



Contact: Debbie Spiliotopoulos  
[DSpilio@novaregion.org](mailto:DSpilio@novaregion.org)  
703-642-4631

Northern Virginia Waste Management Board

## Media Release

For Immediate Release

### **Residents Urged to Minimize Waste** *Keep Collection Workers and Communities Safe*

**Fairfax, VA, April 21, 2020** --Northern Virginia joins the nation in an abundance of refuse and recycling being collected by municipalities. Stay-at-home orders have sent people into their basements, attics, sheds, and other places where there's cleaning to be done. The results -- refuse and recycling has increased 40 percent regionally. This clean out frenzy overburdens regional waste and recycling systems and it puts waste and recycling collection workers at great safety risk. This has resulted in Northern Virginia jurisdictions urging residents to minimize to minimize their waste.

What to do? Minimize waste and maximize care

- Do not set extra bags outside the cart.
- Keep your spring-cleaning pile in the basement, attic or garage for now.
- Flatten cardboard boxes to create more room in the recycling cart.
- Grass cycle lawn clippings.
- Make sure all trash is in a bag and bags are securely closed.
- No plastic bags in recycling, make sure recyclables are empty, clean and dry. Check with your county, city or town for what to include in recycling.
- Dispose of used wipes, tissues, and paper towels in trash bags that are tied shut and place inside trash containers for disposal. Never dispose of disposable wipes, paper towels, rags and similar items in the toilet—these items damage sewer systems to the point of system failures and potential backups.
- Don't litter—when outside the home, properly dispose of masks, gloves, wipes and other items in the trash.

In Northern Virginia, local governments manage residential trash, recycling, and yard waste independently, but share disposal facilities. With stay-at-home orders in place, jurisdictions are facing unusual increases in the amount of trash and recycling generated, leading to greater safety risks to collection workers and overburdening waste and recycling systems.



Northern Virginia Regional Commission  
3040 Williams Drive, Suite 200, Fairfax, Virginia 22031  
Phone: 703/642-0700 Fax: 703/642-5077  
Website: [www.novaregion.org](http://www.novaregion.org); [www.knowtoxics.com](http://www.knowtoxics.com)

These facilities are now operating at close to capacity and struggling with labor shortages. Our region is not alone. This is a national trend and some regions of the country have experienced the closure of waste and recycling facilities.

Curbside trash and recycling collection are essential to community health and safety. Every morning, collection crews are reporting to work while facing the same life challenges as residents. To help ensure crew health and safety as well as daily completion of routes, Northern Virginia counties, towns, and cities ask residents to please follow the NVRC guidelines outlined above, to help maintain the viability of the region's collection programs.

###

*Northern Virginia jurisdictions manage solid waste and recycling programs independently, they collaborate on common regional concerns through the Northern Virginia Waste Management Board, staffed by the Northern Virginia Regional Commission. The Northern Virginia Waste Management Board, composed of solid waste managers and public works directors from each of NVRC's member jurisdictions, was created in 1989 to promote regional approaches and solutions to recycling and waste management issues in Northern Virginia. <https://www.novaregion.org/204/Solid-Waste-and-Recycling>*

Prince William County

<https://www.pwcgov.org/government/dept/publicworks/trash/Pages/Landfill-Hours-and-Directions.aspx>

Other Resources:

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/coronavirus-spring-cleaning-surge-leaves-residential-garbage-cans-overflowing/2020/04/09/eba1ac10-79cd-11ea-8cec-530b4044a458\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/coronavirus-spring-cleaning-surge-leaves-residential-garbage-cans-overflowing/2020/04/09/eba1ac10-79cd-11ea-8cec-530b4044a458_story.html)

<https://swana.org/news/swana-news/article/2020/04/13/swana-calls-to-help-protect-waste-and-recycling-workers>

[https://swana.org/initiatives/guidance-on-coronavirus-\(covid-19\)](https://swana.org/initiatives/guidance-on-coronavirus-(covid-19))

<https://www.wastedive.com/news/coronavirus-us-waste-recycling-disruption-tracker/574324/>