



**Councilperson Celeste Friend**  
SOUTH UTICA - THIRD WARD



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One of the most basic functions of any local government is to help us dispose of our waste. Of course, once upon a time, everyone dealt with this by themselves. (And of course, in the not-too distant past, we also simply created far less waste than we do now.) But as we built up larger and larger communities, we had to figure out how to deal with this collectively. I have vivid childhood memories of going to the dump with my Dad on Saturday mornings. In many small and rural towns, this is still how it works. But in cities like ours, most of us don't go to the dump, the "dump" comes to us. (In Utica, as in many places, you can still take your own trash to the solid waste facility, and sometimes it is the easiest way to dispose of some things, such as cans of paint.)

## **Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Authority**



Not very long ago, garbage pick-up was a straightforward task that the City of Utica performed: our DPW had garbage trucks, and the DPW went around and picked up the trash. Then this government function, like many other government

functions, was consolidated and partially privatized. Utica, in cooperation with County governments and other municipalities established the Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Authority (OHSWA) in 1988 in order to create adequate landfills for trash. Then, under Mayor Hanna, a few years later OHSWA took over the actual trash and recycling collection. They sub-contract out this work to private companies. In Utica this company is Controlled Waste System Inc (CWSI).

### **How is all this garbage removal paid for?**

Although OHSWA covers the municipalities in both Oneida and Herkimer Counties, each municipality's solid waste finances are treated separately. In Utica, we rely on two income streams to pay for all of our trash and recycling. First, the annual solid waste fee is charged per property on a flat fee basis depending on the size of the property. (Single family home fees are currently \$86.) The sale of blue bags generates the other revenue stream. This is referred to as "pay as you throw", where the more you throw away, the more blue bags you have to buy. And this pays for all of the trash and recycling pick up. In other words, all of this trash and recycling pickup is paid for completely outside of the City budget. We each pay a fee and we all buy blue bags.

### **What Can I Throw Out?**

In Utica, all the things that we want to dispose of can be categorized in one of six ways: garbage, bulk trash, bulk items, tires, recyclables, and green waste. Here are some of the rules for each. (For more examples and full rules, either follow the link below or pick up a poster at Cafe Domenico.)

#### **Garbage**

Here in Utica, we are required to use blue bags for all of our household garbage and trash. This includes all manner of things, such as food waste, clothing and shoes, and small appliances.

#### **Bulk Trash**

This is limited to a 3' x 3' x 3' volume and includes items like garden hoses, pools, old lawn furniture, large toys, furnace filters, etc. Nothing can be longer than 4' and wood or metal should be bundled together or placed into large trash cans as long as the can doesn't weigh more than 50 lbs. These trash items can be placed next to the blue bags. This is in my view, very generous. We can put all this sort of stuff out, as long as we do so properly, every week. Next door in New Hartford, none of this sort of stuff can be put out with the regular garbage.

#### **Bulk Items**

Each household can set out one bulk item each week. These include large appliances, such as refrigerators or dishwashers. It also includes electronic items, such as tvs, computer monitors, printers. These electronic devices will be properly recycled, but can be put out with your trash.

#### **Tires**

Each household can set out two car tires per week, with or without rims. But never put out truck tires! (Again, this is pretty generous in my view.)

## CITY OF UTICA BLUE BAGS & GARBAGE SET-OUT REQUIREMENTS

This information is for City of Utica residents on how to set out garbage & recyclables properly to the curb. Please take time to read this information. This is our City, and by following the rules and regulations we can help keep our City clean.

Garbage (City of Utica Blue Bags) and Recyclables (Orange Container/RecycleOne Decaled Container) should be placed between the sidewalk and the curb for collection. Each single family home is allowed to set out a maximum of 10 City Blue Bags each week. Each multiple family (two or more) home and business is allowed to set out 20 Blue Bags each week.

Garbage & Recyclables are collected once a week. Setout time is between 5 PM and 11 PM on the night before your collection day. It's against local laws to put items out except on that night (Non-compliance may result in a violation notice). Please remove your recycling containers and trash cans from the City curb after collection. Please call 315-731-0238 for your night of collection.

### ANY ITEM THAT CANNOT BE RECYCLED AND IS NOT CONSIDERED A TRASH OR BULK ITEM SHOULD BE PLACED IN A CITY OF UTICA BLUE BAG.

