

# MRF TURE

## Winter 2025

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Manitowoc County Recycling Center & Compost Sites



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### BE AWARE OF BATTERY HAZARDS

Many batteries can pose hazards if handled or disposed of improperly. Lithium batteries are commonly found in many devices today including phones, tablets, laptops, drones, and many high tech toys. They typically carry a high capacity charge needed to meet the energy demands of the devices they power, and if they are damaged they can react and ignite.

Do not place these batteries in your recycling or garbage, or any items containing these batteries. They can and do start fires and have been responsible for many fires in collection vehicles, recycling centers, transfer stations, and landfills.

So what should you do? There are places that can collect and recycle unwanted lithium batteries. The Manitowoc County Recycling Center can accept most rechargeable batteries for a small fee as part of our electronics recycling service, visit [manitowocountywi.gov/.../electronics-collection/](http://manitowocountywi.gov/.../electronics-collection/) for details.



A young child can easily swallow a button battery and suffer dangerous burns and possible death. Be aware of the danger these batteries can pose if they are handled or disposed of improperly. Button batteries are often found in keyless entry remotes, watches, remote controls, toys, calculators, hearing aides, musical greeting cards, and flashing toys/jewelry/shoes. The Manitowoc County Recycling Center accepts button batteries for recycling along with other battery types.



This tablet was brought in when the owner discovered the battery had expanded and burst open the device. This is a defective or damaged lithium ion battery and it is an elevated risk for fire and should be treated with caution. Not all swollen batteries will start on fire, but it is an early sign that something is wrong and they could heat up and ignite. Usually, they burn like a firework or flare and are difficult to extinguish. If you have a battery like this, it can be bagged, placed in a bucket of sand or clay based cat litter, and taken to a safe disposal site.

### Mission Statement

To provide materials recycling and recovery services to the citizens of Manitowoc County and to keep the public informed about recycling issues.



**Manitowoc County Recycling Center & Compost Sites**  
3000 Basswood Road, Manitowoc WI  
920-683-4333  
[Recycling.manitowocountywi.gov](http://Recycling.manitowocountywi.gov)



NEEDLES ENDANGER WASTE WORKERS

Used needles and lancets can stick waste disposal workers when they are thrown away in the trash or recycling, brought to medication collections, or flushed down the toilet. Any worker accidentally stuck with a needle must get medical testing and worry about the possibility of harmful or deadly diseases such as Hepatitis and HIV. Needle-stick injuries are a preventable risk. Package and dispose of your sharps safely to avoid exposing yourself and others to harm. Learn what to do with your sharps in the Manitowoc area at: [manitowocountywi.gov/.../what-do-i-do-with/sharps/](http://manitowocountywi.gov/.../what-do-i-do-with/sharps/).



FREON CONTAINING APPLIANCES

Many customers stop in asking what do do with their air conditioners, dehumidifiers, or refrigerators. We do not accept these items because we are not licensed to handle or remove Freon. There are other places in the area that do though. Be sure to call ahead for their guidelines and pricing. If you have unwanted Freon containing items consider taking them to one of the following places:

- Appliance Disposal, Manitowoc, 920-323-0493
- Sadoff Iron & Metal, Manitowoc, 920-684-3388
- Langs Appliance Service, Manitowoc, 920-682-8091
- Tisler Salvage Inc., Reedsville, 920-864-7631
- B & B Metals, Newton, 920-693-8261
- Salvage Battery and Lead, Mishicot, 920-755-4511



LAMP RECYCLING is one of the services provided by the Manitowoc County Recycling Center’s ongoing electronics collection program. Some lamps, including fluorescent tubes, compact fluorescent bulbs and high intensity discharge bulbs, contain small amounts of mercury that can be harmful to human health and the environment when they are disposed of in the trash. Even incandescent bulbs contain lead, which is also a toxic metal. All the materials in these bulbs can be recycled. During 2023 the Recycling Center collected approximately 14,889 bulbs from area residents and businesses. Once received, the bulbs are carefully packaged for shipping to a specialized recycling facility where hazardous materials are safely removed. All the materials in these bulbs can be recycled without generating any waste. Even the hazardous materials, like mercury, can be recovered.

