

Multi-family Residential Recycling Toolkit for Residents

Purpose of this Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to help you tackle waste reduction in your own space. Whether you are just getting started with recycling, or looking to take the next step, this toolkit will help you along your waste-reduction journey.

What you will find in this toolkit:

1. [Information on what you can recycle and where to take your recycling](#)
2. [Dealing with hazardous waste: do's and don'ts](#)
3. [Ideas for small-space solutions for storing your recycling](#)
4. [The Waste Reduction Hierarchy](#)
5. [Suggestions for reducing and/or diverting your food waste](#)
6. [How to build a community in your complex with recycling parties](#)



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Six Steps To Improve Your Recycling Practices

1. Figure Out What to Recycle (and Where)

The first step to achieving good recycling is to know what to recycle and where to take it. Most buildings will have some kind of recycling program in place, whether it is a cardboard-only program or one that resembles the RecycleBC program.

→ **Check your buildings' bins or recycling area** for posters to identify what you can recycle in your building.

→ **If the recycling options at your building are limited**, you can drop off your clean and sorted recyclables at one of several [Recycle BC Depot locations](#) throughout the Central Okanagan. You can also bring glass, styrofoam, soft plastics, and refundables to these depots.

Curious about what happens to your recycling once it's taken away? To learn more about what happens to recyclables, check out RecycleBC's [What Happens to My Recycling](#).

2. Learn the Do's and Don'ts of Hazardous Waste

There may be items you need to dispose of that are not accepted in either your building's recycling or garbage programs, such as *household hazardous waste*. This is defined as, "Leftover products that contain corrosive, toxic, flammable or reactive components." Household hazardous wastes can be flammable and/or contain toxins such as mercury, lead, and cadmium, which pose risks to human health and the environment if disposed of incorrectly.

Household hazardous waste include:

- Paint
- Cleaners, degreasers, etc.
- Aerosols
- Pesticides, fertilizers, pool chemicals
- Electronics (anything with a power cord including: cell phones, smart devices, used cables, tvs, computers, home office equipment, small appliances, etc.)
- Batteries
- Fluorescent light bulbs and tubes
- Thermostats, smoke detectors, etc.
- Propane tanks



For more information on what is and is not accepted as household hazardous waste, please download the RDCO Household Hazardous Waste Brochure [here](#).

✓ **DO:**

- Keep hazardous materials in original containers.
- Secure any hazardous liquids in containers with tight-fitting lids; keep upright to prevent spills.
- Label your waste as clearly as possible (to the best of your ability).

✗ **DO NOT:**

- Dispose of any of the above-listed materials in either your garbage or recycling.
- Mix chemicals.
- Pack items in large plastic bags.

Where do I take my household hazardous waste?

Household hazardous waste can be collected and brought to various locations across the RDCO; check [here](#) for where to drop off different hazardous materials.

A note on tires...

Please bring *used tires* to local tire shops, the **Glenmore Landfill** or the **Westside Residential Waste Disposal & Recycling Centre**.

A point about sharps...

Hypodermic needles should never be disposed of in the garbage or recycling. These *sharps* pose a serious bio-hazard to anyone that may come into contact with them after disposal, including residents, maintenance staff, haulers, truck drivers, waste auditors, recycling sorters and landfill staff. It is important for residents to understand proper disposal procedures. Interior Health (IH) supports the Central Okanagan to keep sharps out of the garbage by:

- Accepting used sharps at all IH public health, primary care, mental health, and substance use sites.
- Providing needle disposal boxes for personal use at these **Kelowna** locations:
 - Interior Health Community Health & Services Centre (505 Doyle Ave)
 - Kelowna RCMP Detachment (1190 Richter St)
 - Outreach Urban Health Centre (455 Leon Ave)
 - Rutland Community Policing Office (115 McIntosh Rd)
- Many pharmacies will accept sharps for proper disposal: please call ahead to confirm that your pharmacy will accept sharps from you.
- **For more information, please visit Interior Health's Safe Needle Disposal [website](#).**

3. Tiny Space? Find Solutions for Storing Your Recycling

Living in an apartment, condo, or townhome can mean having limited storage space for your garbage and recycling, but there are many creative storage solutions out there, several of which are **DIY** (“Do It Yourself”). Here are some ideas:

DIY Pantry Recycling Organizer¹



Transform a Drawer into a Recycling Centre²



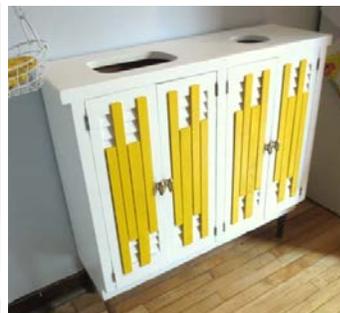
Milk Crates for your Recycling³



Easy DIY Home Recycling Centre⁴



Create a Hidden Recycling Storage Station under a Bench^{5 6 7}



¹ <https://www.manmadediy.com/1255-how-to-diy-pantry-recycling-center-makeover/?chrome=1>