**Blue Bag Examples:** food waste, coffee grounds, tissues, towels, napkins, paper plates & cups, dishes, silverware & cooking utensils, disposable diapers for babies/adults, plastic bags (any type), prescription medication bottles, empty paint cans, empty paint or pesticide aerosol containers, brushes (hair, tooth, paint), needles & syringes in a can with a taped lid, ashes from stoves/barbecues/fireplaces, pet droppings & litter products, shoes, gloves, boots, sneakers, hats, pocketbooks, wallets, clothes including cloth items, rags, mop heads, curtains, bedspreads, incandescent light bulbs (all sizes), small toys, games, small appliances (alarm clocks, radios, razors, can openers, etc.), ceramics, air & oil car filters, empty oil containers, microwave products, soiled newspaper or cardboard, soda/beer cartons, frozen food boxes and styrofoam cups, plates & meat trays.

#### TRASH LIMIT →

**One cubic yard (3' x 3')** for one family (Two cubic yards for two or more apartments or businesses).

For example: Two containers under 35 gallons, and not more than 50 pounds.

**Trash Examples:** garden hoses, plastic pools, empty driveway sealer cans, old lawn furniture, lawn mowers, linoleum, pieces of rug & carpet padding, small appliances such as irons, coffee pots, electric frying pans, fans, lamps, toaster ovens, microwaves, large toys such as swing sets, bicycles, tricycles, big wheels, window panes & frames, furnace filters, suitcases, hampers, construction & demolition (C&D) debris such as roofing materials, wood, plaster, plasterboard, bathroom tiles, floor tiles, cement pieces & insulation.

**1**  
CUBIC  
YARD

#### TRASH PREPARATION →

**Wood or metal (4-foot length limit) must be tied into secure bundles. Place smaller pieces into a durable plastic or metal lidded container, no larger than 35 gallons, weight limit 50 pounds. Set out next to your Blue Bags on garbage night only.**

**4'**  
LENGTH  
LIMIT

#### BULK ITEMS →

**There is a limit of one (1) bulk item per week, per building. Residents are permitted to set out electronic waste at the curb as their weekly bulk item. Bulk items that are electronic waste will be collected for proper recycling.**

**Bulk Item Examples:** washing machine, dryer, refrigerator, freezer, stove, dishwasher, hot water heater, dresser, couch/sofa, large chair, and room-size rugs/carpets (rolled up & tied, and not over 6').

**Electronic Waste Examples:** TVs, monitors, computers, laptops, printers/scanners, video game consoles, tablets, MP3 players, VCRs/DVRs/DVD players, cable/satellite boxes, & fax machines.

**NO:** 55 Gallon drums, pianos, safes, propane tanks or oil tanks—these items are **NOT** collected at curbside in the City but are accepted at the Authority EcoDrop Facility on Leland Ave. in Utica, year round. Some fees may apply.

**1**  
ITEM  
PER WEEK

#### CAR TIRES →

**Limit of two car tires per week, per building, no truck tires.**

**2**  
TIRES  
PER WEEK

#### GREEN WASTE →

**Green waste will not be collected loose at the curb. Place leaves, grass, twigs and other green waste in a durable plastic or metal lidded container up to 35 gallon capacity (April through November).**

Containers should not exceed 50 pounds each. Do not use plastic bags. Do not use your orange/recycling container for green waste. Shrubbery branches and limbs (no longer than 4') should be bundled and tied. You will be limited to a total of 5 green waste containers or bundles per week. For questions related to green waste collection times or missed pick-ups call the Utica DPW directly at 315.738.1341. If you have large quantities of green waste (i.e. trees) call OHSWA at 315.731.0238 for a service fee quote or instructions on hauling green waste to the Compost Facility.

**5**  
CONTAINER  
LIMIT PER  
WEEK

## Recyclables

In 2011, OHSWA adopted “single stream” recycling, which means that we can put all of our recyclable items into one container and they are separated out later. We can recycle paper, plastic, metal, and glass. For all the rules, see the poster or click below. Until a few years ago, Utica provided round orange buckets for recycling, and then rectangular ones. But after 2011, when we were

able to put all our recyclable items into one bucket, those became too small and so are being phased out. We are now responsible for providing our own container for recyclables, to which we should affix large decals that the OHSWA happily and freely gives us. The best thing to do is to use a large plastic container with a lid, so that on a windy night our recyclables don't end up all over the street and our neighbors' yards.

