

Steele County Waste Disposal Guide

A

Adhesives

Glues, caulking compounds, epoxy resins, pastes, joint fillers, wood putty, grout, spackling compounds, rubber cement, and adhesives that are flammable, poisonous, and corrosive or contain petroleum distillates from Steele County homes should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facilities for free disposal. [Click here](#) for more information on the location and hours of these HHW facilities. If the container is completely empty or the substance is completely dried out, it may be placed in the trash.

Aerosol cans

EMPTY aerosol cans may be recycled with metal cans. [Click here](#) for more information about Steele County's Residential Recycling program.

Aerosol cans that are not empty and come from Steele County homes may be taken to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information on the location and hours of these HHW facilities. Do not burn aerosol cans, as they are a safety hazard.

Agricultural Pesticides

Through a partnership with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Steele County is now able to accept up to 100 pounds of agricultural and commercial pesticides from facilities in Steele County free of charge. To ensure good service to all Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility visitors, agricultural and commercial pesticides are ONLY accepted by appointment and only during the regular HHW facility operating season (May through September). [Click here](#) for more information about the Steele County HHW facility or call the Steele County Landfill at 507-583-7766 for more information on this waste disposal program or to set up an appointment.

Empty pesticide containers from businesses can be disposed in the trash, however they should be triple rinsed prior to disposal, with rinse water used up according to directions in the same way as the rest of that pesticide.

Aluminum cans

Aluminum cans may be recycled at curbside and at all Steele County Recycling Drop Off Sties. [Click here](#) for more information about Steele County's Residential Recycling program. Aluminum cans may also be redeemed for cash at scrap metal dealers, such as Owatonna Metal Recycling. Check the phone book yellow pages for other options of scrap metal dealers.

Ammunition

Unused or unwanted ammunition, including fireworks and flares, should be brought to the Steele County Sheriff's Office, 204 E. Pearl St., Owatonna, phone 507-444-3800.

Animals

Call your veterinarian for information regarding deceased pets or a rendering service for larger farm animals. The type and condition of a dead animal carcass will govern the required disposal method. Call the Steele County Feedlot Officer at 507-444-7488 for more information.

Antifreeze

Antifreeze contains chemicals that are poisonous to humans and animals. Antifreeze from households may be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facilities for free disposal. [Click here](#) for more information on the locations and hours of these HHW facilities. If the container is completely empty it can be put in the trash. Do not mix with oil or other solvents. Many auto service centers also accept antifreeze for recycling from the general public. Look in the yellow pages under "Auto Repair & Service" for business names.

Appliances

Major appliances that are required by state law to be recycled include the following:

- Air conditioners
- Dehumidifiers
- Dishwashers
- Dryers
- Freezers
- Garbage disposals
- Heat pumps
- Microwave ovens
- Ranges
- Refrigerators
- Residential furnaces
- Stoves
- Trash compactors
- Washing machines
- Water heaters

Appliances may be recycled at the locations listed below. A fee will be charged.

- Steele County Landfill. [Click here](#) for address, hours, phone number and current fees.
- The Retrofit Companies
3855 W Hwy. 14
Owatonna, MN 55060
Ph. 507-455-2181
- Steele County/Waste Management Recycling Center

1171 Brady Blvd. (off State Avenue and Cty. Rd. 45 two blocks north of Cash Wise Grocery Store)
Owatonna, MN 55060
Ph.507 456-4894

Hazardous substances, such as Freon, PCBs and mercury, will be removed from appliances and properly managed. The remaining metal is recycled. Some new appliance dealers will take your old appliance when you buy a new one. Make sure that they are using a licensed appliance recycler.

Working appliances can be donated to friends and some charities will accept them for reuse. Sell them at garage sales or through newspaper ads. Repair old appliances when possible. Consider buying a used appliance instead of purchasing new.

Asbestos

Asbestos was used in building construction in items such as shingles, siding, insulation and floor tile as fire-proofing until the mid-1980's when it was determined to be harmful to human health. The primary concern with handling asbestos is exposure to airborne fibers. These fibers, if inhaled, can cause lung damage or cancer.

