

LRGVDC Regional Solid Waste & Recycling Guide

Cameron
County

Hidalgo
County

Willacy
County



Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
311 N. 15th Street
McAllen, Texas 78501
(956) 682-3481
www.lrgvdc.org

Funding provided by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality



Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC)

Since its formation in 1967, the LRGVDC has served as a link between federal and state programs and a means for local units of government to join together in developing services and strategy, thus eliminating duplication of effort and encouraging economic efficiency.

Membership in the LRGVDC includes cities, counties, school districts, special districts, educational institutions, and others.

Mission Statement

“Encourage and permit local units of government to join and cooperate with one another and with representatives of major economic interests, citizen groups and groups experiencing economic distress to improve the health, safety and general welfare of their citizens and to plan for the future development of the region”

Where does the Trash Go?

Where does the trash go after you throw it in the can? Does it magically disappear? No!

The Landfill—After garbage leaves your home, it goes to a landfill. A landfill is a large space where trash is buried in the ground. Landfills must receive a permit from the State and are safe when they are operated correctly. However, it is very expensive to operate a good landfill because of the rules and regulations needed to make them safe. We need to reduce what we toss out so landfills don't fill up fast.

Dumps— They are illegal places to dispose of garbage and are harmful to the environment. They pollute water, attract rodents carrying diseases, breed germs: all of which can make humans and animals sick.

Waste Hits Your Wallet

Americans throw away 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour

Texans spend over \$1 billion annually on solid waste disposal services for over 22 million tons of garbage

Every ton of paper recycled saves approximately 17 trees

At least 20% of Texas' solid waste is from grass clippings, leaves and other landscape wastes.

Recycling one aluminum can save the equivalent of enough energy to run a TV set for three hours

The U.S. produces enough plastic film each year to shrink-wrap the state of Texas

Approximately 27 landfill years remaining in the Lower Rio Grande Valley

We must Reduce waste in landfills to Save space and natural resources

What the Data Shows about Landfills

There are 218 open landfills in Texas and 186 of these landfills were considered active (accepting waste) in 2005. In the LRGVDC Region there are 5 active landfills, 4 in Hidalgo County and 1 in Cameron County.

Per-capita rate—For 2005, total disposal in the state was 29.67 million tons, the per capita disposal rate in Texas was 7.11 pounds per person per day which is above the EPA national average for 2003 of 4.5 pounds per person per day. The total disposal in the LRGVDC Region for 2005 was 1,042,880 and the per capita disposal rate was 5.21 pounds per person per day.

Landfill capacity—The total remaining landfill capacity in the State of Texas at the end of 2005 was 1.845 billion cubic yards. Based on reported compaction rates, this volume would hold 1.22 billion tons of waste and serve for 41.05 years. For the LRGVDC Region the estimated remaining capacity as of 2007 is 8,509,686 tons, which would translate to 27.11 remaining years of landfill space.

LRGVDC Open Landfills

Facility/Permit #	County	Status	Total Facility Acres	2007 Intake (Tons)	Compaction Rates	Remaining Capacity		Estimated Life
						Tons	Cubic Yards	(years)
Brownsville – 1273A	Cameron	Active	275	285,024	1,218	19,396,769	31,860,659	42
Edinburg - 2302	Hidalgo	Active	174	100,000	1,020	12,500,000	25,000,000	67
Edinburg – 956B	Hidalgo	Active	254	371,257	1,400	8,115,151	11,578,788	17.7
BFI/Donna – 1948	Hidalgo	Active	135	473,814	1,021	2,523,542	4,743,276	5.30
Peñitas - 1727	Hidalgo	Active	44.07	3,574	1,000	12,970	25,580	3.58

Trends Analysis

Since 1986, there have been over 700 MSW landfills closed in the State of Texas, most due to more stringent requirements of the Federal Resource Conservation & Recovery Act (RCRA) Subtitle D.

