let you know what the nonrecyclable items are.

Just remove the nonrecyclable items and place your recycling cart at the curb on your next regularly scheduled recycling day.

## Oops... Your Recycling Cart was Contaminated

There were unrecyclable items in your blue recycling cart. Please help us reduce contamination by placing only accepted recyclables in your blue cart.

### These items should NOT go in your blue cart:



Plastic Bags



Electronics



Clothing/Shoes



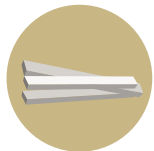
Cords/Wires



Rope/Twine



Garden Hoses



Construction & Demolition Debris



Clothes Hangers



Household Hazardous Waste



Soiled Paper Items



Food Waste



Diapers

Thank you for recycling correctly.

Contact us for information about how to properly dispose of these items and other recycling questions:



Hillsborough County Florida

(813) 272-5680

HCFLGov.net/Recycling

# How to use your blue recycling cart



## DO RECYCLE these items in your blue recycling cart

- Clean and empty aluminum cans (no aluminum foil)
- Clean and empty metal food containers (no scrap metal)
- Clean and dry paper (any paper that tears easily; no shredded paper)
- Clean, dry and flattened cardboard (no pizza boxes)
- Clean and dry paperboard (such as cereal boxes or paper towel rolls)
- Clean and empty plastic bottles, jugs and containers (no plastic bags or plastic wrap)
- Clean and empty milk, juice and broth cartons
- Clean and empty glass bottles and jars

**Always place recyclables loose in your cart, never bagged. Recyclables should be clean, dry and free of food residue.**

## DON'T RECYCLE these items in your blue recycling cart

- Electronics
- Light bulbs
- Batteries
- Household hazardous waste
- Plastic bags, plastic wrap and plastic film
- Syringes and needles
- Styrofoam™
- Yard waste
- Pressurized tanks
- Construction and demolition debris
- Cooking and dining ware, drinking glasses, ceramics and cutlery
- Cooking oils and grease
- Medications and prescriptions
- Clothes hangers
- Rubber items
- Tanglers, such as cords, wires, hoses and tarps
- Any item smaller than your fist (these items often do not make it through the sorting equipment).

These items are not recyclable in your blue cart. Some of these items can be recycled at other locations.

- Fill your blue cart with unbagged recyclables that are clean and empty.
- Everything must fit inside the cart in order to be collected.
- Cart must be at the curb by 6 a.m. on your collection day.
- Place the cart at curbside with the arrows on the lid pointing toward the street and the handle toward your home.
- Keep your cart at least 3 feet away from your gray trash cart, mailboxes, vehicles, trees and any other obstructing objects.



Visit [HCFLGov.net/Recycling](http://HCFLGov.net/Recycling) for more information.

# Keep Recycling Tangler-Free Tampa Bay



Plastic bags, hoses, cords, ropes, clothes and other tanglers shut down the recycling process.

Recycle right and toss tanglers in the trash!

## Contaminated Recycling



## Tangler-Free Recycling



[TampaBayRecycles.org](http://TampaBayRecycles.org)



Items such as plastic bags, bagged recyclables, cords, wires, tarps, clothing and hoses jam and damage recycling sorting equipment. They should never be placed in your blue cart.

Not only can these items damage the equipment, but workers must manually remove

them, a difficult, dirty and potentially dangerous task.

Recycle plastic bags at participating grocery or big box stores, or reuse them as trash bags or pet waste bags.

Recycle right and trash these tanglers so that your efforts are not "wasted"!

# Trash the tanglers



## Going beyond the text

# Do the research

Have students look through the advertisements in the *Tampa Bay Times* for products that are promoted as environmentally friendly or safe for the environment. Have the students work in small groups to list the items and research what makes those items environmentally friendly or safe. Does the information in the advertisement match what the research indicates? Why or why not? What conclusions can they draw from their findings? Have the groups present what they have learned and discovered to the rest of the class. As an extension activity, instruct the groups to come up with environmentally friendly items that could replace some of the more harmful items they see advertised in the paper. Be sure that the students consider the items' ingredients as well as their packaging.

# Reduce Your Use Tampa Bay

[ReduceYourUseTampaBay.org](http://ReduceYourUseTampaBay.org)

Hillsborough County is partnering with the City of Tampa and Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful to reduce the use of single-use plastics in Hillsborough County.

