

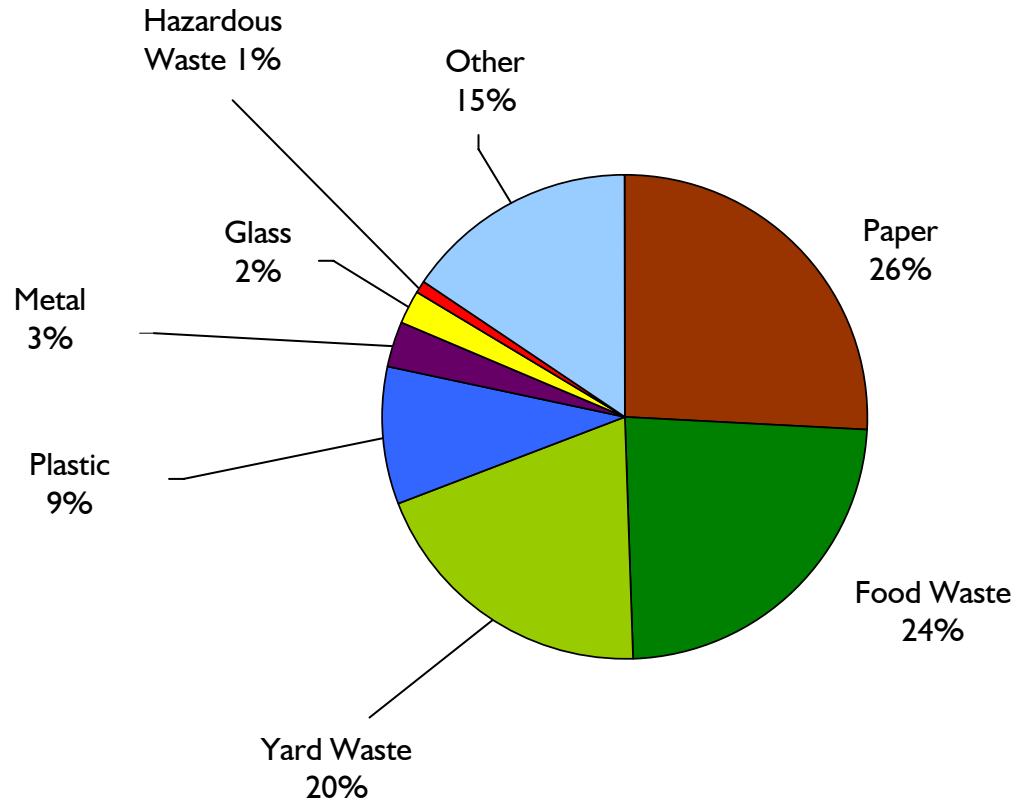
# Waste & Recycling

The average Calgarian throws 1000Kgs of garbage into our landfills each year. Half of this “waste” is organic and includes leaf, grass, and other yard waste, as well as kitchen scraps. Most, if not all, of this material could be turned into a valuable soil amendment called compost. Another 25% of the waste is paper and cardboard, while less than 9% of regular household waste is comprised of plastics. The remainder is comprised of metal, glass and old products – toasters, mattresses, cell phones, clothes, carpet, et cetera.

Recent studies show that less than 17% of Calgarians recycle. This is one reason why Calgarians have the highest rate of waste generation in the world. Our affluence is another. As affluence increases so does buying power; the more buying power people have the more they are able to consume. Short lived products and disposable convenience goods are filling our landfills and trashing our planet.

In 2003, Albertans were producing 800kgs of waste/capita. They set a goal to reduce that number to 500kgs of waste/capita by 2010. Since 2003, instead of reducing our waste from 800kgs/capita to 500kgs/capita, we’ve increased our waste to 1000kgs/capita.

## Household Waste in Calgary:



## THE CHECKLIST

Question	Comment Positive	Action
Are you composting?	Compostable material accounts for half of all waste going to landfill. By composting organic kitchen and yard waste the average Calgarian can reduce their waste by 50%, while making an incredible soil amendment in the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get a compost bin and start using it. It should be in a convenient and sunny location. You can compost 12 months of the year.</li> </ul> For more information visit <a href="http://www.greencalgary.org">www.greencalgary.org</a> and check out the <b>Composting Guide</b> under 'Resources'.
Do you recycle?	Between composting and recycling, nearly 90% of waste can be saved from the landfill.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper, cardboard, glass, plastic bags, milk containers, and beverage containers can be recycled in Calgary. Use the green bins.</li> </ul>
Do you have a 'No Junk Mail' sticker?	31 million trees are cut down each year in Canada for junk mail alone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put the 'No Junk Mail' sticker (included in kit) on your mail box.</li> </ul>

<p>Do you take your reusable grocery bags with you when you go shopping?</p>	<p>Billions of plastic bags are distributed in Canada each year. Most get used for less than an hour before being disposed of. Single use plastic bags litter our city and generate tremendous amounts of waste.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Get in the habit of using a reusable grocery/shopping bag or basket. When you are finished unloading your items, put them back in your car or in your bicycle pannier.</li> </ul> <p>We all remember to bring our wallets to the grocery store, so using the same technique for remembering our grocery bags will make this second-nature.</p>
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## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Choose products without packaging or products that have minimal packaging;

### Did You Know?

For every 1 kilogram of waste that we generate in our homes, 56 kilograms of waste is generated upstream in the mining, processing, manufacturing and distribution systems. If you are interested in learning more about how this works check out the [www.storyofstuff.com](http://www.storyofstuff.com) for an amazing short video.

- Look for products that can be refilled;
- Choose products that contain recycled material (i.e. look for things that state “this product contains 50% postconsumer recycled paperboard”);



### The EcoLogo Certification

A made-in-Canada certification, EcoLogo is a widely recognized and respected certification mark that helps people to identify environmentally preferable goods and services. Visit [www.ecologo.org](http://www.ecologo.org) for more information.

- Choose products that are durable and that can be repaired.



### Plastic Symbols – don’t be fooled

This symbol does not indicate that the product is made from recycled plastic or even that it can be recycled. This confusing symbol is simply the resin code which indicates the type of plastic used in the manufacturing process. If the product is made from recycled material it will say: “made from 100% recycled plastic” or some variation of that phrase.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Green Calgary's Compost Guide** ([www.greencalgary.org](http://www.greencalgary.org): see 'Resources'):

**Green Calgary's Reuse and Recycling Guide** ([www.greencalgary.org](http://www.greencalgary.org): see 'Resources'): Calgary's most comprehensive reuse and recycling guide, offering solutions for everything from wine corks to old sneakers.

**ECOHOLIC** (2007) by Adria Vasil

## PRODUCED BY GREEN CALGARY

***Empowering Calgarians to create healthy homes and communities by providing environmental education, products and services.***

Green Calgary offers a variety of programs to help achieve mandates of waste reduction and water protection including Environmental Education; Healthy Homes Calgary; Commercial Environmental Services (formerly Calgary Materials Exchange); EcoStore - selling environmental products that reduce our environmental footprint; Information Services & E-newsletter.

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