Two changes for 2020

Plastic bottle caps

The first item is part change, part reinforcement of an existing message. The reinforcement? Please remove all caps from plastic bottles/jugs and dispose of them in your trash. Caps and lids on plastic containers pose a safety hazard for our employees. Employees attempt to remove caps/lids from containers prior to baling because the baling process can cause those caps to pop off from the bottle/jug at a very high velocity. Additionally, all plastic containers need to be empty so as to not contaminate the baler with unnecessary liquids. So please, remove and dispose of all caps and lids from your plastic containers before recycling them. Procedurally, earlier this year Area Recyclers began baling all plastic for processing instead of the long standing practice of granulating the plastic for sale. There are many reasons for this change but chief among them is the prolonged slump in the recycling markets. There are many reasons for the slump, but recycling is still a vitally important part of being an environmentally responsible society.

2020 curbside collection calendars

The second change for 2020 is in how Area Recyclers is distributing the curbside recycling collection schedules. Since the inception of curbside recycling, collection calendars have been printed and placed into curbside recycling bins beginning in November. This has proved to be a sometimes futile effort to distribute the calendars due to wind, rain, or homeowners simply not noticing the calendars. So, in an effort to be more efficient and more environmentally friendly with the curbside collection calendar, beginning this year Area Recyclers will not be placing the calendars in curbside bins. Instead, we ask residents to please download the calendar from our website www.dmcwaste.org or from our Facebook page (simply visit Facebook and type “Area Recyclers” in the search bar). Additionally, if you like and follow Area Recyclers on Facebook, we send out weekly reminders of which area we are collecting curbside recycling in. Facebook followers are also alerted to recycling giveaways, Recycled 2 You store promotions, and other timely information such as holiday collection reminders. If you are not a computer, tablet, or smart phone user we will have printed calendars available for pick up at the Area Recyclers office or local city hall.

DMC Regional Waste Commission holiday schedule

Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Day are holidays for the DMC Regional Waste Commission and all agency locations and offices will be closed to the public.

For the Thanksgiving holiday, Burlington area residents who normally have recycling collected on Thursday will have their recyclables collected on Friday, November 29th. Please have recyclables placed curbside in your Area Recyclers container by 7:30am to ensure collection. Friday’s regular route is not affected and normal hours and collection resume on Friday.

For the Christmas holiday, Burlington area residents who normally have recycling collected on Wednesday will have their recyclables collected on Thursday, December 26th. Please have recyclables placed curbside in your Area Recyclers container(s) by 7:30am to ensure collection. Thursday and Friday routes will be collected as scheduled and are not affected.

For the New Year’s Day holiday West Burlington and Winfield residents who normally have their recyclables collected on Wednesday will have their recycling collected on Thursday, January 2nd. Thursday’s regular route is not affected.
What Do I Do With it Now?

“What do I do with it now?” is a very common question we hear in the solid waste management and recycling field. It reveals the lack of foresight we are all guilty of as consumers. We buy stuff in the here and now. We usually don’t bother to think about what we will do with the product, or its packaging, or its batteries when we are through with it. Many of us have at least begun to think about recycling our containers and packaging in a comparative sort of way. This brand’s packaging looks easier to recycle than that brand, or this brand uses less packaging than that one. But for too many of us consumers, that way of thinking is intermittent, or overruled by other types of product preference.

In the solid waste field, we are on the receiving end of everyone’s shortcomings in stewardship. The default option for getting rid of something is to put it in the trash. That often includes things that could have been reused or recycled, or things that were not really needed in the first place. It also includes stuff that got contaminated or filthy. But let’s face it – developing a culture of forward-thinking could greatly reduce what goes in the landfill. And this is not just about packaging, it’s about products themselves.

Product designers consider many factors in the development of new consumer items. Some even use lifecycle analysis to consider the economic and environmental costs from natural resource extraction through the finished product and even through distribution and retail. All too often, that is as far as the lifecycle analysis goes. Once the consumer buys the item, its final destiny is the consumer’s problem. True lifecycle analysis should include the consumer and post-consumer phase as well. We have had many, many opportunities to learn this as a society. Here are some examples: Nuclear power is clean (carbon-free) and efficient… until you have to dispose of the waste. Electric cars avoid carbon-based fuels and dirty emissions, but how do you recycle or dispose of the giant batteries at the end of their life?

