



# Frequently Asked Questions

Get answers to your FAQs about recycling and garbage.

## What is the purpose of this directory?

Recycle Today promotes recycling in Pinellas County by informing residents where and how they can recycle. Each city selects its own program, which means there are 25 different recycling programs in Pinellas County. To find out what items you can recycle, look for your municipality on [pages 5-12](#) (alphabetical listing), or see [page 13](#) if you live in an unincorporated area.

## Why should I recycle?

Recycling is one of the best ways you can contribute to a sustainable future. Throwing away an item that can be recycled is a waste. Recycling has both local and global benefits. Locally, it saves our limited disposal capacity by reducing how much garbage must be buried in our landfill. Globally, recycling reduces pollution and conserves both energy and natural resources.

## What are the "3Rs"?

Recycling is one of "3Rs" which cut waste and help the environment:



**Reduce** = decrease the garbage you generate



**Reuse** = use an item again instead of throwing it away



**Recycle** = collect usable materials separately from trash so they can be transformed into new products

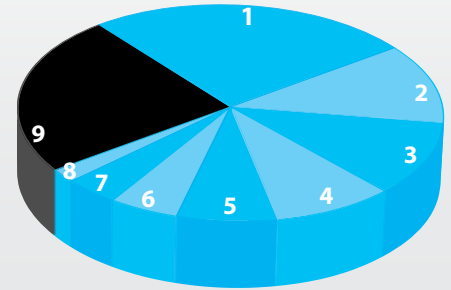
## How much do we recycle?

During the last decade, we have maintained a countywide recycling rate of about 30%.

## How much could we recycle?

Florida has a new goal to recycle 75% by 2020. Based on what is received at the Solid Waste facility (see pie chart), most of what we throw away could be recycled. Your efforts truly can make a difference!

**76%** of the incoming trash at the Solid Waste facility could be recycled!



- 1 - Paper (26%)
- 2 - Food (12%)
- 3 - Bottles & cans (11%)
- 4 - Construction debris (9%)
- 5 - Yard waste (7%)
- 6 - Electronics & chemicals (5%)
- 7 - Clothing & fabric (4%)
- 8 - Metals (2%)
- 9 - Items not easily recycled such as dirty diapers or tissues (24%)

The pie chart is based on 2007 waste composition data for solid waste disposed of at Pinellas County Solid Waste.

## Pinellas County Solid Waste Facility

### Where does garbage go?

The garbage that you do not recycle is received by the Pinellas County Solid Waste facility, except for construction and demolition debris which is handled primarily by the private sector. We use an integrated solid waste management approach that is anchored by a Waste-to-Energy (WTE) facility.

### What is the WTE facility?

Pinellas County uses a [Waste-to-](#)

[Energy facility](#) to process most of our garbage. The burning of the garbage generates enough electricity to power up to 45,000 households and reduces the volume of material to be buried in the [landfill](#) by 90%.

### What goes in the landfill?

Most of the garbage received at Pinellas County Solid Waste is processed in the Waste-to-Energy facility, but the landfill is still required for the following items:

- Waste that cannot be burned
- Waste when the WTE facility is down for maintenance
- Ash from the WTE process which replaces soil as a cover material in the landfill

### Are tours available?

Yes. Any citizen or group may request a [free guided tour of the Solid Waste facility](#). Also, free bus transportation is available for qualifying educational groups.

### What does the recycle logo mean?

The three “chasing arrows” in the recycle logo symbolize the three stages of recycling:



- **Collect** recyclables, such as cans or bottles.
- **Process** materials (recycle) into new products.
- **Buy** the recycled products.

Recycling is a continuous cycle that recovers usable materials from consumers and returns them to the manufacturing stage, where they replace raw natural resources. By recycling, you reduce the need to cut trees and extract minerals from the earth to make the things we use every day.

### What does “close the loop” mean?



When you buy a recycled product, you “close the loop” by completing the recycling process. You can help even more by choosing products made with post-consumer recycled materials.

### Are there recycling options for apartments, condos or businesses?

Yes. Visit our A to Z Guide at [pinellascounty.org/recycle](http://pinellascounty.org/recycle) and select [On-site Recycling Options](#) from Quick Find Lists. Also, see [page 19](#) for information on business waste reduction and recycling.

### What plastic items can be recycled in Pinellas County?

All recycling programs in Pinellas County accept plastic bottles. The cities of [Gulfport](#), [Oldsmar](#) and



[Tarpon Springs](#) also collect plastics #1-7. See our A to Z Guide at [pinellascounty.org/recycle](http://pinellascounty.org/recycle) for ways to recycle other plastic items such as [grocery bags](#), egg cartons, [newspaper sleeves](#), [packing materials](#) and [plant pots](#).

### Can I recycle glass?

Yes. There are recycling options for glass including 17 cities that accept glass in their curbside recycling programs (see pages 5-13), plus 28 drop-off sites (see the [bottom of the map on page 3](#)).

### Can I recycle fluorescent light bulbs?



Yes. There are convenient local options to [recycle fluorescent tubes and compact fluorescent bulbs](#) (CFLs). Visit our A to Z Guide at [pinellascounty.org/recycle](http://pinellascounty.org/recycle) for information. Never throw fluorescent light bulbs in the garbage since they contain mercury.

### Can I recycle motor oil?

Yes. There are over 60 locations in Pinellas County that recycle motor oil at no charge. Pour motor oil in a clean plastic container with a lid, such as a milk jug. Drop off oil at a local mobile collection (see page 21), the Household Electronics and Chemical Collection Center (see page 20) or at an EnviroPartner business, such as Advance Auto Parts or Autozone. See [pinellascounty.org/utilities/oil](http://pinellascounty.org/utilities/oil) for a complete list of oil recycling sites, including store addresses and hours.



### Can I recycle cooking oil?

Yes. There are [six drop-off sites for liquid cooking oil](#) (see pages 5-13). Please do not pour oil or grease down the drain because these products can clog pipes and lead to sewer backups.

### Can I recycle at the beach? (NEW)

Yes. There are over 350 bright blue [containers at local beaches for recycling aluminum cans and plastic bottles](#). Beachgoers can easily drop items off as they arrive or leave.



### How do I dispose of medicines?

Never flush unwanted medicines because wastewater treatment is not designed to remove them. The Sheriff’s Office provides [Operation Medicine Cabinet drop-off containers and collection events](#) for proper disposal. For details, visit our A to Z Guide at [pinellascounty.org/recycle](http://pinellascounty.org/recycle).

## What’s new in 2012?

### Bottle caps

You can now recycle plastic bottle caps. First remove the cap from the bottle, then place the bottle and the cap in the recycling bin. Removal of the cap ensures the bottle is free from liquids, allows the bottle to be crushed and prevents injury from “exploding” caps.

### Pizza boxes

You can now recycle pizza boxes. Previously the boxes were banned due to possible food residue. Recycle the box only if it is clean—with no pizza, wax paper or grease stains. If part of the box is greasy, tear it off and recycle the rest.

### Plastics #1-7

Residents of [Gulfport](#), [Oldsmar](#) and [Tarpon Springs](#) can now recycle plastics #1-7 which includes bottles, jugs, tubs and a variety of other containers. Be sure the item is marked with a recycling triangle and a number.