Before you remove asbestos, call the Steele County Environmental Services office (507-444-7475) for specific disposal procedures. Asbestos is accepted for disposal at the Steele County Landfill, but it is subject to specific removal and disposal procedures.

Ash

Cold or damp ash from a fireplace may be disposed in regular household garbage. Allow several days after burning before placing it in household garbage to make certain it is cold.

Auto Glass

Businesses – All auto glass disposals must follow Industrial Waste management procedures. Call the Steele County Environmental Services office at 444-7475 for this information.

Auto Parts

Many parts may be taken to scrap metal dealers or salvage yards, such as Owatonna Metal Recycling in Owatonna or Misgen Auto Parts in Ellendale. Check the yellow pages in a phone book for other options.

B

Bags

Grocery/Shopping – The best solution is a durable, reusable bag. Brown paper bags may be recycled with all other papers. Plastic bags are not recyclable in Steele County's Residential Recycling program

at this time, but they are accepted for recycling at several large grocery and retail stores in the county or they may be placed in household trash if not needed for reuse. It is illegal to burn plastic bags in a backyard burn barrel.

Reuse options- use them to line small waste receptacles, store wet clothing or pack shoes or other items for overnight trips. Many people that host garage sales like these bags for reuse as do most thrift stores and farmers' markets.

Batteries

DO NOT throw rechargeable batteries, such as those containing lead, mercury, nickel and cadmium in the trash! Buy equipment that can be plugged into an outlet or recharged instead of using disposable batteries.

Alkaline batteries

Non-rechargeable batteries i.e. size A, AA, AAA, C, D or 9-volt disposable batteries may be safely thrown in the trash.

Auto (lead-acid) batteries

DO NOT throw lead-acid batteries in the trash! They should be taken to a reclaimer to be recycled. By Minnesota law, any business that sells new batteries is required to collect batteries (up to five per person) for recycling. A fee may be charged for non-customers. The Steele County/Waste Management Recycling Center in Owatonna (ph. 507-456-4894) also accepts lead-acid batteries for recycling for a fee.

Button batteries

These are commonly found in hearing aids, watches, digital thermometers, calculators, toys and cameras. **Silver oxide batteries** should NOT be placed in household trash, but often jewelers, drug stores, hardware stores and discount stores accept these for recycling. **Lithium batteries** and **zinc oxide batteries** are not hazardous and may be placed in the trash. Do not burn batteries in a burn barrel.

Rechargeable batteries

Rechargeable batteries, typically nickel-cadmium (N-CAD) batteries that no longer keep a charge are required to be recycled by Minnesota State Law. These can be recycled at all Radio Shack stores and some hardware and discount or large retail stores. DO NOT throw rechargeable batteries in the trash.

Books

Share books with friends and neighbors. Donate books to libraries or charities like Salvation Army in Owatonna (ph. 507-455-2023). Sell books at garage sales or used book stores like Paperback Exchange in Owatonna (ph. 507-455-3440). Unwanted and unusable books, whether paperback or hard cover,

may be recycled with all other papers in Steele County's Residential Recycling program. [Click here](#) for more information about Steele County's Residential Recycling program.

Boxes (cardboard)

Corrugated boxes, those with two thin layers separated by a wavy layer in the middle, are recyclable. Examples are appliance boxes, boxes from electronics or toys and grocery store boxes. Flatten boxes prior to recycling. Bring large quantities of corrugated cardboard boxes to the Steele County Recycling Center in Owatonna or one of the six other recycling drop off sites located around the county. [Click here](#) for more information about Steele County's Residential Recycling program.

Corrugated cardboard may be recycled at curbside, but it must be flattened, cut or folded to no larger than three foot squares and taped or tied together in no higher than one foot bundles, although recyclers may recycle more than one bundle as long as the cardboard is tied together. If the cardboard is contaminated with food, for example pizza boxes, has a waxy coating on it, such as bread boxes or has attached Styrofoam supports it cannot be recycled and must be placed in the trash.

