



# ***Sustainability Basics in the Home through Environmental Health, Solid Waste Management, Recycling, & Getting Food Smart***

April 2025

Office of Public Safety & Health  
**Solid Waste Management**  
&  
**Environmental Health Division**



# Solid Waste Management in Middlesex County



Middlesex County  
Department of Public Safety & Health  
Division of Environmental Health (CEHA)  
Solid Waste Management



## MCUA

Middlesex County Utilities Authority



## IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY

MIDDLESEX COUNTY ♦ NJ

# Middlesex County Environmental Health Division (MCEHD)



- **Solid Waste**
  - **Recycling**
- Air
  - Noise
  - Odor
- Water
  - Testing
- Septic
  - Drainage systems
- Site Remediation



# Solid Waste & Recycling:



# Solid Waste & Recycling



## Why?

In the 1970's, landfills started filling up, and oftentimes with some dreadfully scary stuff. Folks started realizing we could separate and properly dispose of certain products, so regulations were put in place to begin *Recycling*.





# 10 Important **BENEFITS** of Recycling



**Reduces  
Emissions**



**Healthy  
Ecosystem**



**Conserve  
Resources**



**Saves  
Energy**



**Saves  
Money**



**Eco  
Awareness**



**Use Less  
Landfill**



**Creates  
Jobs**



**Supports  
Relations**



**Domestic  
Market**

# Solid Waste & Recycling



## When?

- Before 1987, recycling programs were practiced through civic groups.
- In 1987, The Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Act was passed setting a goal of a 25% recycling rate.
- Each county was required to designate 3 items to recycle, plus leaves and motor oil.
- In 1990 a goal of 60% recycling of all waste types was set for 1995.
- Today's goals are 60% total recycling rate and 50% MSW recycling rate.



# Solid Waste & Recycling



## Who?

- Industrial
- Commercial
- Government & Educational Institutions
- Residential
- *You!*





# Solid Waste & Recycling



## What?

More *(and less)* than you think!

- Aluminum and steel cans
- Glass bottles and jars
- Plastic bottles, jars, jugs, and tubs
  - water, soda, milk, and juice bottles, laundry detergent, and most toiletry bottles and yogurt tubs
- Newspaper and mixed paper (magazines, office paper, junk mail, cereal boxes)
- Corrugated cardboard

# Solid Waste & Recycling



## **What? (*con't*)**

- Leaves, brush, Christmas trees (not including artificial trees)
- Motor oil
- Textiles (clothes, fabric, material)
- Tires
- Bulk Goods
- Masonry/paving materials (asphalt, block, brick, cinder, and concrete)
- E-waste (Computers, televisions, computer monitors, printers, fax machines)
- White goods (washers, dryers, ranges, refrigerators, air conditioners)
- Rechargeable batteries

# Solid Waste & Recycling



## Where?

Everywhere!

- Residence
- Work
- MCEHD
- Municipal Convenience Centers
- MCEHD events





## DO Recycle



**Plastic**  
Bottles, Jars,  
Jugs, and Tubs



**Glass**  
Bottles and Jars  
all sizes, shapes,  
and colors



**Mixed Paper**  
paper, newspaper,  
magazines, cereal boxes,  
softcover books



**Cans**  
aluminum and  
steel (tin) cans



**Cardboard**  
corrugated boxes

## DON'T Put in the Recycling Bin



**Plastic**  
Bags, Film, Wrappers,  
Cups, and Utensils



**Greasy or food-  
contaminated  
items**



**Shredded  
Paper**



**Pots, pans,  
and small  
appliances**



**Dishware,  
glass, and  
mirrors**



**Tangles**  
i.e. garden hoses,  
electric cords



**Styrofoam**



**Syringes,  
batteries,  
and bulbs**

# Recycling in Middlesex County

It is mandatory for all residents, businesses, and institutions in the County to recycle the following items:

- Newspaper
- Glass food and beverage containers
- Aluminum cans
- Steel cans
- Plastic Bottles, Jars, Jugs & Tubs
- Mixed Paper
- Corrugated Cardboard
- Leaves
- Motor Oil
- Brush
- Textiles
- Masonry/paving material
- Rechargeable batteries
- Tires
- White goods
- Electronics (televisions, CPU's, printers, fax machines monitors, laptops)
- ❖ Mercury-containing devices
- ❖ Fluorescent bulbs
- ❖ Plastic film – only for warehouses, retail establishments and supermarkets with 25 or more employees
- ❖ Wood scrap – only for new construction sites
- ❖ Food waste – only for large generators (52 tons per year or more)