Bring your burnt out lamps and ballasts to main office at the Manitowoc County Recycling Center. When transporting large amounts of fluorescent tubes secure them in boxes or by taping them together in manageable bundles using an easy release masking or painter’s tape (no duct tape).



Item	Fee
4 ft. Fluorescent Lamps*	\$0.45 each
8 ft. Fluorescent Lamps*	\$0.55 each
Compact Fluorescent Lamps*	\$0.45 each
High Intensity Discharge (HID) Lamps (Including Sodium, Metal Halides, & Mercury Vapor)*	\$1.40 each
Incandescent, Flood and Spot Light Lamps*	\$0.35 each
LED Lamps*	\$2.80 each
Ballasts (non-PCB)	\$0.55 per lb
Ballasts (PCB)	\$1.00 per lb

\*There will be an additional charge for any broken lamps.  
 \*\*Do not use duct tape to bundle fluorescent lamps together, use an easy-release tape like painter’s tape or masking tape.



**CHRISTMAS LIGHTS**

Bring your unwanted Christmas lights to the Manitowoc County Recycling Center. Strings of lights are recyclable, even with the bulbs in them. There is no charge to recycle strings of lights or any other electrical cords. Bring them to the Recycling Center Main Office at 3000 Basswood Road Monday-Friday between 7am and 4pm.

All string lights will be accepted as well as extension cords. Garland, wreaths, trees and other lighted decorations will not be accepted. Normal light bulbs, including spot lights, compact fluorescents, fluorescent tubes, and incandescent bulbs can be recycled but normal fees apply.

This is a popular service. Since we started collecting string lights in 2015, approximately 7300 pounds have been turned in.



Visit the Recycling Center at [manitowocountywi.gov/departments/recycling-center/electronics-collection/](http://manitowocountywi.gov/departments/recycling-center/electronics-collection/) or call 920-683-4333 to learn more about Christmas Light Recycling and similar programs offered in Manitowoc County.

**COMPOST YOUR HOLIDAY TREE**

Manitowoc County residents and businesses may drop off their natural holiday trees at the Basswood Compost Site. Remove all ornaments, tinsel, lights, stands and storage bags from trees before dropping off. If your tree is more than 6 feet long, please cut it in half. The Basswood compost site is located at 3000 Basswood Rd., near the intersection of CTY P and R. Please call 920-683-4333 or visit [manitowocountywi.gov/.../yard-materials-drop-off/](http://manitowocountywi.gov/.../yard-materials-drop-off/) for information.

According to the National Christmas Tree Association around 29 million natural trees are sold over the holidays. Many of these trees are recycled once their holiday usefulness is over. Used natural trees can be chipped and turned into wood mulch. Mulch is used for groundcover and erosion control in landscaping projects and trails. Another popular use is for constructing wildlife habitat. If properly placed in a backyard these holiday conifers provide shelter and protection for songbirds during the winter. Placed in loose piles at the edge of a woodland, these trees help many wildlife including birds, small mammals and even the animals that depend on them for food. Many sportsmen will construct these brush piles to attract small game or to create hunting blinds. Carefully placed piles on the ice in lakes can be used to create fish habitat once the ice melts and the trees sink to the bottom. Be sure to check for local restrictions and warnings about invasive organisms before building fish or wildlife structures.



Holiday trees may be taken for free from the Manitowoc County Basswood Compost Site during normal business hours. However, do not climb on the pile to remove trees.