² <http://jeffgilmanwoodworking.com/portfolio-item/storage-ideas/>

³ <https://www.diyncrafts.com/29250/repurpose/20-diy-home-recycling-bins-that-help-you-organize-your-recyclables>

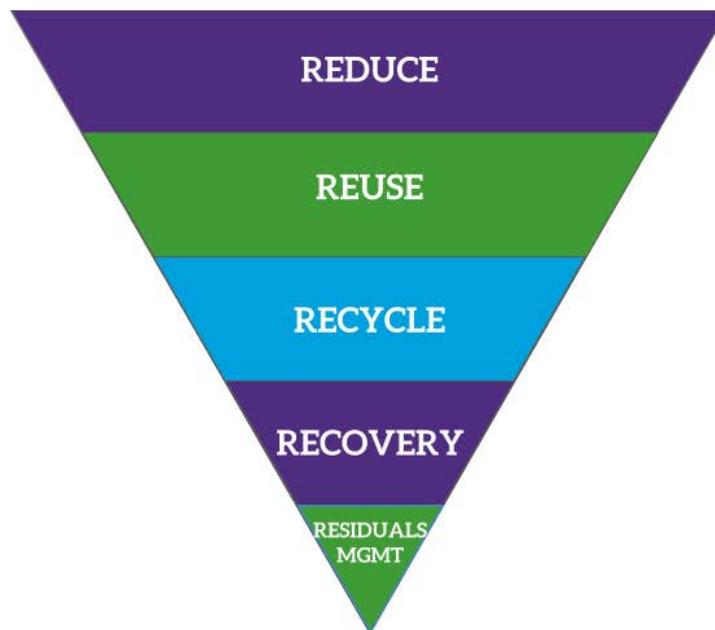
⁴ <http://www.laurasplans.com/2014/10/easy-diy-home-recycling-center.html>

⁵ <https://www.ana-white.com/community-projects/double-bin-trash-and-recycling-bin>

⁶ <https://projectophile.net/2014/06/04/glamorous-up-cycled-recycling-center/>

⁷ <https://www.diyncrafts.com/29250/repurpose/20-diy-home-recycling-bins-that-help-you-organize-your-recyclables>

4. Follow the 5 R Waste Reduction Hierarchy



According to BC's 5 R [pollution prevention hierarchy](#), *Recycle* is one of the last options for reducing your waste.

Reduce waste where you can

This can include refusing to create waste in the first place or repurposing items. Why not start with the following ideas?

Refuse

- Buy food “unpackaged” where possible (loose fruit versus in mesh bags), or buy in bulk to minimize the total amount of packaging purchased.
- Bring reusable shopping bags with you when you shop, wherever you shop.
- If you prefer to bag your produce, bring your own reusable produce bags, rather than using the single-use plastic bags available in produce sections.
- If you forget to bring your reusable bags, consider if you really need one:
 - Can you bring your items to your car loose in the shopping cart?
 - Can you carry the items you've purchased, using your pockets, jacket, purse, or backpack?

- Ask the staff for a box - boxes are not always available or easily accessible, but it doesn't hurt to ask, as most buildings will have a recycling program for cardboard.
- Keep a waste-free lunch kit (utensils and a cup or mug should get you started) in your car, your desk, or your purse/backpack/briefcase to use for lunches on the go.
- Choose to sit-in at coffee shops and restaurants instead of taking your coffee or food to go. If you must take out, BYO (Bring Your Own) mug or food containers (check with the establishment beforehand to confirm they are accepting these types of containers).
- Request "no straw" while dining out or "no utensils, condiments, or bags" when ordering takeout.

Reduce

- Combine online shopping orders with friends or neighbours to lessen the amount of packaging materials coming into your space.
- Shop at stores committed to selling no or low waste products, and shop in bulk where you can.

Repurpose

- Use old takeout or other food containers (e.g. yogurt, hummus, etc.) to store odds and ends. These could become a place to store pens, craft supplies, nuts and bolts, etc.
- Use old jars or cans, mugs or bowls to plant flowers or herbs.
- Cut up old t-shirts to use as rags.
- Use newspapers as gift wrap.

Reuse items instead of disposing of them

- Wash out takeout containers and reuse them to pack lunches or store leftovers in the fridge.
- Bring clean, intact plastic grocery bags for reuse on your next grocery store trip.
- Take part in the RDCO's [Trunk Sale](#) - the Central Okanagan's largest Reuse Event/Garage Sale.
- The RDCO's [Repair Cafe](#) events can give your broken items a second chance. Volunteer specialists are on hand to help you repair small appliances, electrical items, bikes, sewing or mending clothing, ceramics, computers, clocks, and much more.
- Donate items in good condition to charity shops.
- Sell items in second hand markets, like Castanet and Facebook Marketplace, or at consignment shops throughout the Central Okanagan.