❖ mandated for businesses and institutions only



# Recycling Process

Separation of recyclables from the garbage by residents or businesses

Collection of recyclables by a licensed hauler

Sorting Recycling Centers process the recyclable materials

Processing of materials to make new products



# The 3 R's



## Reduce

The amount of garbage that we generate

## Reuse

Glass Jars, Plastic Containers, Paper & Plastic Bags

## Recycle

Saves Energy, Money, Landfill Space, Conserves Natural Resources



# Most common problem materials:

- Plastic bags !!
- Garden hoses
- VHS tapes
- Syringes
- Toys
- Carpet
- Plates, Cups, Utensils
- Shoes
- Batteries





# Why is this problem happening?

1. Over-recyclers/wish-cyclers – think everything is recyclable
2. Unclear signage on trash, recycling cans and on products (some have recycling symbol but aren't recyclable)
3. Lack of education as to what people should recycle
4. "Don't care" attitude

**\*\*Education is key for better recycling! Learn what can and cannot be recycled, then teach your friends and family!\*\***

[Burlington County Recycling Center Virtual Tour](#)





# Solid Waste Management Programs/Functions



- ❖ Boat Shrink Wrap Program
- ❖ CFC Reimbursement Program
- ❖ Clean Communities Program
- ❖ Compost Bin Sales
- ❖ Compost Workshops
- ❖ Cooking Oil Program
- ❖ Education/Public Outreach
- ❖ Coloring Contest
- ❖ Fluorescent Light Bulbs
- ❖ Household Hazardous Waste
- ❖ Paint Program
- ❖ Paper Shredding
- ❖ Propane Tank Collections
- ❖ Recycling Rates/Tonnage Reports
- ❖ School Recycling Containers
- ❖ Solid Waste Advisory Council
- ❖ Solid Waste Planning
- ❖ Tire Program



# 2025 Paper Shred Schedule

DAY	DATE	MUNICIPALITY
Sunday	March 23	Old Bridge
Friday	April 11	Monroe
Saturday	April 26	Sayreville
Saturday	May 3	North Brunswick
Friday	May 16	Piscataway
Sunday	June 1	Edison
Saturday	June 7	Spotswood
Sunday	September 7	South Brunswick
Sunday	September 28	Woodbridge
Friday	October 10	Highland Park
Saturday	October 18	Cranbury
Friday	November 7	Monroe

Any resident may participate at any event! Just provide the name of hometown upon arrival in a **non-commercial vehicle.**



# Household Hazardous Waste 2025 Drop Off Events



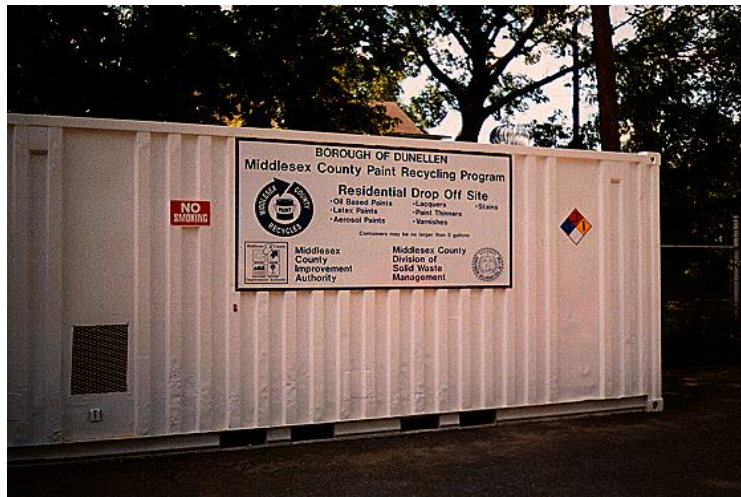
## 5 events- 8am-2pm

- Sunday, March 16 - Middlesex College - Edison
- Saturday, May 17 - Middlesex County Public Works - No. Brunswick
- Sunday, June 22 - Old Bridge Recycling Center
- Saturday, September 20 - Middlesex County Public Works - Sayreville
- Sunday, November 16 - Middlesex College - Edison