**TREE FOR A TREE PROGRAM** The Manitowoc County Recycling Center is assisting the City of Manitowoc Parks and Forestry Division with their 'Tree for a Tree' Program. Throughout January, City of Manitowoc residents will be able to receive a voucher for a free deciduous tree when they bring their natural Christmas tree to the Basswood Compost Site. Participants must come to the Recycling Center Main Office, open Monday through Friday between 7am and 4pm, before dropping off their tree. Participants will need to complete and sign a form at the main office. Vouchers will be mailed to qualified City residents in March. There are a limited number of vouchers available on a first come, first serve basis with a limit of one per address to City of Manitowoc residents. Pickup details will be announced when the voucher is mailed out. A total of 75 vouchers will be issued. Choice of species is on a first come first serve basis as their will be limited quantities. Vouchers are redeemable at the Silver Creek Nursery from April 15 to May 15 for deciduous seedlings known as 'whips', which are about 3-4 feet tall, 2-4 years old, and ready for planting. The Tree for a Tree program is part of an urban forestry grant through the WDNR to help regain some of the urban tree canopy that will be lost due to the Emerald Ash Borer.

For more information visit [manitowocountywi.gov/.../yard-materials-drop-off/](http://manitowocountywi.gov/.../yard-materials-drop-off/)

For information about the Tree for a Tree offer visit <https://www.manitowoc.org/DocumentCenter/View/30496/Tree-For-A-Tree-Flyer?bidId=>

**CAN'T WAIT FOR THE CLEAN SWEEP?**

If you have old chemicals and want to get rid of them before our next Hazardous Waste Clean Sweep collection event, you can take them to the Brown County Resource Recovery site. As a non-resident of their area, you will need to pay a fee depending on the type and amount of hazardous materials you bring in. They are only open on designated days of the week. For more information about their program, fees, and guidelines, visit them [online](#) or call 920-492-4950.

Typically, Manitowoc County holds a free, one-day, drive through "Clean Sweep" event in mid-May every year. It is free and one day only because it occurs at a temporary location and is partly funded through a grant from WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and a donation from Waste Management, Inc., and has a minimal impact on County funding. Plans are underway to hold a [2025 Clean Sweep](#) event.

If you can't wait to get rid of your chemicals, Brown County is a great option and they have a stellar facility. If you can wait and prefer to be frugal, our free, one-day event is a great near-by option. Either program will manage your old chemicals in the safest and most environmentally friendly manner.

**Can't wait to get rid of all your household chemicals?**

**MERCURY REDUCTION PROGRAM**

Very small amounts of mercury can do significant damage. One gram of mercury is enough to contaminate all the fish in a lake with a surface area of 20 acres. A typical mercury thermometer contains approximately 0.7 grams of mercury (700 milligrams), but larger thermometers can contain as much as three grams. Both short term and long term exposure to mercury or mercury vapors can cause serious health problems for humans and wildlife. Mercury affects the nervous system and can impair the way we hear, talk, see, walk, feel and think. Humans are exposed to mercury through contaminated air, water, food, or directly through the skin.

Drop off items listed below at a designated mercury drop-off site. Each household will qualify for one free digital thermometer in exchange for any mercury fever thermometer(s) brought to the Manitowoc County Recycling Center, while supplies last.

**Guidelines:**

- Household devices/material only.
- Items must be 7" by 12" or less. Oversized household items can be taken to the annual Household Hazardous Waste Clean Sweep event.
- When transporting mercury the item must be cushioned in a **sealed, non-metal container**.
- Do not open, disassemble or damage mercury containing devices. (That includes removing the mercury-filled ampule from old thermostats.)
- Businesses can contact the Recycling Center about options for mercury disposal.

**Accepted Items:**

- Thermometers
- Thermostats
- Mercury switches
- Manometers
- Barometers
- Blood pressure monitors
- Dental amalgams
- Bulk mercury





DRUG DISPOSAL PROGRAM RESULTS

Thanks to everyone using and assisting with the county-wide drug disposal program we were able to collect 1,823.8 pounds of unwanted medications in 2024. This included over the counter medications, dietary supplements, prescription medications and pet medications. It did not include pill bottles or packaging. Since the Drug disposal program started in 2006 we have collected 27,101.6 pounds of medications.