Currently, more than a third of what we put out on garbage pick-up night gets recycled. This is impressive and OHSWA is to be commended for this. Those recyclables are then sold on the market and turned into new goods. The revenue from the sale of these recyclables helps to keep costs down for the entire system.



recycleone  
ONE AND DONE

**ONE BIN** | **MIX ALL**  
**NO BAGS** | **RECYCLABLES**  
EASIER, MORE CONVENIENT, LESS COST. **TOGETHER**

### HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

★ All Recyclable Items Mix Together In One Bin For Collection ★

1. All recyclable items—paper, plastic, metal and glass—need to be mixed together loosely in one container.
2. Recyclables must be placed in an approved container no less than 10 gallons, not more than 35 gallons.
3. Lids and labels should be left on recyclable containers. Containers should be empty and rinsed before recycling.
4. Do not place recyclables in plastic bags for collection. No string, trash or green waste allowed.
5. Cardboard boxes must be empty (packaging removed) and flattened/broken down before recycling.



## PAPER

Newspaper & Inserts  
Junk Mail, Circulars,  
Magazines & Catalogs  
Phone & Paperback Books  
Brown Grocery Bags  
Lightweight &  
Corrugated Cardboard

**Beverage Cartons**  
(Milk, Juice & Juice Boxes)

**DO NOT INCLUDE:**  
Hard Cover Books, Napkins, Paper Plates,  
Tissue Paper, Soda & Beer Cartons or  
Construction Paper



## PLASTIC

**Plastic Bottles & Containers**  
(With & Without Numbers)  
Milk & Water Jugs  
Cottage Cheese,  
Yogurt & Pudding Cup  
Containers  
Soap & Detergent  
Containers

**DO NOT INCLUDE:**  
Plastic Bags, Styrofoam Containers,  
Toys, Motor Oil Bottles, Prescription Bottles  
or Clothes Hangers



## METAL

**Food & Beverage Cans**  
Deposit Cans  
Aluminum Foil  
Aluminum Plates  
& Trays  
Aerosol Cans  
Metal Lids

**DO NOT INCLUDE:**  
Propane Tanks, Metal-Cardboard Containers  
(Cocoa & Motor Oil), Clothes Hangers, Silverware  
or Small Appliances



## GLASS

Green, Amber &  
Clear Containers  
Canning Jars  
Deposit Bottles  
Liquor & Wine Bottles  
Food & Beverage  
Containers

**DO NOT INCLUDE:**  
Broken Glass, Drinking Glasses,  
Ovenware or Ceramics, Dishes, Mirrors,  
Window Glass or Light Bulbs

★ ONLY ONE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE: SHREDDED PAPER – PLACE IN A CLEAR PLASTIC BAG WITH YOUR RECYCLABLES ★

#### Items That SHOULD NOT Be Placed In Your Recycling Bin

- **Sharps**  
Do not set out with your recyclables! Place used needles, syringes and lancets in a puncture-proof plastic container like a laundry detergent bottle with a top. When full, tape lid/top shut, label as "sharps" and place in the garbage.
- **Plastic Bags**
- **Batteries**
- **Ceramics**
- **Clothes Hangers**
- **Drinking Glasses**
- **Electronics**
- **Garbage**
- **Household Hazardous Waste**
- **Lawn & Yard Waste**
- **Light Bulbs**
- **Paint Cans**
- **Propane Tanks**
- **Styrofoam**
- **Window Glass**



For more information on RecycleOne, waste disposal and special programs, visit [ohswa.org](http://ohswa.org) or call **315.733.1224**.

\*RecycleOne decals can be obtained from the Administrative Office at 1600 Genesee Street, Utica, NY 13502

#### EcoDrop

**Residents & Businesses May Drop Off Recyclables At Our Two EcoDrop Facilities:**

**EcoDrop | Utica** – 80 Leland Ave.  
Mon – Fri 8 AM – 4 PM, Sat 7 AM – 2 PM

**EcoDrop | Rome** – 575 Perimeter Rd.  
Mon – Fri 8 AM – 4 PM, Sat 8 AM – 12 PM

#### AmIRecyclable.com?

Download the AmIRecyclable digital reference guide for your SmartPhone to learn how to properly recycle or dispose of various items including plastic toys, garden hoses, plastic bags, Styrofoam and more.