The goal of the Reduce Your Use Tampa Bay campaign is to educate and inform the public and businesses about the environmental impacts of single-use plastic products and to furnish them with the tools needed to help combat the problem.

Food-service wares, such as single-use plastic cutlery, straws, lids, plastic bags and take-out containers pose a significant threat to our environment and to wildlife because they take hundreds of years to fully break down. Plastic trash in the water and on the shore can be mistaken for food by wildlife, injuring or poisoning them. Wildlife also can get tangled or hurt by plastic debris. According to National Geographic, plastic is estimated to kill millions of marine animals every year.

The best way to stop plastic from contaminating our waterways is to reduce our use of single-use disposable plastic products such as single-use plastic bags, straws, plastic water bottles and Styrofoam™.



## Plastic Bags

Americans use  
**100 billion**

single-use plastic bags a year, which require 12 million barrels of oil to manufacture.

The average American family takes home almost

**1,500**

plastic shopping bags a year, but only 1 percent of plastic bags are returned for recycling.

Plastic bags are used for an average of **12 minutes** before ending up in the trash.



## Skip the Straw

A disposable straw is used for an average of **10 minutes** before ending up in the trash.

**500 million** straws are used in the United States every day.

Every year, consumers in the U.S. use enough straws to wrap around the earth

**2.5 times.**

# Take the pledge

Join Hillsborough County, the City of Tampa and Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful in the worldwide movement to reduce waste from single-use plastics.

You can be part of the Reduce Your Use Tampa Bay campaign by sharing how you are reducing pollution from disposable plastic products.

Visit [ReduceYourUseTampaBay.org](http://ReduceYourUseTampaBay.org) for more information on how you can be part of the solution to plastics pollution in our community.

*Scan here to take the pledge!*





## Plastic Water Bottles

Americans purchase about

**50 billion**

water bottles per year, enough to circle the earth five times.

Every person in the U.S. purchases an average of

**13** bottles per month.

Less than

**a third** of all plastic bottles are recycled.

## Styrofoam™

Expanded polystyrene foam products (Styrofoam™), including foodware, break into small pieces that float and ultimately end up littering our oceans and beaches.

Animals can mistake Styrofoam™ for food or nesting materials, causing them harm.

Americans throw away **25 billion** Styrofoam™ coffee cups every year.

**Plastics** make up almost **90 percent** of trash in the oceans.

More than **40 percent** of plastic is used just once, then thrown away.

**18 billion** pounds of plastic trash flows into the oceans every year from coastal regions.

Plastic debris causes the deaths of more than

**a million** seabirds and more than **100,000** marine mammals every year.

Sources: Center for Biological Diversity, Earth Day Network, Ocean Conservancy, National Geographic, Smithsonian Institution, UNESCO

### Businesses for the Bay

Is your business taking steps to reduce the use of single-use plastics? Get recognized for your actions!

Businesses participating in the Businesses for the Bay single-use plastics reduction campaign receive:

- Window decal or certificate of participation
- Educational table tents and posters
- Recognition on Reduce Your Use Tampa Bay campaign website and social media

No costs, bans or mandatory reduction actions are required to join.

Become a Businesses for the Bay partner by sharing the actions you already are taking or pledge to take in the future to reduce waste from single-use plastics at

**ReduceYourUseTampaBay.org**

## Closer to a plastic waste-free planet, one business at a time.



Cut out and take to a business you patronize.



As a customer, reducing plastic waste is important to me. Every small step to reduce single-use plastics helps the environment. Please consider being part of the solution by becoming a Businesses for the Bay partner. Visit [ReduceYourUseTampaBay.org](http://ReduceYourUseTampaBay.org) to learn more. Thank you!

## Going beyond the text The plastic problem

The following two News Video activities focus on the issue of the increasing use of plastic in our lives. In these two activities, videos of a news event are presented for discussion as well as to inspire the use of evidence to support logical claims using the main ideas of the video. Students must analyze background information provided about this current event, draw out the main ideas and key details, and review different opinions on the issue. Then, students should present their own claims using facts and analysis for support.

