

## Recycle Cart Audits

Allied Waste and Master Recyclers from Linn and Benton Counties undertook an interesting challenge during the last two weeks of August. Teams worked through neighborhoods ahead of the recycle truck to check and label recycle carts based on their content. Cart audits were done in Albany and Lebanon to get some information about what residents are putting in their carts and how Allied Waste can better communicate information about recycling to it's customers.

Carts were tagged with a green Recycle Star tag or an orange Recycle Reminders tag. Customers who had appropriate material in their cart or just one item that shouldn't be there were given a Recycle Star. Those who had material that shouldn't be in the cart were given a reminder with specific items checked to help them make corrections.

### NUMBERS:

- 781 carts were audited
- 324 carts or 41% received Recycle Stars.
- 457 carts or 59% received Recycle Reminders.
- 252 carts or 32% contained plastic bags or plastic film, which can't be recycled with commingled recycling.
- 56 carts or 7% contained styrofoam.
- 218 carts or 28% contained plastics that we do not accept for recycling.
- 17 carts or 2% were so contaminated that they could not be emptied as recycling.
- 2 carts (less than 1%) were full of yard debris.
- 38 carts or 5% contained large cardboard that can pose problems in the truck hopper.



### Conclusions:

**1. Recycling is Clean!** This may seem obvious but proper recycling yields clean material and a clean cart. Containers should be rinsed for recycling so that no liquid or food waste runs out. Food, especially greasy food contaminates paper, so use common sense when deciding if that pizza box goes in the cart or not. If it is just a grease spot or two, that's okay, but cheese and large grease spots are too much. It's always okay to rip off the greasy parts and include the clean part of the cardboard. Following these guidelines will insure that recycling carts smell clean too.

**2. Carts only need to be set out at the curb as needed.**

Again, this is simple, but many of the 781 carts audited were less than 1/4 full. Save time and energy by only setting carts at the curb when 1/2 or more full. Allied Waste is glad to empty carts each week, but fewer stops mean fewer emissions from our trucks, so it's good for our environment and easier for customers to put carts out only when needed.

**3. Allied Waste customers are eager to Recycle.**

It was obvious from the audits that most people are trying to get recycling right and want to recycle. Check the website at [www.sanitation.com](http://www.sanitation.com) later this fall for updated information on recycling.

## Cart Placement Guidelines



Be sure to leave at least **4 feet** between carts so the truck arms can get between them to empty, as in the photo above. Also remember to place carts at least 6 feet from vehicles, basketball hoops, mailboxes and other obstacles.

## Yard Debris Reminders

Leaves will soon be falling and that means full yard debris carts. Fall is a great time to get a quick refresher on what goes in these carts. It's simple if you remember the rule "If it grows, it goes!" All material that goes in the yard debris cart was once a growing organic material. That means things like: grass clippings, leaves, garden and yard debris (not the broken pots), medium sized and smaller tree limbs, cut flowers, hedge trimmings and windfall fruit.

**Just remember that we can't accept plastic bags of any kind in the yard debris.** Please empty bags into the cart so that material is loose. An easy way to remember this is to think about the kind of material you would like to have in your mulch at home. If little pieces of plastic don't sound like something you would like on your flower beds, it shouldn't go in the yard debris either.

## Cardboard Recycling



When recycling cardboard, flatten it and cut to make sure it fits in the cart and that the lid will close. Large pieces that stick out of the top of the cart can make a mess on the ground when the cart is emptied. The picture of the cart on the left has cardboard that is *too large* to be emptied. If you have lots of cardboard, bring it to our recycle center on Industrial Way or put it in the cart as space allows. We appreciate your help to make recycling as efficient as possible.



## Household Hazardous Waste Event

The annual Household Hazardous Waste Event for Albany will take place on Friday, October 16 & Saturday, October 17 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Residential customers can bring anything labeled hazardous, poison, caustic, flammable, danger or corrosive. That includes products like:

Pesticides/Insecticides  
Solvents  
Automotive Liquids  
Hazardous Cleaners  
Batteries  
Paint  
Electronics (no appliances please)  
Mercury Thermometers  
Flourescent Light Tubes



Disposing of these materials properly helps to keep drinking water clean by ensuring that they don't end up in the watershed. Proper disposal prevents unnecessary risk to drinking water systems. The Oregon DEQ suggests the following:

- Once a drinking water supply is contaminated it can be very expensive, *EPA estimates that, on average, it is 27 times more expensive to clean up contamination than to prevent it!*
- If you are a Linn County resident, you very likely live near an area that supplies public drinking water—help protect our valuable drinking water resources by participating in this free event!

### Calendar

October 16 & 17, 2-4 p.m. Annual Household Hazardous Waste Event. (see information above)

December 28, 2009-January 8, 2010  
Christmas Tree Pick-up  
(trees must be bare, with lights and decorations removed, no flocked trees.)

**Holiday Schedule:** we work all holidays. Driver may come by early, so have carts out the night before.

### Reuse/Recycle

There are many ways to recycle and provide materials for reuse, other than through Allied Waste. One of the local agencies that does a great job with metals is Burcham's Metals. Find out what metals they take or buy, how to prepare it, how to clean it and what you can purchase from them at: [www.burchamsmetals.com](http://www.burchamsmetals.com) Another great place to recycle items that can't be recycled in the tan cart is the First Alternative Co-op in Corvallis. Find out more at: [www.firstalt.coop](http://www.firstalt.coop)

### Waste Reduction Tip

Set a goal to reduce waste this year when packing school or work lunches. By packing sandwiches, chips, fruit and other goodies in reusable containers rather than plastic bags, one person can reduce waste by saving more than 600 plastic bags on average. Multiply that by your whole family and you might start to save some money too. You'll double your efforts by using empty containers you already have at home.



### Contact Us:

Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
1214 SE Montgomery St.  
Albany, Oregon 97322  
at: 541-928-2551 or  
Harrisburg: 541-995-6414  
After hours, leave a message and we will call you back.  
or find us on the web at:  
[www.sanitation.com](http://www.sanitation.com)  
for on-line bill pay option:  
go to [www.disposal.com](http://www.disposal.com)