In the late 1990's the permitted number of facilities stopped decreasing and the state's reserve capacity has shown a steady increase. This is due in part to improvements in technology which has nearly doubled the average compaction rate. There has also been a move away from smaller community landfills towards larger regional landfills.

In the LRGVDC Region there are 38 closed landfills and only five (5) open landfills.

Approximately 27 landfill years remaining in the Lower Rio Grande Valley

Who makes the difference? You do!

Why is it important to Recycle?

- ◆ Recycling is a way to keep waste out of landfills.
- ◆ Recycling recovers valuable raw materials. If we make aluminum cans from recycled cans, then we don't have to disturb the environment by mining new materials.
- ◆ Recycling reduces pollution and saves energy that would have been used for making products from raw materials.



How can one person make a difference?

- ◆ If not you, who? If we combine our efforts together, we can make a difference.

What would happen if everyone stopped recycling?

- ◆ Disposing of garbage would become much more expensive. Since everything would be thrown away, landfills would fill up fast. We would have to build more landfills to accept the new garbage.
- ◆ The supply of any material is limited. Many natural resources would quickly disappear. If we keep filling our landfills with aluminum, plastic and steel, there will eventually be no more of those materials left.



What can be Recycled? Almost Everything!

Electronic Waste

Electronic waste is becoming one of the fastest growing waste because we are replacing older models at rapid rates. The key to reducing e-waste in our landfills is to **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Re-buy and Restore**. Many companies now accept old computers and cell phones when you purchase a new one. The City of McAllen also has a drop-off center that offers e-waste recycling. Their Recycling Center is located at 4101 N. Bentsen, please call 681-4050 for more information.



Do not “over-buy” Electronics
Buy only what you need.

Heavy Trash

Heavy trash is an item that cannot be put into your garbage can. Many local communities offer collection for heavy trash once a month. Many communities also schedule Clean-up Events for people to take these items at least twice a year. Check with your community to find more information.



Storm Water

Did you know it is illegal to dump waste and pollution into storm drains? Anything poured into the storm drain makes its way into the Arroyo Colorado and Lower Laguna Madre. Storm drains are used to prevent flooding from excess rain water. Storm water receives no treatment, so if it is contaminated by pollutants it stays polluted. Storm drains can also be clogged by waste or debris that is dumped into them, causing flooding.



Dirt in Drain
Turtles Complain!

Plastic

Plastics have become the most used material in the World since 1976. Bottled water being the single largest growth area among all liquids, which include consumable and non-consumable. Although plastic bottled water is the largest growth area in bottled beverages only about 12 percent were recycled in 2003. The recycling rate for plastic soft drinks is around 30 percent. Three major reasons for recycling plastic bottles are 1) less petroleum is consumed, 2) the litter factor and 3) the plastic recycling industry faces a shortage because much of the recycled plastic is being exported to China.

Plastics can be numbered from 1 through 7, the numbers signify the type of plastic that the product is made from and it also identifies if it is recyclable. Number 1 (PET) is often used in milk jugs or detergent bottles. It is easily recycled by breaking it apart into small chips which are washed, dried and reused. Some common end uses for recycled #1 plastics are plastic pipes, lumber, flower pots, trash cans, or containers for motor oil or cleaning supplies. Number 2 (HDPE) plastics are commonly used in food packaging, as well as water and soda bottles. Number 2 plastic is one of the most used recycled plastics and is commonly used



in textiles. Some companies make their carpet using 100% recycled #2 plastic. Number 2 plastic is also spun like cotton candy to make fiber filing or fabric for things like pillows, quilts or jackets and a large quantity goes back into the bottle market. Plastic films (LDPE) are often used for plastic bags, shrink wrap and grocery bags. Film plastics are washed and reformed or used to make new products. Some end uses for recycled LDPE plastic films are plastic tubing, agricultural film and plastic lumber. The types of plastic that can be recycled depends on where you live. The most common types of recyclable plastics are #1 plastic, #2 plastic and film plastic.

