



Recycling Frequently Asked Questions

Will you be extending the household recycling collection services beyond the current pilot areas, and what are my other recycling options?

The decision to expand is always going to be informed by the current economic climate, and also ongoing evaluation of viable alternatives, which is being undertaken as part of the imperatives of the new legislation (i.e. the National Environmental Management Waste Act and the Consumer Protection Act). There are still lessons we are learning from the pilot project (Think Twice), as well as initiatives that may emanate from the Extended Producers Responsibilities (EPR) regulations, which requires manufacturers to reduce, reuse and increase their recycling recovery rates.

For all recycling facilities visit the [Recycling services page](#), alternatively you could use our [Waste Recyclers Map](#) to find out if you live in a Think Twice area.

How do I dispose of used compact fluorescent lights (CFLs), batteries as well as other household chemicals?

Small volumes (limit of 50kg / 50l per person per day) of household hazardous waste such as cleaning waste, lighting waste and used oil of residential origin can be taken to the [Athlone Refuse Transfer Station](#) or the [Bellville Integrated Waste Management Facility's](#) hazardous household waste drop-off. Alternatively, some retail stores like Pick 'n Pay, Builder's Warehouse, Makro and Woolworths has boxes for safe disposal of CFLs and batteries. For further information, go to our [Hazardous waste page](#).

Why is waste minimisation and recycling better than the current waste disposal and landfill solutions?

It is a more responsible and sustainable way to manage our waste/resources. Waste items can be an economically viable resource if channelled in the right way through the right business mechanism, and can be used to benefit the economy. Also, there is less negative environmental impact if waste is diverted from landfill (landfills generate methane, a potent greenhouse gas).

How do citizens benefit from waste minimisation and recycling?

[Recycling](#) creates a lot of economic opportunity for those interested in starting a recycling business, whether it is collection, sorting or processing.

For some residents, the satisfaction of knowing they are doing something to save the environment is often enough (i.e. indirect benefit of less negative impact on environment).

For businesses or complexes, by reducing their waste quantities, they could save on their waste removal bill by registering as a [waste minimization club](#).

What are the major obstacles involved in improving household waste minimization in South Africa?

In many municipalities in South Africa, the infrastructure does not yet exist to ensure an efficient value chain from the collection of recyclables, sorting and sale to the end markets, making the current systems of recycling expensive, and thus not always economically viable.

How could waste minimisation and recycling best be implemented in South African households?

The most important way households can effectively minimize their waste, is to first try and avoid generating waste or unnecessary waste. And because we cannot avoid the generation waste in totality, composting all the green waste and as much food waste by means of a combination of worm composting and traditional composting is another measure we can employ. This would greatly minimize the burden on the landfill sites. In addition, households can wash (with used water) and set aside all recyclable items, stockpile them at home for as long as possible, then drop them off at the closest recyclable drop off site.

What can I do with the recycling I collect at my home?

The City has [drop-off facilities](#) that are spread across the entire municipal area, where residents can take their recyclable materials.

Alternatively, you can access the [City's recycling web portal](#) to find out which private recycling collectors are near your area where you can either drop off your recyclables or they do household collections.

Where can I learn more about waste management law within the City of Cape Town?

Click on this link to find the [City of Cape Town Waste Management By-Law](#).

Why do we have to sort our recyclables?

Keeping it separate makes it easier to sort into the different categories, in preparation for when it is sent to the recycling industries. Each market has certain specification for the type of material and amount of contaminants allowed. These standards have to be met in order for the recyclables to be accepted.

Why can't I recycle everything?

Just like any other business, recycling is a business with the economics' driven by supply and demand, so in order for anything to be recycled successfully, it must have an end market. Therefore, if there is no end market or buyer, then unfortunately the recyclable materials will not be recycled successfully.