Boxboard consists of one layer of cardboard that is white or grey on the inside. Examples are cracker, cereal, cake mix, and shoe and gift boxes. These boxes are recyclable with all other papers in Steele County's Residential Recycling program. If the box is contaminated with food waste, it should go in the trash.

Brush, Branches and Tree & Hedge Trimmings

Minnesota State Law banned landfilling of yard waste, brush and branches in Greater Minnesota in 1991 to reduce landfill use. When chopped into mulch or composted, these biodegradable "wastes" can be put to better use as opposed to being buried in a landfill. A few sticks or a wilted plant or vase of flowers is not considered a violation of the ban from disposal in household garbage, but larger amounts or bags of yard waste cannot be taken by garbage haulers.

Call your city office for information on where to compost this material and whether or when yard waste can be burned. Owatonna does not allow burning of yard waste. [Click here](#) for more information on yard waste disposal in Steele County cities. If you live in a rural area, a free annual permit must be obtained from the Steele County Sheriff's office in order to burn yard waste. Call or stop by the Sheriff's office for more information, 204 E. Pearl St., Owatonna, phone 507-444-3800.

Building Materials

Demolition debris materials can be brought to the Steele County Landfill for disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about the Landfill, including disposal rates and a list of what items can and cannot be buried in the demolition area. As determined by state law, certain items from the demolition of homes or commercial buildings may be buried in the demolition portion of the landfill, which is unlined and therefore cheaper to dispose. Other waste besides demolition debris can be brought to the Steele County Landfill for disposal in the mixed waste area of the landfill.

Burn Barrels

Current Minnesota Law forbids burning of garbage in a back yard burn barrel, except for farmers who are actively engaged in the business of raising crops or livestock. It is against the law for anyone, including farmers, to burn or bury lead acid batteries, appliances, hazardous waste, household batteries, used motor oil, oil filters, tires, recyclable items and plastics (other than baling twine) and it is illegal for farmers to burn or bury waste from another household or business.

Ordinary items such as paper products, painted items and plastics can release toxic chemicals, such as arsenic, mercury, chromium, formaldehyde, hydrochloric acid, lead, dioxin and dioxin-like chemicals. Since there is no combustion or air pollution control equipment on a burn barrel, those chemicals go into the air and ash and create health and environmental risk. In fact, research shows that a family of four that burns household garbage creates more pollution than a modern municipal incinerator that burns 200 tons of waste a day!

Burning

Rural residents must obtain a free annual permit from the Steele County Sherriff's office to burn brush, leaves or other yard waste. Call or stop by the Steele County Sheriff's office, 204 E. Pearl St., Owatonna, phone 507-444-3800 for more details.

C

Cans: steel/tin

Steel or tin cans are recyclable in Steele County's Residential Recycling program. Rinse out cans to reduce smell and deter insects and other pests. Labels do not need to be removed, and cans do not need to be crushed, although crushing saves space in a recycling bin and on the truck. [Click here](#) for more information about Steele County's Residential Recycling program.

Car Wax

Solvent-based Cleaners – waxes, polishes, degreasers and other petroleum based products from homes should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information on these HHW facilities. If the container is completely empty, it can be put in the trash. Solvent-based cleaners should not be disposed down a drain, in the trash or down a toilet. As an alternative, use water-based cleaners in place of petroleum-based cleaners.

Cardboard

Boxboard consists of one layer of cardboard that is white or grey on the inside. Examples are cracker, cereal, cake mix, shoe, and toy and gift boxes. Boxboard may be recycled in with all other papers in Steele County's Residential Recycling program.

Corrugated cardboard has two thin layers separated by a wavy layer in the middle and is often light brown in color. Examples are boxes from professional moving companies, grocery stores, appliance dealers and electronics stores. If the cardboard is wet or contaminated with food, such as bakery boxes or pizza boxes or if it has attached Styrofoam supports, it should go in the trash. Flattened corrugated cardboard boxes are accepted at all recycling drop sites in Steele County. [Click here](#) for more information about Steele County's Residential Recycling program.