# Paint Drop-Off Program



<u>Weekend</u>	<u>Northern Locations</u>	<u>Southern Locations</u>
1 <sup>st</sup>	Middlesex	East Brunswick
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Dunellen	New Brunswick/ Old Bridge
3 <sup>rd</sup>	South Plainfield	Helmetta / Monroe
4 <sup>th</sup>	Woodbridge	South Brunswick



# Tire Recycling



4 Drop-off locations:

- East Brunswick
- Plainsboro
- Sayreville
- Woodbridge



\* Provision for oversize tires

# Cooking Oil



- Cooking oil that is poured down the drain can stick to pipes and block sewer lines.
- Cooking oil that is disposed of in a garbage truck can leak onto roadways.
- Used cooking oil has value as a recycled commodity, and it is easy to collect.
- Cooking oil can be recycled into biodiesel fuel or reprocessed to feed livestock, and to manufacture soap, make-up, rubber, and detergents.





# RESIDENTIAL COOKING OIL RECYCLING PROGRAM



**All locations open | 8:00AM - 12:00PM**  
Recycle your used cooking oil safely at these locations

## **EAST BRUNSWICK RECLAMATION CENTER**

357 Dunhams Corner Road, East Brunswick  
Every Saturday from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

## **MONROE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

76 Gravel Hill - Spotswood Road, Monroe  
Every Friday from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

## **OLD BRIDGE PUBLIC WORKS**

1 Old Bridge Plaza, Old Bridge (at Municipal Complex)  
Every Saturday from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

## **SOUTH PLAINFIELD RECYCLING CENTER**

Kenneth Avenue, South Plainfield  
Every Friday from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

## **WOODBRIIDGE PUBLIC WORKS**

225 Smith Street, Keasbey (under GS Parkway and Rt. 9 Bridges)  
Every Saturday from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

# Cooking Oil Recycling

**County residents only. Residential material only, no businesses.**

Liquid vegetable oils only. No shortening, coconut oil, lard or motor oil.  
Residents must see an attendant before unloading their vehicle.

**732-745-4170**

[solidwaste@co.middlesex.nj.us](mailto:solidwaste@co.middlesex.nj.us)

Send an email to sign up  
for monthly reminders.



For more information visit [www.middlesexcountynj.gov/recycle](http://www.middlesexcountynj.gov/recycle).

# Backyard Composting Workshops



Teaching about yard waste and composting....

....putting it all together (in the bin!).



Two Saturday workshops are scheduled for 2025: **April 5 and October 11**



# Compost Bin Sales



Compost Bins are available for sale by  
Appointment.  
Please Call: 732-745-4170



*"Backyard Composting: How you Bring Your Garbage Back to Life" Anonymous*

Yard waste placed in a compost bin...  
...leads to a great soil amendment.



# Recycling Containers



Middlesex County Department of Public Safety & Health  
Division of Solid Waste Management  
(732) 745-4170

## Recycling Bins for Schools

2024

Deliveries: **25 Schools**

Desk Sides: **227**

Slim Jims: **94**

20 Gallon w/lids: **113**

Dollies: **123**

Dolly Bins: **246**



Slim Jim  
23 Gallon  
20" x 11" x 28" high

Round with lid  
20 Gallon  
19" Dia. x 22"



Dual Tandem Dolly  
44 Gallon (2)  
Recycling & Trash

Desk Side  
28 Quart  
14" x 10" x 15" height



Free containers courtesy of the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders through their Division of Solid Waste Management.

[www.middlesexcountynj.gov](http://www.middlesexcountynj.gov)

Like Us on Facebook: Middlesex County NJ

# NJ Clean Communities Programs to Reduce Litter



- Program provides grants to municipalities and counties to reduce litter, educate and enforce
- Adopt a Beach \*
- Urban Cleanup Team \*
- Adopt a Highway \*
- Clean Communities Environmental Student Exchange \*
- Clean Water Challenge \*
- International Coastal Cleanup \*

\* programs managed by the NJ Clean Communities Council [www.njclean.org](http://www.njclean.org)



