



**LRGVDC  
Regional Solid Waste  
& Recycling Guide**

Cameron  
County

Hidalgo  
County

Willacy  
County



Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council  
301 W. Railroad  
Weslaco, Texas 78596  
(956) 682-3481  
[www.lrgvdc.org](http://www.lrgvdc.org)

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## 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.

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### 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 all of our trash go? Does it magically disappear? Not unless you recycle and learn how to reduce waste.

**The Landfill**—After garbage leaves your home, it goes to a landfill. A landfill is a large space where trash is buried into the ground. Landfills must receive a permit from the state. Landfills are mandated by the state to use the layering process when disposing of trash. In order to conserve landfill space it is necessary to reduce the amount of waste we produce.

**Dump sites**— They are illegal places to dispose of garbage and are harmful to the environment because they are not mandated or regulated by anyone. They pollute water, attract rodents carrying diseases, breed germs: all of which can make any living creature ill.

## Wasteful Ways Affects Your Wallet!

Recycling 1 ton of paper saves 17 mature trees, 7,000 gallons of water, 3 cubic yards of landfill space and 2 barrels of oil



Every ton of paper recycled saves approximately 17 trees

If only 1,000 people stopped their junk mail, we could save up to 150,000 trees each year



\$1 out of every \$11 Americans spend for food goes for packaging

Each of us uses at least one 100 foot tall Douglas Fir trees in paper and wood products per year



Recycle your yard waste too!

One gallon of used motor oil contaminates 1 million gallons of water

**We MUST Reduce waste in order to conserve our natural resources!**

# What the Data Shows about Landfills

There are 295 open landfills in Texas and 197 of these landfills were considered active (accepting waste) in 2009. In the LRGVDC Region there are 5 active landfills, 4 in Hidalgo County and 1 in Cameron County.

**Per-capita rate**—For 2009, total disposal in the state was 32.26 million tons, the per capita disposal rate in Texas was 7.1 pounds per person per day which is above the EPA national average for 2009 of 4.5 pounds per person per day. The total disposal in the LRGVDC Region for 2009 was 1,207,707 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.

## Landfills left in the RGV

Facility/Permit #	County	Status	Total Facility Acres	2007 Intake (Tons)	Compaction Rates	Remaining Capacity		Estimated Life (years)
						Tons	Cubic Yards	
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

## Landfill Data

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.

**About 1% of U.S Landfill space is full of disposable diapers, which take 500 years to decompose.**

# Environmental Education is the Key!



## Why is it important to Recycle?

- ◆ Recycling is one way to keep waste out of landfills.
- ◆ Recycling recovers valuable raw materials. If we make 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 new products. It also harvests new energy that is wasted.



## 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 at a very fast rate. We would have to build more landfills to accept more new garbage.
- ◆ The supply of any material is limited. Many natural resources would quickly disappear. If we keep filling our landfills with valuable resources such as aluminum, plastic, steel and paper, there will eventually be no materials left.

# How Can I Minimize My Carbon Footprint?

## Electronic Waste

Electronic waste is becoming one of the fastest growing types of waste. The key to reducing e-waste in our landfills is to **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Re-buy and Restore**. All computer manufacturers are now required by law to offer a buy back program to offer recycling programs. The Cities of McAllen , Pharr, Harlingen and the City of San Juan collect e-waste for recycling. Please call each location for more information. Or you can go to [www.Earth911.org](http://www.Earth911.org). You can also take your items to the nearest Best Buy, Staples or Good will Industries. Call them for more details.



Recycle your yard waste too!

## Heavy Trash

Heavy trash is a huge problem for any city. Many communities offer collection events for heavy trash at least once a month. Many cities also schedule Clean-up Events during the first few weeks in April during the Great American Clean up sponsored by Keep Texas Beautiful. Check with your community to find more information or go to [www.KTB.org](http://www.KTB.org) or [www.KAB.org](http://www.KAB.org) to see when your community is scheduling their next clean up.



## 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.



When It Rains...  
It Drains

# The Secret Life of Plastic

Plastic has become the most widely used material in the world since 1976. Bottled water being the single largest growth amongst all liquids, which include consumable and non-consumable plastic. 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. Before recycling, plastics are sorted according to their resin identification code, a method of categorization of polymer types, which was developed by the Society of the Plastics Industry in 1988. Plastic recycling rates lag far behind those of other items, such as newspaper (about 80%) and corrugated fiberboard (about 70%). All plastic bottles were recycled at a rate of 24% in 2005.

Plastics can be numbered from 1 through 7, the numbers signify the type (resin) of plastic that the product is made from and it also identifies if it is recyclable or not. 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.



# Recycle your yard waste too!

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. Call your local city hall to see if your city has a composting facility.

- \* 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 make up at least 20% of landfills in the Lower Rio Grande Valley**

# How is Compost Beneficial to our planet?

## 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 and plants and animals naturally die. Over time these organic materials break down or decompose. The rich, dark-brown, crumbly, soil-like material that results from this material is called compost which also may have 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.

*• An average household produces 600 lbs. of compostable yard waste yearly.*

*• Compostable material makes up 20 percent of a community's residential waste.*

*• Composting in the yard or at a local community garden requires much less energy and is less expensive than bagging, hauling and processing such waste through municipal landfills.*



**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) 681-4580

### Price Guide

Compost	Regular \$15.00 per cubic yard Premium \$20.00 per cubic yard
Mulch	\$12.00 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  
9000 FM 802, Brownsville, TX  
(956) 831-3641

### Price Guide

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

City of San Juan Recycling Center  
323 W. 1st St., San Juan, TX  
(956) 223-2340

### Price Guide

Compost	No cost for residents
Mulch	No cost for residents

Natural Soil Solutions, LLC  
1.2 Miles N. of Hwy 107 on FM 1425  
Santa Rosa, TX 78593 (956) 584-1910

### Price Guide

Compost	\$25.00 1-5 cubic yards \$20.00 6-25 cubic yards \$18.00 over 25 cubic yards
Delivery Fee	According to Amount and distance

# RGV Recycling Centers and Drop Off Stations

Reduce your waste and increase our landfill space.