**Go to the following lessons, watch the videos and complete the discussion questions:**

- ▶ The Oceans Are Filled with Plastic, and the Problem Might Get Worse  
<https://nieonline.com/tbtimes/videooftheweek.cfm?id=395>
- ▶ Scientists Scramble to Create Replacements for Plastic  
<https://nieonline.com/tbtimes/videooftheweek.cfm?id=440>
- ▶ Then, find *Tampa Bay Times* articles, photos, cartoons, editorials or letters to the editor focused on the same issues as the class discussion and videos.
- ▶ In a blog post or journal entry, write about what you have learned and explore some possible solutions to this growing problem.

# Household Hazardous Waste

Many of the everyday products we use in our homes are potentially harmful to humans, wildlife and the environment.

Products that contain ingredients that are toxic, flammable, corrosive or reactive are known as household hazardous waste (HHW).

Common examples of HHW include household cleaners, solvents, paints, stains, pesticides, herbicides, antifreeze, motor oil, nail polish remover, flares, propane tanks, ammunition, pool chemicals and rechargeable batteries.

Improper disposal of HHW can pollute the environment, endanger wildlife and threaten human health. All unwanted or expired HHW items should be taken to a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center for proper disposal.

Questions about HHW? Visit [HCFLgov.net/HHW](http://HCFLgov.net/HHW), call 813-272-5680, option 4, or email [PUD-SpecialWaste@HillsboroughCounty.org](mailto:PUD-SpecialWaste@HillsboroughCounty.org).

**DON'T** put HHW in your blue recycling cart.

**DON'T** put HHW in your gray trash cart.

**DON'T** pour HHW down the drain or toilet, on the ground or into storm sewers.

**DO** take HHW to a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center for proper disposal.

## Household Hazardous Waste Collection Centers

Hillsborough County makes it easy for residents to dispose of unwanted or expired HHW items. Just bring your HHW, along with a valid photo ID, to one of Hillsborough County's three HHW Collection Centers.

### Sheldon Road Household Hazardous Waste Center

Accepts HHW on the first Saturday monthly, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
9805 Sheldon Road  
Tampa, FL 33635

### South County Solid Waste Facility

Accepts HHW on the second Saturday monthly, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
13000 U.S. 41  
Gibsonton, FL 33534

### Hillsborough Heights Solid Waste Facility

Accepts HHW on the third Saturday monthly, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
6209 County Road 579  
Seffner, FL 33584

### Residents must show a valid photo ID.

HHW is accepted only during the days and times listed. Commercial or excessive quantities of waste will not be accepted.

## Items accepted at Hillsborough County HHW Collection Centers

- Aerosols
- Ammunition and flares
- Cleaning chemicals
- Gasoline and diesel fuel
- Mercury thermostats and thermometers
- Motor oil and automotive fluids
- Cooking oil
- Fire extinguishers
- Fluorescent light bulbs (limit 10 bulbs)
- Paint, stain and varnish (limit 10 1-gallon containers and five 5-gallon containers; must be sealed and not leaking)
- Paint primer, thinner and stripper
- Pesticides, herbicides and insecticides
- Pool and spa chemicals
- Propane tanks (30 pounds or less) and helium tanks (20 pounds or less) (limit 5 tanks)
- Rechargeable batteries (including Ni-Cd, lithium and lithium-ion)
- Auto, motorcycle, lawn mower and marine batteries



## Cooking Oil Recycling Effort

## Cooking Oil Recycling Effort (CORE)

Used cooking oil is also accepted at Cooking Oil Recycling Effort stations located throughout the county. Visit [HCFLgov.net/CORE](http://HCFLgov.net/CORE) for more information and locations.



## Going beyond the text

## Danger under your sink

Many of the everyday products we use in our homes are potentially harmful to humans, wildlife and the environment, and improper disposal of these items can be dangerous and deadly. Read the information about Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) on these pages. Next, watch the video DANGER! 4 Things You Didn't Know about What's UNDER Your Sink! at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QE1akvi63GU>. After watching the video, go to [HCFLgov.net/HHW](http://HCFLgov.net/HHW) for more information about the program. To add to your knowledge, do a little research about HHW on the Internet. Now that you have all of this knowledge, it is time to share what you know with everyone else in Hillsborough County through an advertising campaign in the *Tampa Bay Times*. Your campaign will include a full-page public service announcement, an editorial and a news article in the *Times* alerting people about the major points associated with HHW and how it should be properly disposed of. Share your campaign with your classmates.



# Battery disposal

Never place batteries of any type in your blue recycling cart.

