

Sullivan County Dept. of Solid Waste & Recycling

A Users Guide to Recycling & Waste Disposal Programs in Sullivan County, New York

Practically every municipality in the country has its own unique requirements for waste disposal and recycling practices. Sullivan County, New York is no exception, and this guide was developed to help residents, businesses and visitors successfully navigate aspects of our waste management program. A few key points to keep in mind:

1. Decide whether you want convenient curbside collection of trash and recyclables (you will need to hire a private hauler for this service) or do-it-yourself drop off at a transfer station.
2. Recycling is mandatory in Sullivan County, either with private haulers or direct drop off at transfer stations. This means recyclables **MUST** be separated from trash prior to discarding trash. Recycling saves not only natural resources and landfill space - it also saves you money! Please do your part. Handy recycling instructions are available at solid waste facilities and by contacting the Department of Solid Waste & Recycling.
3. Private haulers using Sullivan County Solid Waste Management Facilities must be licensed, and offer separate recycling collection services to their customers. When shopping for a waste hauler, make sure they are in fact licensed in Sullivan County, and request their recycling instructions up front, in order to avoid confusion. Firms *not* using Sullivan County facilities must also comply with mandatory source separation recycling requirements, as it is the law.
4. We **DO NOT ACCEPT** regulated medical waste, hazardous materials, explosives, ammunition, liquid waste or radioactive materials.
5. We are not able to accept brush, tree parts or yard waste at our facilities. Compost these items on your property or contract with a landscaping service for removal instead.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. Does Sullivan County provide curbside collection of garbage and recyclables?

A. No. Sullivan County DOES NOT provide waste or recycling curbside collection service. You will need to hire a private sanitation company to provide this service for you. Check the Sullivan County telephone directory under "Garbage Removal" for firms that offer sanitation services. Please remember that recycling is **mandatory** in Sullivan County, and that **all** sanitation haulers must offer collection of separated recyclables (sometimes at added cost) to you. See below for more about recycling!

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- Q. Does Sullivan County have a place to take garbage and recyclables to so I don't have to hire a private hauler?**
- A. Yes. Sullivan County operates six conveniently-located recycling & waste transfer stations across the County. For instructions, fees, directions and hours of operation, please call the Department of Solid Waste & Recycling at 845-807-0293.
- Q. Help! I need recycling instructions. Where can I find them?**
- A. Copies are on hand at our transfer stations, or call the Recycling Hotline at 845-807-0291 to have one mailed to you. Additionally, recycling instructions and sanitation information have been posted on Sullivan County's web site; updates shall be made periodically.
- Q. Do bungalow colonies, camps, businesses and apartment complexes have to recycle too?**
- A. Yes.
- Q. How come my private hauler charges me a big deposit for a summer garbage container rental?**
- A. Unfortunately, bad prior experiences with customers who have not paid their final bills before leaving Sullivan County at the end of the season have left some private haulers with large uncollectable waste disposal fees. Private haulers may require a container deposit to ensure their interests are safeguarded. Renters often pay a similar security deposit for housing.
- Q. Why can't I just burn my garbage, instead of paying to have it hauled away and buried in a landfill?**
- A. Besides being downright **illegal** in New York State, burning garbage increases the risk of brush fire / fire damage to property, pollutes the air with dangerous chemicals, and really annoys the neighbors - some of whom may have respiratory ailments that can be worsened by smoke. Instead of burning, do the right thing and safely (and *legally!*) dispose of your garbage. It is your responsibility, after all!
- Q. Why does garbage cost so much to get rid of?**
- A. Sanitary disposal of waste is an expensive proposition, but its one that many people unfortunately take for granted. All aspects of solid waste treatment and disposal are regulated by New York State, which maintains very high standards of environmental compliance. Garbage should not be thought of as a worthless item of discard; it is a product that contains materials which must be managed according to their nature for safety. Permitted sanitary landfills, recycling centers and incinerators are costly technologically advanced facilities that offer this capability.
- Q. Can I bury garbage in my back yard?**
- A. *That is* definitely **NOT** a good idea! Garbage often contains hazardous substances that can leach into groundwater, plus the odor of decomposing trash attracts bears, rats, skunks and other pesky critters to people. It is best to leave proper solid waste disposal to professional operators.

Q. My transfer station closes at 2:45 PM during the week, but some transfer stations (with scales) close precisely at 2:30 PM. What time does the station *actually* close?

A. Operations close to scale traffic 15 minutes before the actual facility so that customers can unload their vehicles and be on their way by closing time. State regulations require punctual operations, so late customers will be asked to leave with instructions to return again during normal business hours. For your convenience we suggest that you arrive well before the scales close, in order to avoid being denied entry to the facility.

Q. Our company pays a private hauler to provide a garbage dumpster for our facility. What do these charges pay for?

A. The fee you pay your private hauler for container service covers several things - container rental, labor, fuel, the tipping fee for waste disposal at the landfill, and the service of hauling provided to your business. Private haulers work hard to ensure your facility remains clean and inviting throughout the year!

Q. Its 4:00 PM and the transfer stations are closed. May garbage be left at a closed transfer station gate?

A. No! Illegal dumping is the act of depositing waste in an unapproved location or in an unlawful manner. Garbage dumped outside of a closed solid waste facility not only creates an eyesore for the public, but waste may be strewn about by animals, creating a public health issue. The only legally approved places to dispose of waste in Sullivan County are at transfer stations during normal operating hours - or by using licensed private haulers for your sanitation needs. Proper disposal of solid waste is a critical responsibility - please plan ahead to make certain you comply with applicable laws.