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, magazines, books, metal and tin cans
City of Brownsville Landfill 9000 FM 802 Brownsville TX 78520 (956) 838-6253	Used motor oil, used tires, aluminum cans, tin or steel cans, ferrous metals (steel, iron), white goods (non-reusable large appliances), and brush
City of Harlingen Recycling Drop Off Site 1006 South Commerce Harlingen TX 78550 (956) 427-8824	Cardboard, newspaper, magazines, paper, aluminum, steel, plastics #1 & #2, plastic bags, plastic foam peanuts, automotive oil (no filters!), Styrofoam, rechargeable batteries (non-NiCd), books, Christmas trees, telephone books, computers, and monitors
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, plastic, card board, newspaper, and glass
City of South Padre Island Drop Off Site 108 W. Retama South Padre Island TX 78597 (956) 761-3226	Aluminum cans, tin cans, card board, newspaper and any type of plastic bottles (laundry detergent plastic jugs are not included)

Willacy County	
Facility	Types of Material
Willacy County Recycling Center 3 Miles South Highway 77 Raymondville TX 78580 (956) 398-7896	Cardboard, aluminum, paper, newspaper, books, and magazines

More information is available at the LRGVDC Web Site ([www.LRGVDC.org](http://www.LRGVDC.org)) or [www.Earth911.org](http://www.Earth911.org)

Before you start a program in your city, do the research, what size bins do you need? Who can service them, what kinds of items will you accept and where will you take those items?

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, magazines, and card board
Alton Recycling - Drop Off Site 401 W. Dawes St. Alton, TX 78573 (956) 432-0792	Cardboard, Plastic, Aluminum, Paper, Used motor oil,
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, and white office paper
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 Mission- Drop Off Site 609 Canal Mission, TX 78572 (956) 580-8780	Cardboard, Plastic, Aluminum, Paper, Used motor oil
Pharr Recycling Center 1301 W. Medina Ave. Pharr, TX 78577 (956) 223-2580	Used motor oil, car batteries, newspaper, cardboard, mixed paper, telephone books, computer paper, #1 plastic (PETE), #2 plastic (HDPE colored clear), plastic bags, aluminum cans, tin or steel cans, ferrous metals (steel, iron), toners, cartridges, magazines, catalogs, brown bags, cereal boxes, glass, used cell phones, re-chargeable batteries and E-waste
San Juan Recycling Center 323 West 1st San Juan TX (956) 702-6428/6429	Used motor oil, paper, plastic, newspaper, cardboard, aluminum, telephone books, catalogs, magazines & junk mail, tin cans, shredded paper, office paper, ink cartridges, old computers, keyboards, printers and monitors
City of Weslaco - Drop Off Site 3101 South Border Weslaco TX 78579 (956) 968-9623	Newspaper, cardboard, aluminum, tin, phone books, used motor oil

# Citizen Collection Stations

## 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  
Weslaco TX 78570  
(956) 968-8733

### *Precinct #2*

El Gato Citizen Collection Station  
1 Mile East of South Tower Rd./  
Corner of Border and El Gato  
Alamo TX 78516  
(956) 283-9496

### *Precinct #3*

Pct. #3 Landfill Citizen Collection Station  
Military Rd. (0.5 miles West of FM 1427)  
Peñitas TX 78576  
(956) 585-4509

Los Ebanos Citizen Collection Station  
107 and Los Ebanos  
Mission TX 78573  
(956) 585-4509

### *Precinct #4*

Doolittle Citizen Collection Station  
1051 N. Doolittle  
Edinburg TX 78541  
(956) 383-3112

## Cameron County

### *Harlingen*

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

### *Terminology*

*Citizen Collection Station*— a building or a processing site that accepts large household items for waste and some construction debris.

*Transfer Station*—is a building or processing site for the temporary deposition of waste.

*Landfill*—Environmentally acceptable disposal of waste on ground. Sanitary landfills are where non-hazardous waste is spread in layers, compacted, and covered with earth at the end of each working day.



# 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 and toxic chemicals. 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 and even cause death. 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.



## The Law

- Under the Texas Health and Safety Code Chapter 341, 343, and 365 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 / 5 gallons or less  
**Penalty: \$500 fine.**
- \* **Class B Misdemeanor**  
Solid waste or litter, which weighs more than 5 lbs. but less than 500 lbs. or 5 gallons but under c.f.  
**Penalty: 6 mos 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  
**Penalty: 1 year in jail and/or \$10,000 fine.**

## What can you do with your garbage?

Be responsible for your garbage. Dispose of it properly and help reduce waste.

### 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 or reused. Find other uses for things that you may otherwise toss.

### Recycle

Many communities now have recycling centers. If your community does not have one, help start a recycling center in your area. Check on Earth 911.org to find out where your nearest recycling center is and what kinds of recyclable items they accept.

### 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, or donate your items.

**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 - 956-702-3867**
- Hidalgo County Pct. 3 - 956-519-4246**
- Hidalgo County Pct. 4 - 956-383-8560**
- Willacy County - 956-966-3537**



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

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