All the collected medications were sent to the Wisconsin Department of Justice's Drug Take Back Program. They reported collecting a total of 110,615 pounds of medications in Wisconsin for 2024. From the moment medications are turned in they are handled, stored, and transported by law officers until they are destroyed at a Hazardous Waste incinerator that is regulated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. This type of regulated incineration uses high temperatures and pollution controls to safely incinerate these substances.

Unused medications present public health and safety concerns within the community. When flushed or thrown in the trash, pharmaceutical chemicals can show up in the water supply. Medications can also be involved in accidental poisonings, theft and drug abuse when improperly stored or handled.

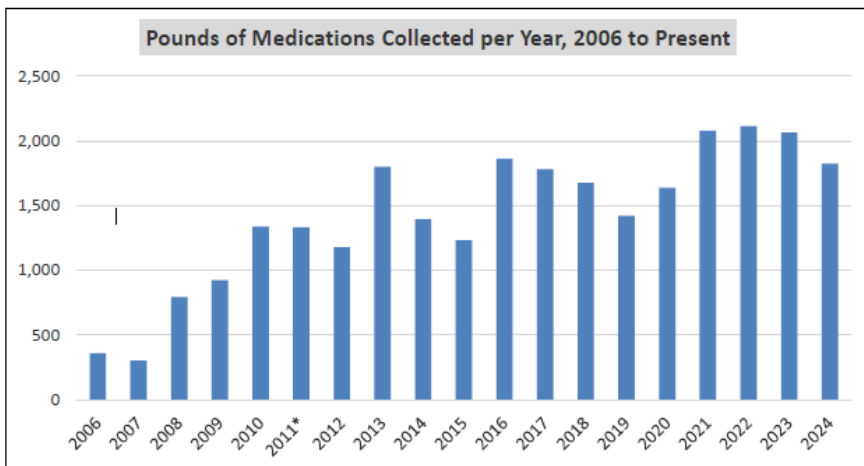
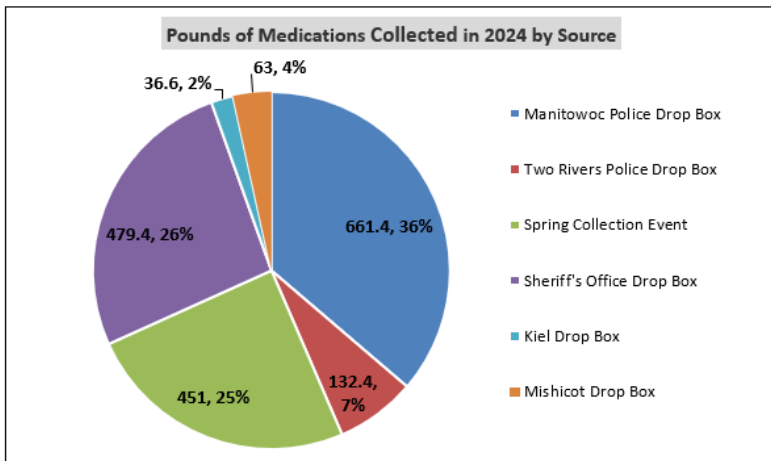
Permanent Dropbox Locations:

- Manitowoc County Sheriff's Office: 1025 South 9th St, Manitowoc, 8am—3:30pm M-F
- Manitowoc City Police Dept: 910 Jay Street, Manitowoc, 7:30am—4:30pm M-Th, 7:30am-11:30am F
- Two Rivers Police Dept: 1717 East Park Street, Two Rivers, 8am—4:30pm M-F
- Mishicot Village Hall: 511 East Main Street, Mishicot, WI, open during Village Hall hours
- Kiel Police Dept: 619 Paine St, Kiel, open 7:30a-3p M-F

Directions:

Remove pills from original container and put them in a sealed "ziplock" style bag that is quart size or smaller before placing in the drug drop box. Empty pill containers may be placed in your home recycling or trash. Liquid, powder, and cream medications should remain in the original bottles with caps tightened. Accepted medications include over the counter, prescriptions, supplements, and pet medications. Never dump thermometers, sharps, or chemicals in a drop box.

