

## Landfill Lesson

Here you will learn about where your trash goes & about your local landfill.

A landfill is a place where all of your trash is taken. Trash is "stuff" that cannot be reused, recycled, or composted.

Landfills are very important because they safely secure trash in what is called a landfill cell (which looks like a big hole). This helps to keep trash out of our neighborhoods & environment.

Anything that you have thrown away in the trash in Iowa City or Johnson County ends up at the Iowa City Landfill.

The Iowa City Landfill only takes trash from Johnson County (includes Iowa City, Coralville & North Liberty), Kalona, & Riverside. There are a lot of other landfills in Iowa that take trash outside of this area.

Outside of Johnson County, a lot of other places landfill garbage, but some incinerate garbage. Incineration is when garbage is burned. The heat from burning can be used to power electricity.

The Iowa City Landfill is not only where trash goes. It is also where the Compost Facility, Hazardous Material Collection Facility, & a lot of recycling programs are located.

The Compost Facility is where yard waste & food waste are turned into compost.

Compost can be used in your yard or garden. While it looks like dirt or soil, it is more like a natural fertilizer. It provides nutrients to your soil & plants keeping them healthy.

The Hazardous Material Collection Facility is where paint, batteries, & other chemicals that you don't need anymore can be brought.

Hazardous materials should not be thrown in the trash because they have chemicals in them that are bad for people & the environment. This is why it is important to take them to this facility.

When trash sits in a landfill with no air or light, landfill gas & leachate form. Landfill gas is methane & other gases. Leachate is dirty liquid.

Methane is a strong greenhouse gas that forms in landfills, where there is no air or light. Too much of this gas is bad for the environment, so this gas is collected.

Liquid that touches trash in a landfill is called leachate which is dirty liquid, or "garbage juice." Leachate is bad for the environment, so it is collected & cleaned at the wastewater treatment plant.

Several items are banned, or not allowed, in Iowa landfills including yard waste, appliances, lead-acid batteries, tires, & oil.

Items are banned from being thrown out because they are hazardous or could be recycled. We have programs that offer better ways to handle these items, so we don't want them thrown away.

The Iowa City Landfill has also banned TVs & computers from being thrown away. These contain hazardous materials. When they are recycled, the hazardous materials are safely handled & other materials, like metal, can be recycled.

The Iowa City Landfill has also banned cardboard from being thrown away. Cardboard is very recyclable, so we prefer to have this material used again.

Battery fires are a concern at landfills. These happen when a battery, such as in a cell phone, is thrown in the trash, gets damaged in the landfill, & starts a fire. Prevent battery fires by taking batteries to a drop-off recycling program.

Want to learn more?

Landfill: [www.icgov.org/landfill](http://www.icgov.org/landfill)

Hazardous Material & Batteries: [www.icgov.org/hhm](http://www.icgov.org/hhm)

Recycle: [www.icgov.org/recycle](http://www.icgov.org/recycle)