Grass Cycling

Grass Cycling is the natural recycling of grass by leaving clippings on the lawn when mowing. Grass clippings quickly decompose, returning valuable nutrients to the soil. Composting is another great way to recycle yard waste.

- * Grass Cycling saves time, money and protects the environment.
- * Labor time is reduced since there is no bagging or the need to dispose of clippings.
- * Grass clippings add beneficial organic matter (free fertilizer) to soil and produce health, green lawns.
- * Grass Cycling also reduces the amount of yard waste disposed in landfills.
- * No! Grass clippings do not cause thatch, grass roots are the primary cause of thatch.
- * No! Grass Cycling does not spread lawn disease, improper watering and fertilizing are the primary cause of disease spread.
- * No! Grass Cycling will not make a lawn look bad, if lawn is properly mowed, watered and fertilized grass cycling can produce a healthier-looking lawn.

Yard trimmings are 20% of what is sitting in landfills in the Lower Rio Grande Valley

Compost

WHAT IS COMPOST?

Composting is the natural process of decomposition and recycling of organic material into a humus rich soil amendment known as compost. Compost is one of the most valuable resources for beautifying your landscape, and it is virtually free. Leaves drop from trees. Grass clippings are left after mowing the lawn. Plants and animals die, over time these organic materials break down or decompose. The rich, dark-brown, crumbly, soil-like material that results is called compost. Finished compost also has a pleasant smell.

WHY COMPOST?

Recycling the organic waste of a household into compost allows us to return badly needed organic matter to the soil. In this way, we participate in nature's cycle, and cut down on garbage going into landfills. Composting also provides a way not only of reducing the amount of waste that needs to be disposed of, but also of converting it into a product that is useful for gardening, landscaping, or house plants.

Compost can save your money

- Reduce trash
- Provides free soil amendment
- Retains soil moisture & saves on water bills

Composting can improve our environment

- Turns waste into a valuable resource
- Saves limited landfill space
- Recycles nutrients back into the soil

Compost can help your garden

- Feeds the soil
- Prevents soil erosion
- Improves yields of fruits, vegetables, flowers and herbs

Mulch will slow water loss, reduce competition from weeds and grasses, will moderate soil temperature and will provide a small amount of "nutrients".

Compost helps the soil absorb and retain nutrients and moisture, and protects plants from diseases and pests.

Compost Programs in the LRGV Region:

City of McAllen Recycling Center
4101 N. Bentsen Rd., McAllen, TX
(956) 681-4050
Compost Facility - (956) 688-3278

Price Guide

Compost	Regular \$15.00 per cubic yard Premium \$20.00 per cubic yard
Mulch	\$15.00 per cubic yard
Delivery Fee	\$20.00 per load (minimum of 14 cubic yards)

Wholesale Prices

For purchases over 50 cubic yards

Compost	\$ Negotiable
Mulch	\$ Negotiable
Delivery Fee	\$ 20.00 per load or negotiable

City of Brownsville

900 FM 802, Brownsville, TX
956-831-3641

Several smaller cities have Composting Programs and

Price Guide

Compost	\$45.00 per ton
Mulch	\$25.00 per ton

chipped material for cities and parks projects and also have it available for their citizens at their Parks and Recreation Dept., Recycling Centers, etc.

Some of the cities include:

City of Alamo - (956) 787-0006
City of La Feria - (956) 797-2261
City of Port Isabel - (956) 943-9654
City of San Juan - (956) 702-6945