Corrugated cardboard boxes are also accepted at curbside, however, due to recycling truck configurations, corrugated cardboard that is recycled at curbside must be 1) broken down, 2) cut or folded to no more than three feet square and 3) taped or tied in bundles no higher than one foot, although curbside recyclers may have more than one bundle. Multiple pieces of loose corrugated cardboard or boxes that are not broken down will be left behind at curbside.

Carpet & Carpet Padding

Ask your carpet retailer or installer if they can have the carpet recycled. At this time, carpet and carpet padding cannot be recycled in Steele County, but there are some carpet recycling options in the metro area. Talk with your garbage hauler about taking the carpet to a landfill or bring it to the Steele County Landfill yourself for disposal in the lined (Mixed Solid Waste) portion of the landfill. [Click here](#) for hours, location and disposal prices at the Steele County Landfill.

Clean carpets often to reduce the need to replace them. Rent carpet cleaning equipment or hire a professional carpet cleaning service.

Catalogs

Glossy catalogs and magazines may be recycled with all other papers in Steele County's Residential Recycling program, both at curbside and at Recycling Drop Off sites. [Click here](#) for more information about Steele County's Residential Recycling program.

To reduce the number of catalogs you receive that you do not want, write or call the companies and ask to be taken off their mail lists. For subscriptions you wish to receive, tell them not to sell or give your name to other mail order companies.

Caulk & Caulking Tubes

Caulk tubes cannot be disposed with building demolition materials in any Minnesota Landfill. If the caulk tube is from a home in Steele County, is not empty and has one or more of these words on the label – “danger,” “warning,” “caution,” “flammable,” “combustible,” or “corrosive” it should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for hours and locations of these HHW facilities. If the tube is completely empty it can be thrown in the trash for burial in the lined, mixed solid waste area of the landfill.

Christmas Trees

Minnesota law bans Christmas trees from burial in a landfill. Owatonna's Yard Waste Compost Site is open the first two weekends in January of each year and will accept trees, wreaths and other holiday or yard waste for a fee. [Click here](#) for more information on the Owatonna Compost Site. If you live in another city in Steele County, call your city office for information on tree disposal.

Cleaners

Window cleaners, multi-purpose cleaners, ammonia and other home cleaners that have one of these words on the label – “danger,” “poison,” “warning” or “caution” should be brought to either Steele or Rice County's Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for details about these HHW facilities. If the container is empty, it may be thrown in the trash.

Clothing

Clean, dry and usable clothing, linens and washable curtains can be dropped off at the following Owatonna locations: Clothesline at 507-451-2550, the Salvation Army at 507-455-2023 or the Steele County Recycling Center operated by Waste Management at 507-456-4894. The Minnesota Epilepsy Foundation also conducts periodic curbside pick up of usable clothing and USAgain has several red drop off boxes for clothing placed around Owatonna.

Hosting garage sale or bringing used, but usable clothing to a consignment or used clothing store are other options for used clothing. If the clothing is not usable, it should be thrown in the trash.

Complaints

Call Steele County Environmental Services (ph. 507-444-7475) to report illegal dumping of garbage or other garbage or recycling related complaints.

Compost

Compost is a natural fertilizer for gardens, lawns, bushes and trees. Leaves, vines, garden wastes, sticks and other organic materials turn into a beneficial natural soil amendment over time when placed in a pile, exposed to moisture and turned periodically. Compost improves draining and soil texture in clay soils, improves moisture holding capacity and soil texture in sandy soils and increases utilization of plant nutrients in a soil with poor organic content.

The Owatonna Yard Waste Compost Site offers screened, finished compost and various kinds of mulch for sale. [Click here](#) for more information on Owatonna's Compost Site. Call your city office for information on the availability of compost in other cities.

Home compost piles can also be easily constructed and maintained to provide free natural fertilizer for home gardeners. For information on building and maintaining a home compost pile, call the Steele County Recycling Hotline at 507-451-5443.

Compressed Gasses

Refillable portable propane gas tanks and cylinders are accepted by many propane and LP gas distributors. Look under “gas” in the phone book yellow pages for a distributor near you. The small, disposable propane gas cylinders may be thrown in the trash when empty. Some scrap metal salvage dealers accept empty disposal propane cylinders for recycling, but typically the cylinders must be depressurized prior to recycling. Look in the yellow pages under “Recycling Services” or “Scrap Metal - Processing and Recycling” for names of facilities and call prior to recycling disposable propane cylinders at a scrap metal facility.