**Alkaline batteries** (such as AA, AAA, C, D or 9-volt) can be safely disposed of in your gray curbside trash cart.

**Cordless power tool battery packs** (limit five per month) should be brought to a Hillsborough County Community Collection Center or Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center.

**Lead-acid batteries** found in automobiles, motorcycles, lawn mowers and boats should be brought to a Hillsborough County Community

Collection Center or Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center.

**Rechargeable batteries** (such as Ni-Cd, lithium and lithium-ion) found in cellphones, digital cameras, laptops, hearing aids, watches and keyless remotes should be individually bagged and brought to a Hillsborough County Community Collection Center or Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center.

For more information, visit [HCFLgov.net/Recycling](http://HCFLgov.net/Recycling) and click on Batteries.

# Hillsborough County Community Collection Centers

Hillsborough County operates five Community Collection Centers (CCCs) to provide residents a convenient and responsible means of disposing of items not collected curbside.

## Hillsborough County Community Collection Center locations

### Alderman Ford

(Mon. – Sat., 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.)  
9402 County Road 39  
Lithia, FL 33547

### Hillsborough Heights

(Mon. – Sat., 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.)  
6209 County Road 579  
Seffner, FL 33584

### Northwest County

(Mon. – Sat., 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.)  
8001 W Linebaugh Ave.  
Tampa, FL 33625

### South County Solid Waste Facility

(Mon. – Sat., 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.)  
13000 U.S. 41  
Gibsonton, FL 33534

### Wimauma Solid Waste Facility

(Sat. only, 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.)  
16180 W Lake Drive  
Wimauma, FL 33598

## Items accepted at Hillsborough County Community Collection Centers

1) All Hillsborough County residents, including those residing in Tampa, Temple Terrace and Plant City (must show valid photo ID to verify county residence), may drop off:

- **Electronics (limit five items per month)**
- **Paint, stain and varnish (limit 10 1-gallon containers and five 5-gallon containers; must be sealed and not leaking)**
- **Rechargeable batteries (including Ni-Cd, lithium and lithium-ion and lead-acid; must be individually bagged)**

2) Hillsborough County Solid Waste Management residential customers who pay the annual Hillsborough County solid waste assessment on their property tax bill (must show valid photo ID and Hillsborough County property tax bill\*) may drop off:

- **Electronics (limit five items per month)**
- **Paint, stain and varnish (limit 10 1-gallon containers and five 5-gallon containers; must be sealed and not leaking)**
- **Rechargeable batteries (including Ni-Cd, lithium and lithium-ion and lead-acid; must be individually bagged)**
- **Automotive tires (limit 12 per year)**
- **Concrete**
- **Furniture**
- **Household appliances**
- **Mattresses and box springs**
- **Steel**
- **Tile**
- **Treated wood**

\* Hillsborough County Solid Waste Management residential customers may download their property tax bill from [hillstax.org/services/asp](http://hillstax.org/services/asp).



# Hall of shame

Toilet seats, coolers, tarps, televisions and helium tanks are not recyclable curbside. Here are some of the contaminants that Hillsborough County residents “wish-cycled” in 2018.



## Don't 'wish-cycle' – When in doubt, throw it out!

We all want to protect and conserve resources by recycling. But attempting to recycle items that can't be recovered in your local curbside recycling program – “wish-cycling” – actually causes more harm than good.

The largest challenge facing single-stream recycling programs today is contamination. Contamination is when nonrecyclable items or excessively dirty materials are placed into the recycling stream.

For example, when dirty recyclables that still have food or liquids on them are placed into your recycling cart, they saturate otherwise good paper and cardboard – turning them from a recyclable commodity that can be sold into trash that must be landfilled or burned.

Other top contaminants include “tangles” (items such as cords, wires, tarps, clothing and hoses that get tangled in sorting equipment), plastic bags and wraps, Styrofoam™ and large plastic items such as kiddie pools, coolers and toys.

Contamination:

- Reduces the amount of quality recyclables that can be recovered and sold
- Endangers staff at the recycling facility
- Damages processing equipment
- Increases processing costs

If you're not sure if an item is recyclable or not, always discard it in your gray trash cart. When in doubt, throw it out!

