



# AVI News

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## How Long Does it Take for Garbage to Decompose?

From a sustainability perspective, answering the question of how long it takes various types of garbage to decompose is important. In fact, we should reduce consumption of products that generate waste materials that take a long time in landfills to get completely decomposed.

As William L. Rathje and Cullen Murphy note in *Rubbish! The Archeology of Garbage*, misconceptions about the role of landfills in decomposition are often profound.

"There is a popular notion that in its depths, the typical municipal landfill is a locus of roiling fermentation, of intense chemical and biological activity," the authors observe. "The truth is, however, that the dynamics of a modern landfill are very nearly the opposite of what most people think. Biologically and chemically, a landfill is a much more static structure than is commonly supposed."

Let's see how long it really takes for various wastes to decompose in landfills (based on waste category) with some relevant statistics. It should be noted that the rate of decomposition can depend upon landfill conditions.



**Disposable Diapers** - Just in the United States alone, every year more than 18 billion disposable diapers are thrown away. These disposable diapers take approximately 250-500 years to decompose in landfills, thus underscoring the efforts of programs offering diaper and absorbent hygiene product recycling.

**Aluminum Cans** - Every minute, every day, more than 120,000 aluminum cans are recycled only in America. But, at the same time, in every three-month period, enough aluminum cans are thrown away in America that can rebuild the entire American commercial air fleet. Aluminum cans take 80-200 years in landfills to get completely decomposed.

**Glass** - Normally glass is very easy to recycle mainly for the fact that glass is made of sand. Simply breaking down

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### We Want Our Service to Be The Best and You Can Help



Please place your carts at the curb edge with at least 3 feet of clearance from other objects, including other carts, basketball hoops and motor vehicles.



### What Do I Put Into the Organics Cart?

The reason Organics Carts are so important is that using them helps divert materials away from our landfills which is better for the environment. Here is a list to help you use your cart efficiently. Thank you for helping us provide you with the best possible service.

#### Organics Acceptable List

- Grass and weed clippings
- Shrubs and tree prunings (less than 4" in diameter)
- Leaves, plants and flowers
- Food scraps and food soiled paper products

#### Non-acceptable Organics List

- No household garbage
- **No plastic bags**
- No dirt or rocks
- No overloading - lid must be closed

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# How Long Does it Take for Garbage to Decompose?

glass and melting it, we can produce new glass. But the shocking fact is that if glass is thrown away in landfills, it takes million years to decompose. And according to some sources, it doesn't decompose at all.

**Paper Waste** - Based on volume, paper is the largest element in American landfills. Normally, it takes 2-6 weeks in landfills to get completely decomposed. But if we recycle paper items, we can easily save lot of landfill space, while reducing the energy and virgin material requirements of making non-recycled paper.

**Food Waste** - By weight, food waste is the largest waste item in American landfills. The time taken for food waste decomposing depends on the type of food. Normally, an orange peel takes 6 months but an apple core or a banana peel takes around one month to decompose.

**Plastic Waste** - Plastic bags are one of the most common litter items found in our waterways, and plastic pollution is a growing threat to oceans and marine life. Plastic bags take hundreds of years to break down or decompose, causing a cumulative litter problem. Shopping with reusable bags helps reduce litter and waste, protects creeks and the bay, and conserves natural resources.

Thank you for doing your part!

**Final Note** - The increasing waste volume are a major concern for mankind. So, the best way to deal with this problem is avoiding products that generate waste materials that take more than a year to decompose in landfills through a proactive design for recycling.

Source: [www.thebalance.com](http://www.thebalance.com)

## New Plastic Bag Ordinance for Alameda County

Since 2013, certain retail stores, including grocery, liquor, and convenience stores have been prohibited from distributing single-use plastic bags.

As of May 1, 2017, the law has expanded to include all retail stores that sell perishable or nonperishable goods including, but not limited to, clothing, food, and personal items. Stores covered since 2013 remain affected.

Requirements for retail stores: stop providing single use carryout bags, stock compliant reusable and paper bags at checkout, charge a minimum of 10 cents for compliant bags and itemize the 10 cent charge on customer receipts.



## SUMMERTIME FIRE SAFETY TIPS

Setting up your grill with charcoals and grilling all your favorite foods is a great part of summer barbecues. Please, be very careful when disposing your burnt charcoal, because it can be very deceiving. Although the ashes can seem gray and cold, a little ember can be hidden inside and last for days which will cause a fire. A fail-safe idea is scoop your ashes into tin foil and add a little water. If you hear a sizzling noise, that is the little ember we were telling you about.



The next sort of trash cart fire can be caused by accidentally disposing of "Household Hazardous Waste" in your trash cart. Some chemicals can be inert on their own, but when mixed with others they can create a chemical reaction that causes heat which starts a fire. Therefore, state law demands that all chemicals must be taken to your local Hazardous Waste Facility and not be put in your trash cart.

We give you these two very important tips because we don't want you to have a melted trash cart, but most importantly, we do not want a burning trash cart to spread to your home endangering you or your family. Have a safe and happy summer.