# Get Involved

- <http://www.anjr.com/> - Association of NJ Recyclers
- <http://www.njclean.org/> - NJ Clean Communities
- <http://anjee.org/index.html> - Alliance for NJ Environmental Education
- <http://americarecyclesday.org/> (November 15<sup>th</sup>)
- <https://www.epa.gov/earthday> (Earth Day is always April 22<sup>nd</sup>)
- <http://www.sustainablejersey.com/> - Sustainable Jersey
- [http://njwrri.rutgers.edu/watershed\\_orgs.htm#middlesex](http://njwrri.rutgers.edu/watershed_orgs.htm#middlesex) – NJ watershed

Contact Info



**BRING YOUR REUSABLE  
BAGS  
WHEN YOU SHOP!**  
**NJClean.org**



***NJ Law now prohibits all stores from providing plastic bags.***

***Don't Forget to Bring Your Own Bags Every Time You Shop!***

<https://linktr.ee/litterfreenj>



## REUSABLE BAG DONATION

Help the Environment and Those in Need!



Bag Law Success!



Donation Locations



Tips to Donate



Post Your Event



Litter Free New Jersey



Consider Volunteering



Understand The Law



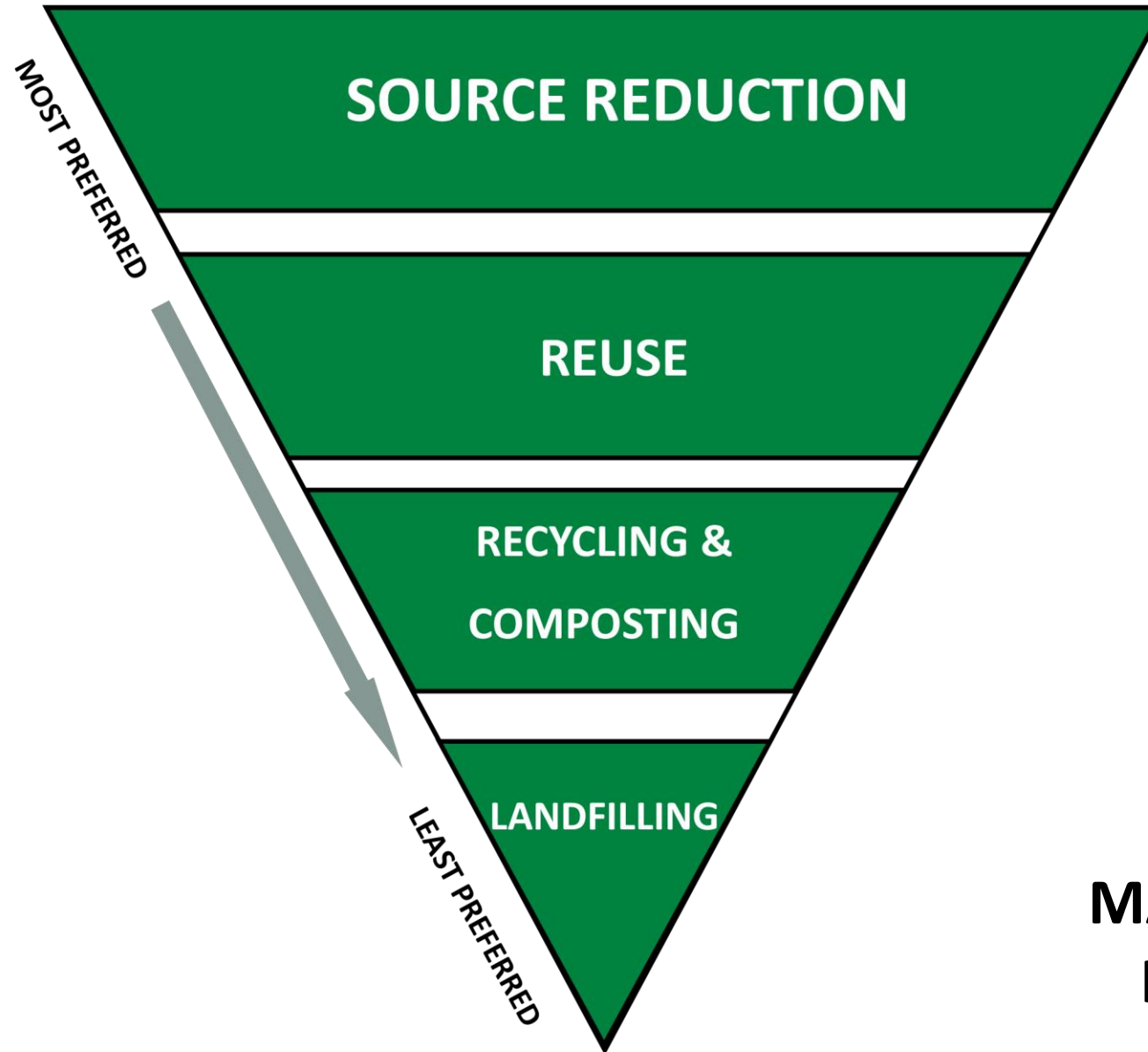
NJ Business Action Center



Search Recycle Coach



With Generous Support From



## **WASTE MANAGEMENT HIERARCHY**



# How much food waste do we generate and recycle?



## New Jersey

Generated 9,857,850 tons of MSW in 2018

- Generated about 2,070,148 tons of food waste
- Recycled 200,958

## Middlesex County

Generated about 996,000 tons of MSW in 2018

- Generated about 210,000 tons of food waste
- Recycled 5,500 tons of food waste in 2018

# LET'S GET FOOD SMART



**THE PROBLEM** 22% of solid waste in New Jersey is **Food Waste**.

**THE SOLUTION** **Tips to Reduce Food Waste**  
Learn what food date labels mean.

## WHAT IS A **FOOD DATE**?

A calendar date on a perishable or shelf-stable food product that communicates to the consumer the timeline for a product's freshness.

## WHAT DOES IT **MEAN**?

Foods required by law to be labeled in New Jersey are baby formula, dairy, and shellfish. Baby formula should not be fed to infants past the expiration date listed, but the other products may be consumed past the date printed on the package. We encourage you to examine and smell an item to decide if it should be used.