### Pick up a Poster and Recycling Sticker

Want to have one of these great, very informative brochures, shown above, that explains all the details about what we can set out on trash night? (In addition to English, the OHSWA publishes the brochure in several languages, taking into consideration that Utica is now home to several immigrant populations.) You can pick up a poster at Café Domenico or at OHSWA's offices at 1600 Genesee Street, where you can also get a recycling sticker for your container.

## Check Out All The Set-Out Requirements for Utica

### OHSWA Phone Number

Are you unsure of how to dispose of something in particular? Did you think that you put something out correctly, but it is still there in the morning? Call OHSWA, located right here in Utica, and talk to real live people, ready and able to answer your questions. They can check the driver's log and help you figure out why something was left behind and how to put trash out correctly. Just call 315-731-0238

[Visit OHSWA's Very Helpful Website](#)

## Green Waste



OHSWA does not handle any of our green waste. All green waste is picked up by the DPW. For a few weeks in Spring and again in Fall, they pick up what is called “bulk green waste”, meaning green waste not in any sort of container. We are free to rake our leaves and other garden waste towards the curb and they will come and pick it up in the night. We don't pay anything extra for this City service. But, and this is important: **DO NOT PUT GREEN WASTE IN THE STREET.** When we put our green waste in the street, it causes all sorts of problems – it limits parking; it gets driven over and causes a mess, and worst of all, it gets washed by the rain into our storm drains and exacerbates our flooding problems. So, put your green waste up on the edge of the city right-of-

way – just next to the street, but not IN the street. After bulk pick up is over, which again, lasts for a few weeks in Spring and again in Fall, then we can put our green waste out in containers and the DPW will continue to pick it up.

## **Violations of Utica Codes**

There is a certain division of labor when it comes to dealing with trash left in people's yards. Anything between the street and sidewalk is in the purview of OHSWA. If people put out trash in ways that violate the requirements, then it most likely will not be picked up. OHSWA can then abate that trash by picking it up and then directly charge for that service by placing a lien on the property taxes. If, on the other hand, trash is on private property, the City must deal with and potentially abate it themselves.

## **How to Create Less Solid Waste: Author's Note**

It seems an understatement to say that we, as a society, create too much waste of all sorts, including solid waste. We overpackage and overconsume and then simply take it for advantage that we can then put it out at the curb and before we know it, someone else hauls it away and we don't have to worry about it anymore. But of course it is still in the world, taking up room and creating all sorts of problematic by-products. And a great deal of resources were used to create it in the first place. Even worse, a lot of solid waste ends up not where we really intended it to be. The oceans are so full of plastic that now there are micro-particles of plastic in the fish that we eat. We must move towards a world where we simply waste less and conserve all sorts of resources more.

If you end up with a lot of leftover food, and you don't want to dispose of it in blue bags, you can in fact take it to the OHSWA facility on Leland Ave and it will be composted, rather than simply dumped into a landfill.

On a small, local scale, we can create less solid waste, and buy fewer blue bags, simply by composting some of our waste in our own back yards. Composting is easy and the end product can be used in our own gardens. All sorts of vegetable scraps and egg shells from our kitchens can be kept out of the waste stream with a little organization and effort. Below is a link to get you started on composting at home

## Keep Utica Beautiful

In order to keep our City beautiful, there are some basic rules which we all need to follow:

- Do NOT put out any of your trash before 5pm on the night before your pickup, and make sure that it is out by 11pm.
- Put ALL your household trash in Blue Bags. The next morning, please take your containers in.
- Only put allowed recyclable items in your recycling container, and please use a container with a lid.
- Place all trash and garbage in the City right-of-way, between the street and the sidewalk, or at the end of your driveway.
- Always say hello and be thankful for the CWSI workers, who work hard in the middle of the night cleaning up after us.

Thank you to everyone at OHSWA and Director Bill Rabbia for all their hard work, and for helping me build this Newsletter.



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