Recycling Drop Off Stations

More information available at the
LRGVDC Web Site

Cameron County	
Facility	Types of Material
Brownsville Recycling Center 308 East Elizabeth Brownsville TX 78520 (956) 541-9501	Newspaper, office paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, plastic bags, aluminum cans
Brownsville Scrap Paper 5850 FM 511 Brownsville TX 78520 (956) 838-1999	Computer paper
City of Brownsville Landfill 9000 FM 802 Brownsville TX 78520 (956) 831-3641	Used motor oil, used oil filters, used tires, aluminum cans, tin or steel cans, ferrous metals (steel, iron), white goods (non-reusable large appliances)
City of Harlingen/Proud Recycling Drop-off Site 1006 South Commerce Harlingen TX 78550 (956) 427-8824	Used motor oil, car batteries, rechargeable batteries (non-NiCd), newspaper, cardboard, computer paper, #1 plastic (PETE), #2 plastic (HDPE Colored), #2 plastic (HDPE clear), packing peanut reuse, aluminum cans, tin or steel cans, plastic bags, magazines and catalogs, brown paper bags, chipboard, white office paper, Christmas trees, telephone books
El Zapato Loco 6224 Padre Island Highway Brownsville TX 78520 (956) 831-2087	Aluminum cans
El Zapato Loco 310 West Van Buren Harlingen TX 78550 (956) 423-0139	Aluminum cans
City of Port Isabel Recycling Center 217 E. Hickman Port Isabel TX 78578 (956) 943-6631	Cardboard (folded), newspaper, office paper, gallons of milk, juice bottles, coke bottles, water bottles, detergent and shampoo bottles, aluminum cans, grocery bags
Town of South Padre Island 108 W. Retama South Padre Island TX 78597 (956) 761-1025	Aluminum cans, tin cans, card board, newspaper and any type of plastic bottles (laundry detergent plastic jugs are not included)

Hidalgo County	
Facility	Types of Material
City of Alamo Drop Off Site 423 North Tower Road Alamo TX 78516 (956) 787-8321	Used motor oil, newspaper, mixed paper, telephone books, computer paper, aluminum cans, tin or steel cans, Christmas trees
City of Edinburg Recycling Center 3102 South Business 281 Edinburg TX 78539 (956) 292-2133	Used motor oil, car batteries, newspaper, cardboard, mixed paper, computer paper, #1 plastic (PETE), #2 plastic (HDPE colored), #2 plastic (HDPE clear), aluminum cans, tin or steel cans, magazines and catalogs, white office paper and telephone books
City of McAllen Recycling Center 4101 North Bentsen Road McAllen TX 78504 (956) 681-4050	Used motor oil, car batteries, newspaper, cardboard, paper-board, mixed paper, telephone books, computer paper, #1 plastic (PETE), #2 plastic (HDPE Colored), #2 plastic (HDPE clear), aluminum cans, tin or steel cans, ferrous metals (steel, iron), toner cartridge, magazines and catalogs, brown paper bags, metal clothes hangers, nonferrous metal, chipboard, aerosol cans, white office paper, drink boxes, aseptic containers
City of San Juan Recycling Center 323 West 1st San Juan TX (956) 702-6428/6429	Used motor oil, paper, plastic, newspaper, cardboard, aluminum, telephone books
City of Weslaco 3101 South Border Weslaco TX 78579 (956) 968-9623	Newspaper, cardboard, aluminum, tin, phone books, used motor oil
Master Fibers Inc. 103 North I Road Pharr TX 78577 (956) 783-0774	Paper, card board (office waste only)
Weslaco Scrap Metal 512 N. Midway Weslaco TX 78596 (956) 968-5461	Aluminum cans, tin or steel, iron, copper, brass, batteries

Willacy County	
Facility	Types of Material
Willacy County Recycling Center 3 Miles South Highway 77 Raymondville TX 78580	Cardboard, aluminum, paper

Citizen Collection Stations

Cameron County

Harlingen
 Harlingen Transfer Station
 3700 E. Harrison
 Harlingen TX 78550
 (956) 216-5300



*Donna
 Citizen Collection Station*

Hidalgo County

Precinct #1
 Donna Citizen Collection Station
 Mile 4 1/2 North East of FM 493
 Donna TX 78537
 (956) 968-8733
 Mercedes Citizen Collection Station
 Mile 1 East and 6 North
 Mercedes TX 78570
 (956) 968-8733
 Monte Alto Citizen Collection Station
 Ash Street
 Monte Alto TX
 (956) 968-8733
 Sunset Park Citizen Collection Station
 Mile 11 North and Mile 1 1/2 West
 Mercedes TX 78570
 (956) 968-8733