## Going beyond the text Litter harms our community and waterways

This activity, adapted from NIEonline, reminds us that plastic pollution is a problem all over the world, especially in the world's oceans. Now an innovative partnership between sneaker company Adidas and an ocean conservation group is working to reduce the plastic in oceans by turning it into environmentally friendly shoes. With the conservation group Parley for the Oceans, Adidas is collecting plastic from beaches before it enters the water and turning it into stylish, “sustainable” shoes. This year, the program will produce 11 million pairs of shoes using recycled ocean plastic, more than twice as many as were produced last year. The Adidas x Parley shoes, which cost \$160 to \$220 a pair, have gotten high ratings from running groups and general consumers. Buyers are responding to the Adidas message that “Every shoe is a small contribution to the preservation of our oceans.” Many consumers want companies to “take care of the earth” as well as provide good products. As a result, many companies now promote how they are “Earth friendly.” In the *Tampa Bay Times*, find and closely read stories about companies doing this. Use what you find to create a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation showing different approaches taken by companies. Analyze the approaches and determine which you think are the most effective. Use images from the *Times* and Internet to illustrate the presentation.

# Litter harms our community and waterways

Littering and illegal dumping of trash pollute the environment, harm wildlife, increase costs to taxpayers and businesses, lower property values and threaten human health.

- Litter and trash clog storm drains and sewers, causing flooding in our neighborhoods.
- Litter and trash make their way through drains to end up on our beaches and in our waterways.
- Wildlife and pets get poisoned by, tangled in and injured by litter and trash.
- Littered open containers and debris such as tires become breeding grounds for disease-carrying mosquitoes.
- Illegal dump sites attract rodents and insects and are dangerous to children and animals.

Sources: Hillsborough County, Keep America Beautiful, Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful

# Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful



## Adopt-A-Road Program

Hillsborough County partners with Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful to combat litter. Volunteer opportunities, activities and events include:

- Adopt-A-“ \_\_\_\_\_ ” programs (groups can adopt roads, parks, shorelines and more)
- The Great American Cleanup
- Hillsborough River and Coastal Cleanup
- America Recycles Day
- Education program in Hillsborough County Public Schools

For more information, visit [keeptampabaybeautiful.org](http://keeptampabaybeautiful.org), email [info@keeptbb.org](mailto:info@keeptbb.org) or call 813-221-8733.

In partnership with:



# Waste-to-energy

Waste-to-energy (WTE) plants burn municipal solid waste – your trash – and use the heat to generate electricity. The Hillsborough Resource Recovery Facility can burn up to 1,800 tons of waste per day, producing enough electricity to power 35,000 homes. This electricity is used to power county facilities and is sold to the local electric grid.

**WTE offers many environmental benefits over landfilling trash:**



- Reduces greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change
- Conserves land by reducing the need for landfills
- Generates clean, renewable energy

WTE also offers significant economic benefits. WTE facilities generate revenue by selling energy to the local power grid and create high-paying jobs that cannot be outsourced. The average WTE plant is responsible for nearly 60 jobs!

Sources: Environmental Protection Agency, Hillsborough County, Solid Waste Association of North America, Waste-to-Energy Research and Technology Council

## The Hillsborough County Resource Recovery Facility:

Burns up to **1,800** tons of trash per day

Generates **\$16 million** per year by selling electricity to the grid

Saves **\$500,000** per year in utility costs by providing electricity to county buildings

Produces **\$450,000** in revenue per year by recovering and selling recyclable metals



### Going beyond the text

## Spread the word

One way to spread the word about the importance of recycling is to host a Make a Difference Day at your school. This event involves hands-on activities that engage students in learning about reducing waste, reusing materials, recycling, composting, and conserving natural resources and energy. Activities could include conducting a “waste-free lunch” or swapping school supplies, clothing and toys to reuse. Have the students in your class come up with different ideas to help students and staff get excited about the school having a waste reduction program and helping the environment. Look through the *Tampa Bay Times* for ways to promote your ideas. Using the formats you see in the *Times*, advertise the event in the school newspaper. Also, create a promotion for the morning announcements. Share your promotions with your class.

## How does waste-to-energy work?

**1. Trash is picked up curbside and delivered to the Hillsborough County Resource Recovery Facility (RRF).**



**2. At the RRF, trash is incinerated to produce electricity. This electricity is used to power county facilities and is sold to electric utilities.**



**4. The remaining ash is landfilled.**



**3. Metal is removed from the ash, recycled and sold.**