

Energy City Insights – Earth-Friendly Cleaning and Recycling Tips

As the weather turns warmer, many are working on cleaning projects and hoping to declutter and organize spaces, especially after being home more than normal this spring. While it is great to get rid of items and dispose of them properly, right now there are added challenges in doing so. The City of Elk River cancelled the Spring Clean Up Day event in April due to concerns about COVID-19, but we are hopeful we can provide a safe event this fall. Until then, here are some tips about recycling what you can and storing items at home until you can properly recycle or dispose of them.

Recycle and Donate

- Properly recycle and donate what you can! Check with local thrift stores and donation organizations to see what they are accepting and when they will be open to the public if they are not already. Do not leave items outside of closed organizations – this is problematic and unsafe.
- Recycle at home what you can but be sure you are recycling the correct items. Our residential haulers in Elk River have seen an increase in recycling which is great, but also an increase in contamination from items that cannot be accepted. If you're not sure if something is recyclable, it is best to throw it in the trash. Stick to recycling cardboard (always break it down), paper, plastic and glass.
- Utilize Elk River's [Recycle Coach](#) app! It has information about local companies that accept items you can't recycle/dispose of curbside in your carts.

Household Hazardous Waste

- Household Hazardous Waste events are hosted by Sherburne County for the collection of household chemicals, paint, batteries and more. Unfortunately, no events are scheduled for this spring but continue to safely store your materials at home until another disposal event is offered.
- Be sure to follow safety instructions on all chemical and hazardous substances. Store them on high shelves, away from children and pets.
- Keep items in the original packaging/containers, this allows them to be properly disposed of once you're able to get rid of them.
- Store corrosive, flammable, reactive and poisonous products on separate shelves, away from heat, and where will stay dry. Do not ever mix or combine such chemicals.
- Never pour hazardous waste in the sewer, on the ground or attempt to dispose of them in the trash – this can be incredibly dangerous.

More resources about hazardous waste can be found the [Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's website](#).

Household Hazards During COVID-19

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has information about additional hazard concerns during this time, specific to resident inadvertently creating health problems when trying to disinfect surfaces with household chemicals. For example, mixing bleach and ammonia can create toxic fumes. Check out more information on this timely topic by [clicking here](#).