Complete information on the Drug Disposal Program is available at [manitowocountywi.gov/departments/recycling-center/drug-disposal/](http://manitowocountywi.gov/departments/recycling-center/drug-disposal/) or you can call the Recycling Center at 920-683-4333 if you have questions.



**RECYCLING DEPOT**

The Manitowoc Recycling Center maintains a residential drop off area at the Recycling Center Main Office located at 3000 Basswood Road. It is open Monday-Friday from 7am to 4pm, and Saturday from 8am to noon. This site is intended for use by all county residents. There is no trash or garbage drop off at this location. Contact a local hauler or the Ridgeview Landfill for disposal of trash. Different municipal drop off sites may be more accessible to you depending on the city, township or village you are from.

General Drop Site Guidelines

- Place your recyclables in the bunker or receptacle labeled for that material.
- Remove any plastic bags or strings and take them home with you to place in your trash.
- Do not place nonacceptable items in the bunkers or receptacles.
- Do not place materials outside receptacles on the ground.
- Large loads of cardboard, paper or plastic can be placed on appropriate pile on the tipping floor.
- Use caution driving through the drop site and on the tipping floor.
- Due to Covid-19, please practice social distancing and other precautions at the recycling depot.



The recycling and compost areas are monitored for illegal dumping, littering, and other issues. Please follow all posted guidelines.

Paper

Includes newspapers, junk mail, magazines, computer paper, books with metal or plastic binding removed etc.. Paper should be clean and dry. No paper contaminated with food or oil. No paper coated with foil, plastic or heavy glue. No plastic/foil wrapping paper.



Plastic

Check for a neck. **We only accept #1 and #2 bottles and jars.** Bottles and jars should be empty. No tub shaped containers or bottles that contained oil or pesticide (even if rinsed). No plastic wraps, films, bags, trays, pails, packaging peanuts, Styrofoam, or any other non bottle shaped item. Please do not tie milk jugs together or tie in plastic bags.



Glass Bottles

Any color glass bottle or jar can be recycled. Put into designated bunker. Remove lids or caps and rinse. No window glass, mirrors, light bulbs, clay, ceramics, drinking glasses or ovenware.



Cartons

Cartons include shelf stable and refrigerated containers for wine, milk, juice, cream, soy milk, soup, and egg substitutes. Drop off cartons with the plastic bottles. They should be emptied and flattened.



Cardboard

Should be clean and flattened. No soiled cardboard or cardboard coated with wax, tin, or plastic.



Cans

Tin, steel, and aluminum cans. Coated cans, foil, and pie tins are ok. Empty and rinse out food residue.



**ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER REQUEST**

Are you interested in receiving current updates recycling programs in Manitowoc County? Join our electronic mailing list to receive our quarterly newsletter. Either call us at 920-683-4333 or email [jonreisenbuechler@manitowoccountywi.gov](mailto:jonreisenbuechler@manitowoccountywi.gov) and request to be added to our email distribution list. The recycling center will not give away or sell your information. You will receive our quarterly newsletter detailing news and information about the recycling center and related events.

**SCRAP METAL DUMPSTER**

The Recycling Depot now has a scrap metal dumpster available for your convenience. It is for clean scrap metal only, including steel, iron, copper, sheet/cast aluminum, tin, and mixed metals. Please remove excessive non-metal components.

- NO propane (or other) tanks
- NO electronics or appliances
- NO batteries or lamps
- NO garbage, plastic, wood, or rubber
- NO chemicals, gas, oil, or other hazardous wastes.



The Manitowoc County Recycling Center is operated by Ascend Services Inc. Formerly Holiday House of Manitowoc Inc.



The Manitowoc County Recycling Center is a business unit of the Manitowoc County Department of Public Works.