Q. Is Single Stream Recycling available in Sullivan County?

A. Yes! Single Stream Recycling (or SSR for short) means that all empty & clean “*convenience recyclables*” - metal (steel and aluminum) cans, glass bottles, aseptic juice/milk boxes, plastic containers and paper – all get mixed together in one recycling bin at transfer stations or in curbside collection programs for easy handling. Please reuse plastic bags (or recycle at supermarkets) as these are not recyclable in the Single Stream program.

Please note that Single Stream Recyclables – and **garbage** - MUST **NEVER** BE MIXED *TOGETHER* in the same container. Recyclables still must be kept separate from garbage to be in compliance with the County’s solid waste management regulations. Recently Sullivan County constructed a new facility that accepts SSR as a way to increase recycling by making it a very convenient thing to do. This facility opened in 2011. Please help us to help you by recycling as much as possible in Sullivan County!

Q. Does Sullivan County operate a Municipal Compost Facility for food and yard waste?

A. No. However, the County does provide extensive backyard composting information and instructions to individuals and businesses. Composting at home or office is not difficult, can save you money on waste disposal costs and produces a valuable soil amendment (finished compost!) as an added benefit. Please contact our office at 845-807-0291 for more compost information.

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Q. I have lots of old oil-based paint and chemicals to get rid of. How can I dispose of this stuff in Sullivan County?

A. Sullivan County offers no-charge Household Hazardous Waste disposal events to residential haz-mat generators during the year. We also publish a list of hazardous material removal & recycling vendors that may be contracted for larger-quantity and commercial cleanouts. Please contact our office to learn more!

Q. Latex paint is non-hazardous, and you do not accept it during the Household Hazardous Waste collection events. How can I dispose of this stuff properly in Sullivan County?

A. Latex paint is non-hazardous, and may be disposed of as regular household trash, provided the paint has been fully solidified first before throwing it away. This is done by adding inexpensive cat litter to liquid latex paint and allowing the paint to harden fully before throwing it away. Please contact our office if you have any questions.

Q. What can I do with unwanted electronics like old TVs and computers?

A. Electronic items (“E-Waste”) are recyclable at all Sullivan County Recycling Stations. New York State has banned the disposal of electronic devices (TVs, computers, monitors, printers, scanners, laptops, tablets, FAX machines, VCRs, keyboards, etc.) effective January 1, 2015. There is a \$15 fee for CRT monitors. Please contact our office if you would like additional information about E-Waste recycling!

Q. Food scraps take up a lot of room in my trash can – do you have a program to reduce that?

A. Americans discard about a pound of organics (approximately 30% of the municipal solid waste stream in the US) including uneaten food, per person per day. Backyard composting is one way to reclaim this material, but preventing food waste in the first place raises many more interesting possibilities. We offer easy backyard compost instructions, and with our food production, food preservation and commercial kitchen food preparation partners at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Sullivan County, food *waste* could be a thing of the past! Please contact our office if you would like more information about managing organics in Sullivan County. A rind really is a terrible thing to waste!

Q. Is there anything Sullivan County can't take for recycling or disposal?!

A. Glad you asked! Actually, even though Sullivan County Recycling & Transfer Stations can handle many recycling & disposal needs, New York State Regulations, health & safety concerns, market conditions and physical limitations often affect what may and may not be recycled or disposed of at Sullivan County Solid Waste Management Facilities. When in doubt, its always best to check with Department of Solid Waste & Recycling personnel first regarding restrictions or special handling instructions before making a trip to the transfer station.

Some materials that we are unable to accept, or which have alternate disposal methods, include: yard waste (tree branches, grass clippings, leaves), friable asbestos, explosives, ammunition, regulated medical waste, radioactive materials and hazardous materials (we can ONLY accept, upon prior registration, HHW during our approved collection events – and at NO OTHER TIME).

Q. What is the best way to properly dispose of unwanted medications in Sullivan County?

A. Pharmaceutical Collection Events and secure Drug Drop Boxes available at many local police stations are the best options for the proper disposal of pills and solid-form medications in Sullivan County. Additionally, some local pharmacies offer unwanted medication collection & disposal services – check with area pharmacies for details. If these options are not available, thoroughly mix unwanted pharmaceuticals with water and cat litter, old coffee grounds or soil and discard with regular household trash. Never flush unwanted medications down the sink or toilet as these compounds will contaminate the environment.

Q. How do I properly dispose of injection syringes (“needles”) and Sharps in Sullivan County?

A. New York State Public Health Law (PHL) Article 28 Healthcare Facilities registered in New York State are required to accept (at no cost) properly-packaged, unwanted medical Sharps (needles, lancets) from household generators for safe disposal. These facilities include hospitals and nursing homes. Prior to disposal, consult local hospitals or nursing homes for appropriate instructions before transporting Sharps for disposal. Special Sharps containers and hours of acceptance may be specified for these items as well.

Q. How do I recycle plastic bags and plastic film overwrap in Sullivan County?

A. NYS Law requires certain stores that previously provided single-use plastic bags to customers continue to accept them and film overwrap back for recycling. Return clean plastic bags and film overwrap to stores (like supermarkets & home improvement stores) in NYS that provide them to customers. Bag recycling bins should be conveniently located at the front of stores & markets that are required to provide them.