

Sorting household waste a guide for newcomers to Geneva

LET'S SORT AND RECYCLE:

to protect the air, water and soil
to preserve natural resources
to save energy
to reduce public expenditure



LET'S SORT AND RECYCLE!

In Geneva, each citizen, each year produces over 300 kg of waste! This rubbish is burned at the incineration plant "Cheneviers", situated along the river Rhône.

It is the largest treatment centre in Switzerland and relies upon highly sophisticated technologies to best protect the environment.

RECYCLE RATHER THAN BURN!

The sorted household waste is collected by the local council and prepared for distribution to recycling companies.

VARIOUS COLLECTION SYSTEMS

Each commune in Geneva is responsible for collecting its own urban waste. This is why collection systems change from one commune to another. This guide offers general information on sorting waste and recycling. To find out about the collection methods in your commune, please enquire at your local council ("mairie") or contact Environnement-Info (022 327 47 11 or environnement-info@etat.ge.ch).



A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

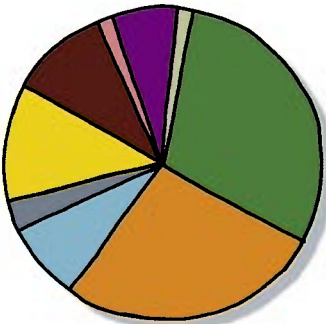
Recycling preserves natural resources and reduces energy consumption. By sorting and recycling our waste we can significantly reduce the amount to be incinerated.

TO EVERYONE'S ADVANTAGE

Incinerating waste is expensive, which is why recycling means important savings can be made, from which public bodies profit... as do their inhabitants, who consequently pay less tax.

A CHALLENGE FOR GENEVA

The canton has set itself an ambitious objective, targeting a 45% rate of recycling for 2007, compared to 37% in 2003. It's up to all of us to achieve this by at least sorting glass, paper and organic waste, which represent nearly 2/3 of the contents of our dustbins. Last but not least, let's not forget batteries which are small, but highly polluting!



OUR DUSTBINS CONTAIN

- 31% Organic waste
- 27% Paper and cardboard
- 8% Glass
- 3% Metal
- 12% Plastic
- 10% Composite materials
- 2% Textiles
- 6% Minerals
- 1% Other

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT WASTE OR THE ENVIRONMENT, PLEASE CONTACT US:

Environnement-Info
022 327 47 11
www.geneve.ch/environnement-info

GLASS
4

ORGANIC
WASTE
5

PAPER AND
CARDBOARD
6

BATTERIES
7

HAZARDOUS
WASTE
8

ELECTRONIC
MATERIAL
9

OTHER
10

Let's recycle glass!

WHY?

Glass still accounts for 8% of the rubbish in our dustbins. This is absurd when we know that it can't be burnt and that it can be recycled indefinitely into new bottles without losing any of its original qualities.

WHAT TYPES OF GLASS?



CAUTION!

Window panes, light bulbs and mirrors as well as porcelain, earthenware and ceramic should not be recycled with glass but should be put in the dustbin.

HOW?

In many communes, bottle containers are provided for three different colours of glass (green, brown or clear). Glass sorted by colour is used to manufacture green, brown or white glass. Unsorted, it can only be used to produce green glass.



Let's keep organic waste separate!

WHY?

Food and vegetable waste makes up about a third of the contents of our dustbins. It contains up to 90% water and thus burns very badly. Separated from other waste however, it can be composted and be of great use in agriculture and gardening.

WHAT CAN BE COMPOSTED?

KITCHEN WASTE



GARDEN WASTE



HOW?

Not all areas of Geneva collect organic waste separately. Please contact us to find out about your area.

CAUTION!

Biodegradable waste must be carefully kept separate to avoid contamination from other waste (batteries, paper, etc.). It must not contain sweepings, vacuum-cleaner bags, cigarette butts or animal litter.



Let's recycle paper and cardboard!

WHY?

Paper and cardboard represent more than a fourth of the contents of our dustbins: they can easily be recycled. It takes twenty times fewer trees, one hundred times less water and three times less energy to manufacture the same quantity of 100% recycled paper than is needed to produce new paper.

WHAT TYPES OF PAPER?

All types of paper and cardboard can be recycled: stationery, newspapers, magazines, envelopes, cardboard, etc.



HOW?

Paper should be taken to the nearest paper-collecting container or left on the street on paper-collecting days.

CAUTION!

Do not include for recycling: tissues and paper hankies, paper napkins, soiled paper or cardboard, plastic-covered or laminated sheets. Composite packaging (milk, tea or fruit juice cartons) should be put in the ordinary dustbin.



Let's recycle batteries!

WHY?

Batteries are the most polluting of all as they contain heavy metals such as mercury, cadmium, zinc and lead. They should never be put in the dustbin, let alone thrown away anywhere else, because they represent a danger to human, animal and plant life.

WHAT TYPES OF BATTERY?

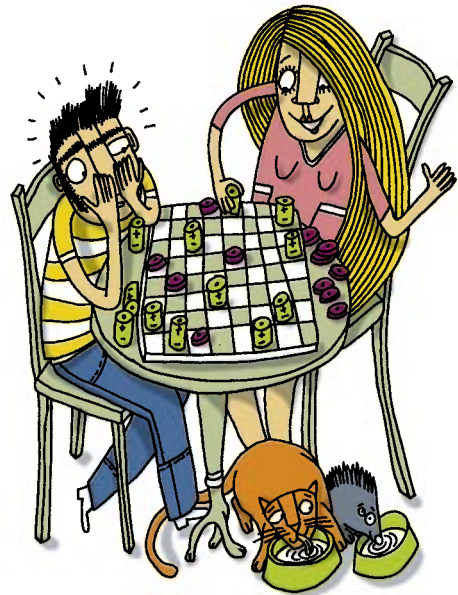
All batteries without exception: traditional batteries, watch or calculator batteries, accumulators. "Green" batteries must also be recycled (they are still extremely polluting even though they contain smaller quantities of heavy metals).