On all other products, date labels should be viewed as **food quality guidelines**. A product can be safely eaten weeks, months, or years after the date, if stored properly in a cool, dry, clean space like your home or local food pantry!

## YOUR FOOD'S **REAL SHELF LIFE**:

- [moremealslesswaste.com](http://moremealslesswaste.com)
- USDA's free **Foodkeeper App** or webpage: [foodsafety.gov/foodkeeper](http://foodsafety.gov/foodkeeper)



**RePLENISH**  
NOURISHING NEIGHBORS

[middlesexcountynj.gov/replenish](http://middlesexcountynj.gov/replenish)



[middlesexcountynj.gov/getfoodsmart](http://middlesexcountynj.gov/getfoodsmart)

**#getfoodsmart**

**30-40%** of the entire U.S. **food supply** is wasted.



[middlesexcountynj.gov/getfoodsmart](http://middlesexcountynj.gov/getfoodsmart)



**22%** of solid waste in New Jersey is **food waste.**



[middlesexcountynj.gov/getfoodsmart](http://middlesexcountynj.gov/getfoodsmart)



**500** pounds of food is **thrown away** every year by each **Middlesex County resident.**



[middlesexcountynj.gov/getfoodsmart](http://middlesexcountynj.gov/getfoodsmart)



**63** million tons of **wasted food** was generated in **2018**, just in the U.S.



[middlesexcountynj.gov/getfoodsmart](http://middlesexcountynj.gov/getfoodsmart)



# Reducing your Food Waste



- Check refrigerator/freezer temperature settings & seals.
- Learn how to store food types properly & rotate foods frequently.
- Inventory your refrigerator, shelves, & pantry before shopping.
- Plan purchases to only buy what you plan to eat – avoid bulk buying.



Credit: FDA.gov

***Restaurants, schools and caterers are encouraged to inventory and measure their wasted food. In doing so, businesses can track where and how wasted food occurs and address those areas.***





## Understanding Product Dating



*How to understand  
and eat beyond the  
label dates!*



# Reducing your food waste



Most date labels are an indicators of ***food quality, not safety***; therefore, food that is past the "sell by date" is often edible.

## **"Best if Used By/Before" ≠ Purchase or Safety Date**

indicates when a product will be of best flavor or quality.

## **"Sell-By" ≠ Safety Date**

tells the store how long to display the product for sale for inventory management.

## **"Use-By" ≠ Safety Date**

the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality.