Wind turbines produce clean electric energy, but the 100 to 200 foot blades have to be replaced every 20 years. How do you do that? Turns out, the blades are an amalgam of fiberglass, resin, epoxy, and a few other types of materials combined in a way that makes them virtually indestructible. Which raises some other questions – If they are indestructible, why do they need to be replaced? If newer blades are slightly more efficient or productive, shouldn’t that value be balanced against the cost of managing the discarded blades?

Well, that’s the consumer’s problem, not the designer’s. True lifecycle analysis at the design phase should have included final disposal or recycling, but, as happens way too often in the U.S., it didn’t.

Canada and the European Union have forced some positive change in product development by holding producers responsible for the ultimate or final disposition of their products. The technical term for this approach is Extended Producer Responsibility, or EPR. In some cases, EPR results in the manufacturers taking back items at the end of their useful life. In others the producers establish or support a third party take back program. In the U.S., EPR has only become the norm with a few kinds of consumer items – rechargeable batteries, automotive batteries, and tires. There are also a few industry EPR initiatives involving various kinds of light bulbs, mattresses, latex paint, and motor oil. Some states, including Iowa, have taken the initiative by instituting deposit systems for beverage containers.

These EPR programs do effect front-end design and product development, and help ensure that lifecycle analysis includes the entire cycle – through final destination. And true lifecycle analysis not only reduces what winds up in the landfill, but also relieves pressure on consumers wanting to choose the most environmentally benign options for their discards.
It’s not just a courtesy, it’s a policy

The fall season means the leaves are coming down and the trees, if not already, will soon be bare. This is a friendly reminder that all loads coming to the landfill, including leaves, grass, tree limbs/branches/twigs and sticks, must be secured and covered.

A sign posted at the entry to the DMC Regional Landfill reminds visitors of the landfill’s cover-your-load policy. All vehicles must have loads tarped and secured when driving down any roadway or risk a citation from local law enforcement and risk being cited a $10 surcharge for unsecured loads at the landfill. Driving with loose loads can create dangerous road hazards and shows little respect to others on the road.

For questions about the signage or the tarping/cover your load policy, please contact the DMC Regional Waste Commission at 753-8126 or 1-800-216-8126.

A note from Santa’s elves at Area Recyclers...

- Wrapping & tissue paper
- Bows
- Ribbon
- Christmas Cards
- Plastic toy packaging & wire ties
- Styrofoam of any type
- Shirt & Gift boxes
- Christmas ornaments
- Christmas lights (can be taken to Lowes for recycling)
- Some fruitcakes

Wishing you a wonderful Holiday Season! If you have any questions, please contact us at (319) 753-8126, 1-800-216-8126, or ask us on Facebook “like” Area Recyclers!

Curb side collection calendars...

For 2020 will be available online only. Residents can download a collection calendar from our website www.dmcwaste.org or from our Facebook page keyword “Area Recyclers”. Collection calendars will not be placed in curb side bins. Residents without a computer or smart phone may stop in at Area Recyclers for a printed calendar.

If you have questions about the holiday collection schedule or about the 2020 curb side collection calendars, please contact Area Recyclers at (319) 753-8126 or email us at feedback@dmcwaste.org.
What is Recycled 2 You?

A: Recycled 2 You is a small gift shop located inside the Area Recyclers building. The shop features a changing variety of unique new products made from recycled materials. It is not a thrift shop or re-sale shop.

How much do items cost at Recycled 2 You?
A: There are items for sale for as little as $4 for bicycle magnets to $45 for deluxe bird-feeders. The store’s purpose is to raise awareness of what can be done with recycled materials, not to generate huge profits.

What’s the most popular item sold at Recycled 2 You?
A: That’s a tough question to answer because everyone has different tastes. The birdfeeders and birdhouses made from recycled plastic (and manufactured here in Iowa!) are always a good seller and great gift item. We recently stocked up on bottle lights and wine bottle faces. The recycled baskets, items made from bicycle parts, and recycled glass wind chimes, sun catchers, and ornaments are always a hit. The sports fans have been very happy with our selection of jersey purses, and mini-bags for Hawkeye, Cyclones, Cardinals, Cubs, Twins, Vikings, and Chiefs fans. The jewelry and lamps made from recycled skateboards have been catching on, too. Stop in soon to see our complete collection!

What are your hours? Phone number?
A: The store is open Monday-Friday 8am-4pm, and the second and fourth Saturdays 8-11:30am. We can try to accommodate special hours as needed during the Christmas shopping season. Our phone number is (319) 753-8126.

Happy Holidays
from the staff at the
DMC Regional Waste Commission