Owatonna Metal Recycling is the one scrap metal dealer in Steele County. Call them at 507-451-1470.

Computer Monitors & TVs

Computer monitors and TV sets are required by Minnesota law to be recycled. These are accepted for recycling at three locations in Steele County and each location sets their own fees. The Steele County Landfill takes these electronics for recycling. [Click here](#) for more information on the Steele County Landfill and its fees. Electronics are also accepted for recycling at the Steele County Recycling Center in Owatonna, which is operated by Waste Management. Call 507-456-4894 for more information. The Retrofit Companies in Owatonna (ph. 507-455-1851) also accepts electronics for recycling for a fee. Some large retail stores such as Best Buy also accept electronics and occasionally a special collection is held at a facility. These types of collections are typically announced in the media.

Concrete

See “Construction Debris.”

Construction Debris

Construction debris includes waste building materials, packaging and rubble resulting from construction, remodeling, repair and demolition of buildings and roads. These materials may be disposed at the Steele County Landfill. [Click here](#) for more information on the landfill and for instructions on how materials must be separated for disposal at the Steele County Landfill.

Corrosive Cleaners

Drain cleaners, oven cleaners, naval jelly, toilet bowl cleaners, concrete cleaners and similar materials are considered hazardous and must be disposed properly. These types of chemicals from Steele County homes should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities. [Click here](#) for details about these HHW facilities.

Curbside Recycling

Curbside recycling is provided to all single family homes in the four cities of Steele County and is offered to apartment buildings whose managers or owners desire this service for tenants. Currently Waste Management holds the recycling contract for residential recycling collection, processing and marketing. The program is funded primarily through a service fee on residential property taxes and it is free for residents to participate. Rural residents may bring recyclable materials to any of the seven recycling drop off sites located throughout Steele County. [Click here](#) for more information about Steele County's Residential Recycling program and for the curbside recycling schedule.

D

Degreaser

Degreasers and other solvents from Steele County homes must be brought to either Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal as hazardous waste. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities. If the container is empty it can safely be thrown in the trash.

Demolition Debris

Loads of concrete, sheetrock/drywall, wood, plaster, metal, insulation, roofing/shingles, siding, bricks etc. can be brought to the Steele County Landfill for disposal for various fees. [Click here](#) for more information about the Steele County Landfill and for instructions on how materials must be separated for disposal in the demolition (unlined) area at the landfill. Many types of waste cannot be disposed with construction/demolition materials. If they are not separated from building materials, there will be a higher fee for disposal of the entire load.

Drain Cleaner

Corrosive cleaners, such as drain cleaners, oven cleaners, naval jelly, toilet bowl cleanser, concrete cleaners etc. from Steele County homes should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities. If the container is empty it can safely be thrown in the trash.

Drugs

Except for chemotherapy drugs, prescription and non-prescription medications from Steele County homes can be disposed in regular household trash. To discourage theft of these unwanted drugs from garbage, add water to pills and add sand or other contaminants to liquid medications. Removing or blocking labels will protect privacy. Chemotherapy drugs need to be returned to the hospital or pharmacy where they were originally obtained. Read additional disposal information under "Sharps."

Drywall

Loads of concrete, old sheetrock/drywall, wood, plaster, metal, insulation, roofing/shingles, siding, bricks etc. can be brought to the Steele County Demolition Landfill for disposal for various fees. [Click here](#) for more information about the Steele County Landfill and for instructions on how materials must be separated for disposal at the Steele County Landfill.

E

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices that contain a screen, such as computer monitors and television sets, are required by Minnesota Law to be recycled. Many other types of electronics, such as CPUs, DVDs and VCR players are also accepted for recycling at three locations in Steele County and each location sets their own fees. [Click here](#) for information on recycling electronics at the Steele County Landfill and its fees.