HOW?

Simply take them back to where you bought them (shop, supermarket).

CAUTION!
Many objects such as toys, cards or gadgets that flicker, move or make a noise contain hidden batteries. Please make sure that the battery is removed before throwing them away !



Let's separate hazardous household waste!

WHY?

Because of its potential to harm human health and the environment when mixed with other waste, hazardous waste should under no circumstances be put in the dustbin, or even worse poured down the drains or thrown away. Hazardous waste must be treated and neutralized in specialized treatment centres.

WHAT IS HAZARDOUS?

Paints, glues and varnishes, paint thinners and removers, garden and household chemicals.
Mercury or gallium thermometers.
Out-of-date or unused medicines.
Fluorescent light tubes and long-life bulbs.
Mineral oils
Car batteries

WHAT SHOULD ONE DO?

Take them back to where one bought them: pharmacy, drug store, hardware store, do-it-yourself supermarket, specialized store, etc. Deposit them at the Recycling Centre at the Châtillon plant (see address on the back cover of this guide).



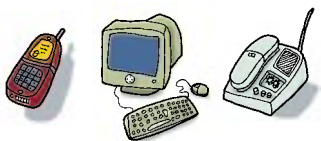
Let's get rid of electronic and domestic appliances properly!

WHY?

It is forbidden to throw these appliances away with household refuse or bulky waste. Indeed they contain heavy metals and other toxic materials that pose a threat to public health and to the environment. Their proper disposal makes it possible to re-use certain raw materials such as iron, precious metals, etc. and allows safe elimination of all polluting components.

WHAT CAN BE RECYCLED?

All office equipment: obsolete computer monitors, computers, printers, photocopiers, fixed and portable telephones etc.



All home electronics: television sets, radios, music centres, videotape recorders, lamps, camcorders, cameras, CD and DVD players, walkmen, etc.



All domestic appliances: vacuum cleaners, coffee machines, cookers, refrigerators, washing machines, dryers, dishwashers, electric kettles, irons, etc.



HOW?

The recycling of these appliances is financed by a recycling tax which is included in the purchase price. In short, shops have an obligation to take back free of charge all appliances of the same type as those which they are selling, whatever the brand, place or date of purchase.



Let's sort and recycle everything we can!

Besides paper, glass, compostable waste, batteries, and electronic equipment, there are many other materials that can be recycled:

METALS

Aluminium and tin food cans can be indefinitely recycled and thus contribute to saving significant amounts of energy. The majority of communes put out specific containers for their collection. As for large metal objects, these are collected with bulky items (see page 11).



PET

Plastic PET beverage bottles must be deposited in the yellow and blue containers set out for this purpose in many shops. Packaging that has contained other products (shampoo, oil, vinegar, etc.) must be put in the dustbin.



TEXTILES

Clothing, textiles and shoes are collected by various charitable organizations that help people in need. You will find containers for this purpose in the majority of communes.



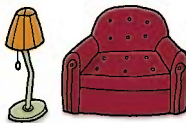
VEGETABLE OILS

No type of grease or vegetable oil should ever be poured down the sink or WC. If your commune has not provided a specialized collection service, please put them into any type of plastic container, such as a PET bottle with a tight-fitting screw-top (not more than 1 litre per trash bag / bin-liner).

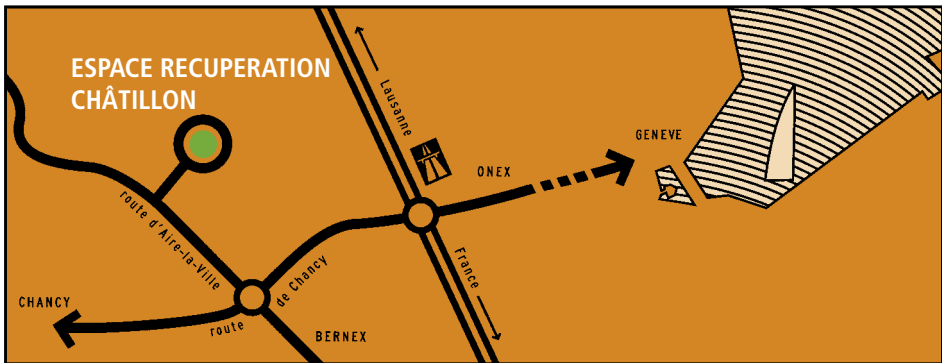


BULKY WASTE

Each commune has its own system for collecting bulky objects (by appointment or according to a pre-established schedule). For the town of Geneva these services are free of charge, but only if you arrange this with the municipal council (Tel. 022 418 42 22). For the other communes, please contact Environnement-Info (Tel. 022 327 47 11).



HOUSEHOLD WASTE OF ANY KIND, WHETHER BULKY, TOXIC,
RECYCLABLE, OR BIODEGRADABLE,
CAN BE DEPOSITED FREE OF CHARGE AT THE RECYCLING CENTRE
AT THE CHÂTILLON WASTE DISPOSAL PLANT (ESPACE RECUPERATION).



WE ARE HAPPY TO WELCOME YOU TO GENEVA
AND THANK YOU FOR HELPING US PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT.

For all questions concerning waste or the environment,
please contact:



www.geneve.ch/environnement-info