*(except for when used on infant formula)*

## **"Freeze-By" ≠ Safety Date**

indicates when a product should be frozen to maintain peak quality

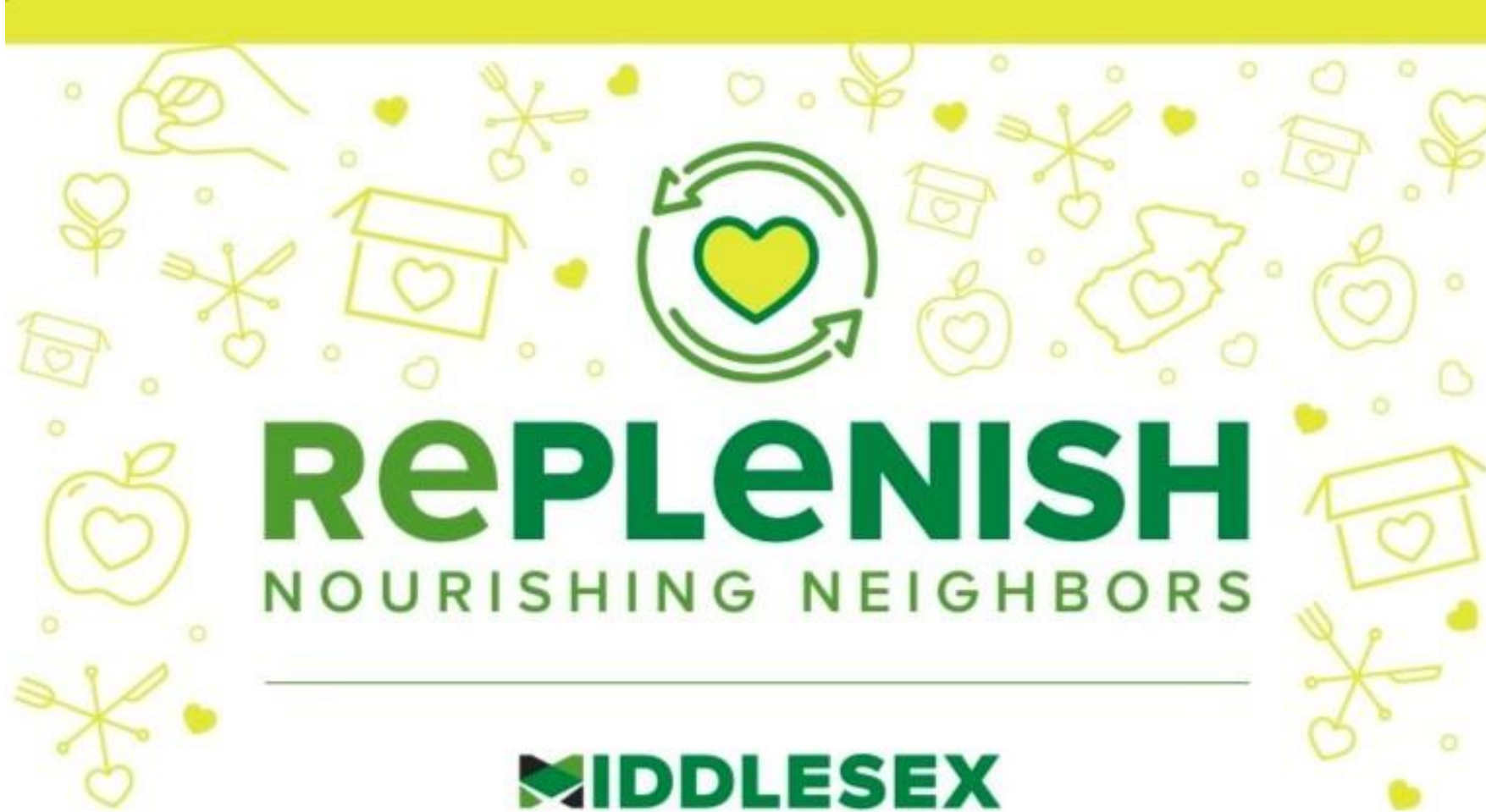
# Reusing your Food



- Enjoy planned Leftovers Night.
- [Share tables](#) at Schools.
- Display “Ugly” produce tables at retailers.
- Donate excess food to local food pantries.
- [Good Samaritan laws](#) to protect donors and organizations ([pdf](#))



Credit: Creative Commons. [Onemansblog.com](https://onemansblog.com)