Precinct #2
 El Gato Citizen Collection Station
 Corner of Border and El Gato
 Alamo TX 78516
 (956) 283-9496



*El Gato
 Citizen Collection Station*

Precinct #3
 Pct. #3 Landfill Citizen Collection Station
 Military Highway
 Peñitas TX 78576
 (956) 279-2203
 Trospen Road Citizen Collection Station
 7 Mile Line & Trospen
 Mission TX 78573
 (956) 279-2203



*Trospen Road
 Citizen Collection Station*

Precinct #4
 Doolittle Citizen Collection Station
 1101 N. Doolittle
 Edinburg TX 78541
 (956) 383-3112

Stop Illegal Dumping

Have you ever thrown your household garbage into a vacant lot; along a road; or into a ditch? If you answer yes to this question, you've dumped your garbage illegally. Litter and illegally dumped garbage are public health hazards. Children playing around illegally dumped litter can get hurt by broken glass, exposed metal, and other dangerous materials. Rats, snakes, mosquitoes, bees, and other pests can live in the garbage and transmit disease to humans. Rotting food attracts flies and may contain germs that can make people sick. Harmful chemicals and other materials that are dumped can contaminate our water. *If you dump it, you'll drink it!* Litter and illegal dumping are *public safety* problems. Dumping in draining ditches can cause flooding. If the ditches are full of garbage or other material, water cannot flow properly.

The Law

Under the Texas Health and Safety Code the following are violations:

- * A person who dumps litter in a place other than an approved solid waste site;
- * A person who transports litter to a place other than approved solid waste site for the purpose of disposal;
- * A person who received litter for the purpose of disposal in place other than an approved solid waste site;
- * An unauthorized person who dumps litter in a dumpster or similar receptacle.

The Penalties

- * **Class C Misdemeanor**
Solid waste or litter, which weighs 5 lbs. or less
Penalty: \$500 fine.
- * **Class B Misdemeanor**
Solid waste or litter, which weighs more than 5 lbs. but less than 500 lbs.
Penalty: 180 days in jail and/or \$2,000 fine.
- * **Class A Misdemeanor**
Solid waste or litter, which weighs 500 lbs. to 1,000 lbs.
Penalty: 1 year in jail and/or \$4,000 fine.
- State Jail Felony**
1,000 lbs. or more

What can you do with your garbage?

Be responsible for your garbage. Dispose of it properly.

Reduce

Reduce the amount of garbage you produce by buying brands with less packaging. Buy products in bulk quantities or buy refills. When there is less packaging, there is less garbage.

Reuse

Instead of disposable products, buy things that can be washed and reused. Find other uses for things that you may be ready to throw away.

Recycle

Many communities now have recycling centers. If your community does not have one, help start a recycling center in your area. Call your community leaders to find out where your recycling center is and what kinds of recyclable items it accepts.

Re-Buy

Buy products made from or packaged in recycled materials. Look for bargains at thrift shops, consignment stores, garage sales, and classified ads. Avoid buying non-recyclable items and find out what items local recyclers accept.

Report illegal dumping by contacting your local Solid Waste Enforcement Officer

- Cameron County Sheriff - 956-554-6700***
- Hidalgo County Pct. 1 - 956-968-8733***
- Hidalgo County Pct. 2 & 3 - 956-581-6800***
- Hidalgo County Pct. 4 - 956-383-3112***
- Willacy County - 956-689-3393***



Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
311 N. 15th Street
McAllen, Texas 78501
(956) 682-3481
www.lrgvdc.org



Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
12100 Park 35 Circle
Austin, Texas 78711-3087
(512) 239-1000
www.tceq.state.tx.us

Region 15 - Harlingen
1804 W. Jefferson Avenue
Harlingen, Texas 78550-5247
(956) 425-6010