Electronics are also accepted for recycling at the Steele County Recycling Center in Owatonna, which is operated by Waste Management. Call 507-456-4894 for more information. The Retrofit Companies in Owatonna (ph. 507-455-1851) also accepts electronics for recycling for a fee. Some large retail stores such as Best Buy also accept electronics and occasionally a special collection is held at a facility. These types of collections are typically announced in the media.

Electronic goods, especially those with a screen, contain significant amounts of hazardous materials such as lead, mercury and cadmium. Recycling electronics keeps these materials out of the landfill, where they could contaminate ground water and harm human health.

Enforcement

Call Steele County Environmental Services (ph. 507-444-7475) to report illegal dumping of any garbage or recycling related complaints.

Explosives

If you find dynamite or anything that is marked “explosive” or that you think might be explosive, DO NOT TOUCH IT! Call the Steele County Sheriff’s Office at 507-444-3800. Household hazardous waste facilities cannot accept explosive wastes.

F

Fertilizer: Non-Agricultural

Household fertilizers that contain herbicides or pesticides should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities. Dry granular fertilizer that does not contain any pesticides can be thrown in household trash.

Follow label instructions and only apply the amount indicated. Buy concentrates to reduce the amount of packaging. Leave grass clippings on the lawn when you mow to help fertilize your lawn. Caution: be sure to apply fertilizer only on the targeted plants. If granules fall on hard surfaces like streets, driveways, and sidewalks, make sure to sweep them up for reuse. Fertilizer that washes off streets ends up in local lakes, ponds and rivers causing excessive growth of algae.

Donate extra fertilizer in its original container to someone who may need it. The best way to get rid of fertilizer is to use it up for its intended purpose.

Flammable Liquids

Gasoline, kerosene, gas/oil mixtures or other products that have a flash point between 100° F and 140° F should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities.

Read labels on products. If the label contains words such as flammable, inflammable, contains petroleum distillates, danger or warning, unused product must be disposed at a HHW facility. Whenever possible, avoid purchasing products that contain hazard labels and buy only what is needed to complete the job.

Floor Absorbent (Floor Dry)

Safe disposal of floor absorbent from households is dependent upon the type of absorbent and the kind of liquid that was absorbed. Floor absorbent used in homes can be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities. If the container is empty or the product is completely gone, it can be put in the trash.

Used floor absorbent from businesses needs to be evaluated through Steele County's Industrial Solid Waste program. Call the Steele County Environmental Services office at 507-444-7475 for more information. If it is determined to be hazardous it may need to be disposed through the Rice County Very Small Quantity Generator of Hazardous Waste Program (VSQG) for a fee.

Floor Wax

Solvent-based cleaners – waxes, polishes, degreasers and other petroleum based products can be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities.

Businesses that need to dispose of unwanted and unused solvent-based cleaners are reminded that these products are considered hazardous and must be disposed properly. Contact the Steele County Environmental Services office at 507-444-7475 for more information.

Fluorescent Light Bulbs

Fluorescent bulbs and HIDs contain small amounts of mercury. Minnesota law forbids disposing of fluorescent light bulbs, including compact fluorescent bulbs, in household or business trash, so these must all be recycled. All hardware stores in Steele County accept fluorescent lamps for a fee as does The Retrofit Companies (TRC) in Owatonna, ph. 507-455-2181. Some utility companies accept spent compact fluorescent lights for disposal free of charge. Call your local utility for more information.

Food

Food waste from homes, such as fruit and vegetable peels, coffee grounds and egg shells, can be composted at home and turned into a valuable soil amendment. For more information on backyard composting, call the Steele County Recycling Hotline at 507-451-5443.

Fuel

Gasoline, kerosene and gas/oil mixtures from homes should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities.

Furniture

Unusable furniture can be brought to the Steele County Landfill for burial. [Click here](#) for more information about the Steele County Landfill. There will be a charge for disposal. Garbage haulers may be able to haul away furniture as well, but call the hauler before setting the furniture out for pick up to find out how your hauler handles these types of materials.

Some charities, such as Salvation Army in Owatonna, accept donations of usable furniture. Call them to verify before dropping off any item. Usable furniture can also be sold through the want ads in local newspapers, newsletters or at garage sales. Consider refurbishing or reupholstering to update old furniture.