28 Kennedy Blvd. Suite 850  
East Brunswick  
Jennifer Apostol, Director

# Sustainable Jersey's Food Waste & Security Actions



## Actions of interest:

- Community Food Pantry/Bank & Soup Kitchen
- Community Gardens
- Food Waste
- Gold Star Standard in Health



# Other Important Environmental Implementations

*Additional guidelines & regulations that help us breathe easy & enjoy the environment around us*

- Idling Regulations
- Dirty Dirt Law
- Avoid the Spark
- Proper Wastewater Disposal



# Idling – N.J.A.C. 7:27-14,15



**All vehicles may idle for up to three minutes with the following exceptions:**

- DIESEL may idle for up to 15 consecutive minutes when the vehicle has been stopped for 3 or more hours and ONLY if the outside temperature is  $<25^{\circ}\text{F}$
- Buses may idle when actively discharging or picking up passengers for 15 consecutive minutes in a 60-minute period
- No idling allowed in a parking space with functioning charging technology



# Idling – continued



## Three-minute idling limit does NOT apply to:

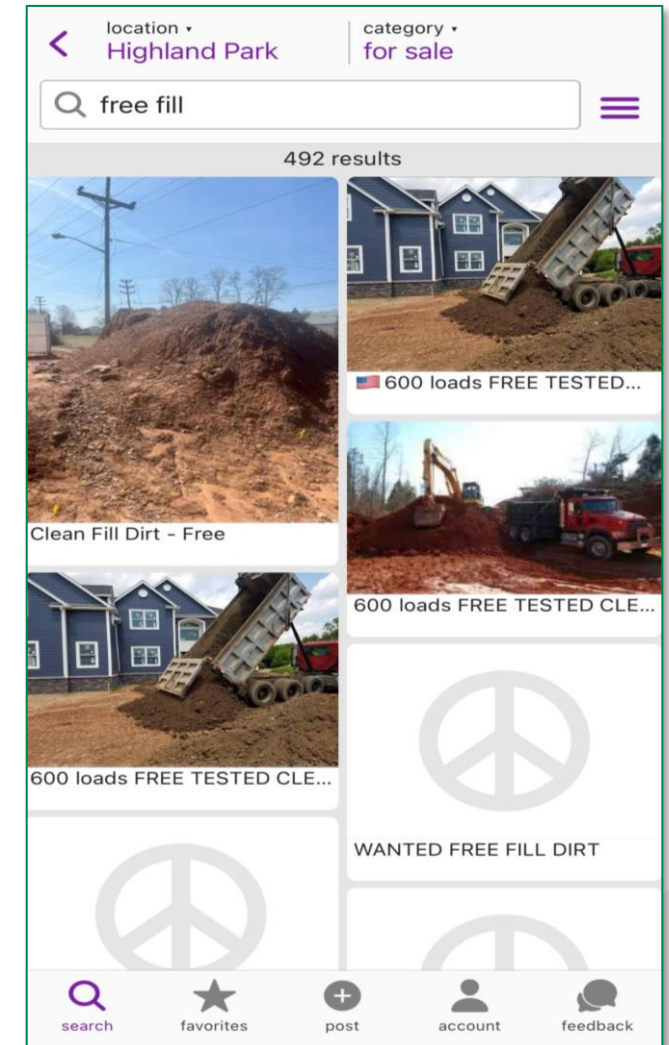
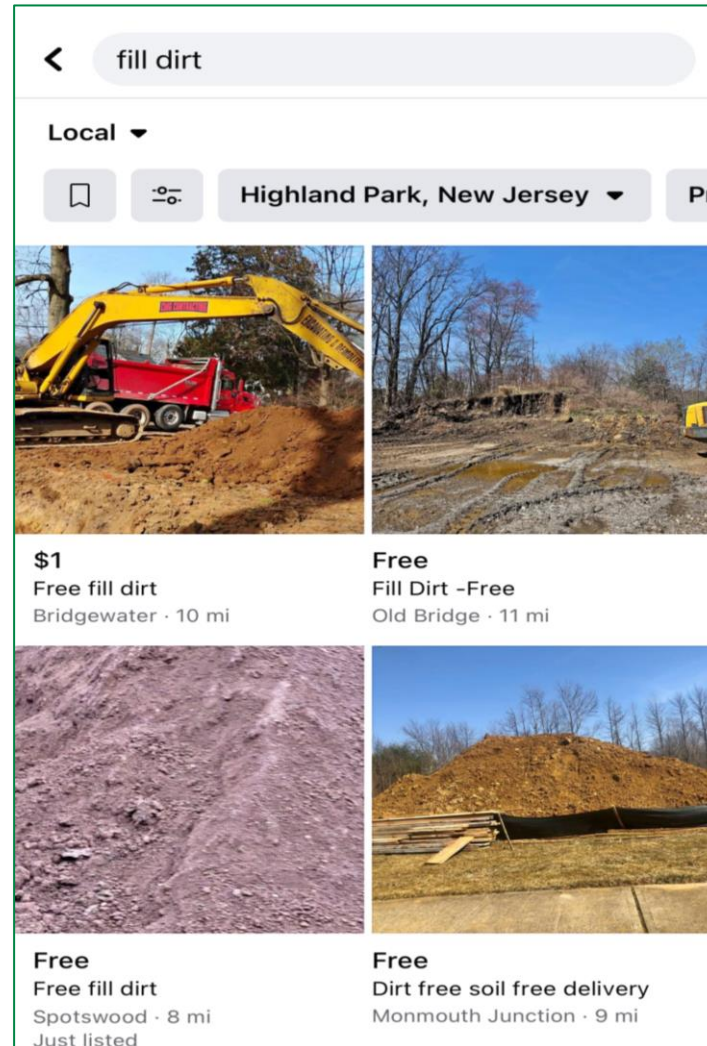
- Motor vehicles stopped in traffic
- Motor vehicles whose primary power source is utilized for necessary mechanical operations such as refrigeration units for perishable loads, hydraulic lifts, “cherry pickers”, or similar equipment
- Motor vehicles waiting to be examined by state or federal MVC inspectors or motor vehicles being repaired
- Operations of auxiliary or alternate power systems for cabin comfort
- A motor vehicle with a sleeper berth, equipped with a 2007 or newer engine, or that has been retrofitted with a diesel particulate filter *while the driver is resting or sleeping in the sleeper berth.*