- Hold an annual clothing swap with friends and family: everyone can bring the clothing they no longer wear and swap it for new-to-you items.
- While it can be enticing to invest in new containers or fancy, zero-waste items, consider reusing what you already have (they may not be as pretty, but they are free and functional):
 - Reuse your old, plastic dish soap bottle when buying dish soap in bulk.
 - Reuse intact Tupperware or takeout containers for leftovers and other items (be sure to avoid heating these types of containers to extend their life and protect your health).
 - Gather together a few utensils from your drawer and create a DIY utensil travel kit for on-the-go eating.

Recycle all recyclable materials, either at your building or at the depot

Remember, *Recycling* is one of the last options for reducing your waste! However, when you need to recycle, go back to [Step 1: Figure Out What to Recycle \(and Where\)](#), which will help you find which recyclables go into which stream and where the nearest depot location is.

5. Reduce Your Food Waste & Get Composting

Reduce your food waste

- **Eat what you buy.** Making a weekly meal plan and grocery list will help ensure that you buy what you need and that you use what you buy.
 - **Did you know:** This can help you save money by lowering your grocery bills too.
- **Save your veggie scraps.** Store vegetable scraps in a container in your freezer; when the container is full, throw the contents into a pot of water and let it simmer away for a few hours to make homemade soup broth.
- **Store leftovers** in clear containers at the front of your fridge, or on a designated shelf so they do not get ignored. Plan to eat leftovers for lunch or have one night a week to eat leftovers, either as they are or re-imagined in a new dish. Leftover vegetables are great for making salads or a stir-fry.
- **Check out [Love Food, Hate Waste Canada](#)** for great tips on how to reduce your food waste.

Divert the rest of your food waste from the landfill

- **Get a vermicomposter:** Vermicomposting is composting aided by worms, where the worms process the food scraps into a rich soil amendment. This is an indoor solution that takes up minimal space and can be used year-round. To create your own worm-composter, visit the [RDCO website](#).
- **Phone-a-friend:** If you live in a condo but have friends or work colleagues with a backyard composter or chickens, ask if you can give them your kitchen waste.
- **Check out gadgets** that can convert your food waste to compost right in your home.
- **Drop off your compost (or have it picked up):** There are several businesses in the Central Okanagan that accept compost drop-offs (or that offer compost pick-up for a fee). See below for contact details and more information.

Business Name	Phone Number	Website
Chickpeace Zero Waste Refillery Kelowna, BC	(250) 317-7217	https://chickpeaceplanet.com/pages/compost-with-us-1
FILL Kelowna's Refill Store Kelowna, BC	(778) 692-3455	https://fillkelowna.ca/products/compost-program
LC Compost Lake Country, BC	(250) 575-2808	https://lccompost.wixsite.com/website

6. Engage your Community

Once you have made strides in improving your own waste reduction and recycling efforts, why not engage your community to take things one step further?

Improve existing recycling programs

- Speak with your landlord, property manager or strata council about making improvements to your building's recycling program:
 - Suggest expanding your existing recycling program to take additional items, or about starting new programs for depot items or compostables that are serviced by commercial haulers.
 - Offer to put up signage to help residents better understand the recycling program in place.

Start a Community Depot Recycling “Car Pool”

- Speak with your building’s management about starting a building-wide Depot Recycling “Car Pool” program. Collect depot items in a central location and have a short list of volunteers (e.g. at least eight volunteers; each one would only need to make one trip every two months) who can take the items to the depot on a weekly basis. These volunteers could be thanked with a small gift card, or by keeping the depot money.
- If you are making regular trips to the depot, perhaps you have space to bring your neighbours’ recyclables. Ask a neighbour that does not have a vehicle, or team up with a neighbour to rotate weekly trips to the depot.

Host a Recycling Information party

One way to raise awareness about the importance of recycling, proper sorting, or reducing food waste, is by hosting a Recycling Information party, a vermicomposting workshop, or by starting a Green Team. These events serve multiple purposes: they build community, provide an opportunity to socialize with neighbours, and can be a no-fuss way to educate building residents on how they can tackle their own waste. *Be sure to check with your landlord, property manager, or strata council before hosting an event to ensure you’ve received the proper permission to promote the event and gather together.*

Here are some steps you can take to throw a successful Recycling Information party.

1. **Collect information on the recycling program** at your building. This can be obtained from your landlord, property manager, or the hauler (check your bins for the haulers’ name). Copies of this information can be handed out at the event.
2. **Gather your neighbours together** in a common space and invite each resident to bring some recycling with them. Ask your landlord or property manager if there is any available budget for snacks, gift cards, or other small incentives to encourage participation.
3. Together, **sort your recycling**. This will depend on the recycling program your building has in place.
4. **Combine items that are destined for the depot** and elect a champion to drop-off those items.
5. **Pool any items that are “hard to recycle”** or better suited for a second-hand shop.
6. **Write down any questions** you may have, but have not found an answer to and email the RDCO’s Waste Reduction Office.