Furniture Polish

Solvent-based cleaners from homes such as waxes, polishes, degreasers and other petroleum based products, can be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities.

G

Garbage

Except for residents in Ellendale, which contracts with one hauler to provide garbage service to their community, Steele County has an “open hauling” system of garbage collection, where residents and businesses can choose the garbage hauler they wish to use. Look in the phone book yellow pages under

“Garbage & Refuse Collection.” for a list of haulers. The Steele County Landfill also allows people to self haul garbage to the landfill. [Click here](#) for more information about the Steele County Landfill. There will be a charge for disposal.

If disposed improperly, garbage can cause pollution of air, soil and drinking water. Since citizens are liable for the clean up of environmental damage cause by “regular” trash, they should make certain it is disposed properly by contracting for service with a licensed garbage hauler or bringing garbage to the landfill for disposal. Over half of household garbage is recyclable, so recycling as much waste as possible will reduce garbage generation and costs as well as conserve natural resources, save energy and provide good paying U.S. jobs. [Click here](#) for more information about Steele County’s Residential Recycling program.

Garbage and Recycling Hotline

The Steele County Recycling Hotline answers disposal questions about garbage, recycling and composting. Call the Hotline at 507-451-5443. Some information can be obtained by listening to the taped message and voice mails can be left if more information is needed. Calls will be returned during weekday business hours of 8:00 to 5:00 Monday through Friday.

Gas Bottles

Some gas bottles can be refilled. Propane gas tanks and cylinders are accepted by many propane and LP gas distributors. Look under “gas” in the phone book yellow pages for a distributor near you. Steele County does NOT accept propane cylinders in its residential recycling program.

Disposable gas cylinders may be thrown in household trash for burial in the Steele County Landfill.

Gasoline

The best way to get rid of leftover gasoline, lamp oil or white gas is to use it up. For small engines that use an oil/gas mixture, buy only the amount you will need at the time. Buy unleaded gasoline for small engines so you can use leftover gasoline in your car.

Old, unwanted or unusable gasoline from Steele County homes can be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities.

Businesses that have unusable gasoline or kerosene should treat these wastes as hazardous. See “Hazardous Waste.”

Glass Bottles and Jars

Glass food and drink bottles that are brown, green, blue or clear are recyclable in Steele County’s Residential Recycling program. [Click here](#) for more information about the County’s Residential Recycling program.

Labels do not need to be removed from glass bottles, but the glass bottles should be rinsed and have the caps or lids removed. Glass may be recycled with all other types of recyclable cans and bottles; they do not need to be separated. Metal caps or lids may also be recycled if placed loosely in the recycling bin with cans and bottles, however, plastic caps belong in the garbage.

Grass

Leaving grass clippings on the lawn after mowing is easy and healthy for your lawn, unless the grass is unusually long and matting would suffocate the grass still growing on the lawn. In fact, leaving clippings on the lawn for an entire summer gives your lawn the equivalent of one fertilizer application.

The Owatonna Yard Waste Compost Site accepts grass and other yard waste for a fee. [Click here](#) for more information on Owatonna's Compost Site. Contact your city office for information on other community compost sites in Steele County.

Grass clippings may also be composted at home. Grass clippings, leaves, vines, garden wastes, sticks and other organic materials turn into a beneficial natural soil amendment over time when placed in a pile, exposed to moisture and turned periodically. Compost improves drainage and soil texture in clay soils, improves moisture holding capacity and soil texture in sandy soils and increases utilization of plant nutrients in a soil with poor organic content. For information on building and maintaining a home compost pile, call the Steele County Recycling Hotline at 507-451-5443

State law prohibits large amounts of grass clippings (i.e. a 30-gallon bag) from being buried in a landfill, so grass clippings cannot be placed in household garbage.

H

Hazardous Waste

If a container states Danger, Warning, Poison, Flammable, Toxic, Corrosive, Combustible, Caution, contains acid, contains lye, contains petroleum distillates or causes burns to skin, it contains hazardous chemicals. Avoid using them if possible. Store properly and use up according to directions for the intended purpose. If the container is empty or the product is completely gone, it can be put in the trash.