# Free Fill Isn't Free!



Need dirt fill for a home improvement project? Make sure it's from a reputable company and that you get valid soil testing first, or it could prove to be an expensive mistake! The new *Dirty Dirt Law* states that the property owner bears responsibility for any contaminated material brought onto the property.



# Avoid The Spark!



- Proper battery recycling can save lives!
- Please take all rechargeable batteries to a recycling center that accepts HAZMAT, a participating electronics store, or a Middlesex County Household Hazardous Waste Day



**Prevent fires, keep people and property safe.**

**DO NOT throw rechargeable batteries in the trash or curbside recycling bin.**

**Be battery safety smart and responsibly manage your batteries at their end of life.**



**Find a battery drop-off location near you:**  
[call2recycle.org/locator](https://call2recycle.org/locator)

**For more information:**  
[avoidthespark.com](https://avoidthespark.com) | [njhazwaste.com](https://njhazwaste.com) | [anjr.com](https://anjr.com) | Recycle Coach app | [recycle.nj.gov](https://recycle.nj.gov)

  @NewJerseyDEP





# Avoid The Spark!





# Wastewater Disposal



Got gross water? Dump it down your toilet, NOT in our shared waterways, including your sink! We don't want to see any contaminated liquid, including oil, sodas, mop or car wash water being dumped into our storm drains as it goes directly into our waterways. Dispose of it right into your toilet instead!







# Sense Something? Say Something!

Have an issue? See, hear, or smell something that may be an environmental hazard or even a violation of one of these regulations? Let us know by calling us directly, calling the DEP, or using the mobile app.



Middlesex County Environmental  
Health: 732-745-8480

# RECYCLE COACH





**Questions?**



## Lynn Ust

*Middlesex County Solid Waste Management*

444 Hoes Lane

Piscataway, NJ 08854

732-745-4170

[solidwaste@co.middlesex.nj.us](mailto:solidwaste@co.middlesex.nj.us)



## Briane Peters

*Middlesex County Environmental Health Division*

444 Hoes Lane

Piscataway, NJ 08854

732-745-8480

**[Middlesexcountynj.gov/recycle](http://Middlesexcountynj.gov/recycle)**