Household hazardous wastes should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities. Other than agricultural pesticides, Steele County's HHW facility cannot accept business hazardous waste. Contact the Steele County Environmental Services office at 507-444-7475 or the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency at www.pca.state.mn.us for information on disposal of business hazardous wastes.

I

Industrial/Commercial Solid Waste

Businesses: waste that is not typical or regular garbage, such as ash, dust collector fines, metal filings, paint residue, paint filters, sludge, epoxy, fiberglass, infectious waste, lighting fixtures etc. may be considered “Industrial solid wastes.” These types of wastes may require special testing and handling to assure proper disposal at the lowest possible cost. For more information on industrial waste management in Steele County, call the Steele County Environmental Services office at 507-444-7475.

Infectious Waste

Infectious waste includes blood, laboratory waste or other regulated body fluids and sharps that have not been decontaminated.

Household generators of sharps must be managed carefully, as needles and other sharps can injure garbage haulers and workers at the Steele County Landfill. Sharps generated at home should be placed in a puncture resistant container such as a heavy plastic liquid laundry detergent bottle with a screw on cap. Label the container “Household sharps – Do not recycle” and keep the container tightly closed after placing sharps inside. When the container is half full, screw the cap on, duct tape the cap onto the bottle and place it in household trash. Additional options for home sharps disposal can be found in a fact sheet produced by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency at this website:

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/hhw/sharps.html>

Business generators of infectious and pathological waste are required to contact the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, www.pca.state.mn.us

Insulation

Loads of sheetrock/drywall, plaster, metal, insulation, roofing/shingles, siding, bricks, concrete etc. from demolition of buildings may be brought to the Steele County Landfill for disposal in the demolition (non-lined) area of the landfill. [Click here](#) for more information about the Steele County Landfill and for the list of materials that can and cannot be disposed in the demolition area. There will be a charge for disposal. Make certain to separate hazardous materials and garbage from construction/demolition debris. If they are not separated from building materials, the load will be required to pay the higher disposal fee for Mixed Municipal Solid Waste in the lined portion of the landfill.

K

Kerosene

The best way to get rid of leftover gasoline, kerosene, lamp oil or white gas is to use it up.

Unwanted or unusable kerosene should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities. If the container is empty or the product is completely gone, it can be put in the trash.

L

Lead Paint

Lead paint from homes should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities.

Leaves

Bags of leaves are prohibited by state law from being buried in a landfill, so large amounts of leaves and other yard waste cannot be placed in household garbage.

The Owatonna Yard Waste Compost Site accepts grass and other yard waste for a fee. [Click here](#) for more information on Owatonna's Compost Site. Contact your city office for information on other community compost sites in Steele County.

Leaves may also be composted at home. Leaves, grass clippings, vines, garden wastes, sticks, fruit and vegetable scraps and other organic materials turn into a beneficial natural soil amendment over time when placed in a pile, exposed to moisture and turned periodically. Compost improves drainage and soil texture in clay soils, improves moisture holding capacity and soil texture in sandy soils and increases utilization of plant nutrients in soils with poor organic content. For information on building and maintaining a home compost pile, call the Steele County Recycling Hotline at 507-451-5443

Light Bulbs: Fluorescent

Fluorescent bulbs, compact fluorescent lamps and HID lamps contain small amounts of mercury. State law prohibits placing these in household trash for landfill burial by either business or household generators. All hardware stores in Steele County accept these for recycling for a small fee, which varies by store and bulb shape and size. Call a hardware store to find out their fees. These types of bulbs can also be recycled at The Retrofit Companies (TRC) in Owatonna. Call TRC for more information (ph. 507-455-1851). Owatonna Public Utilities accepts compact fluorescent lamps from customers for recycling at no charge.

While fluorescent lamps can cost more than incandescent bulbs and must be disposed properly, they typically last much longer and use much less electricity over the life of the bulb and therefore are a better and more environmentally sound purchase. Fluorescent lamps are now available in several styles, such as three-way, globe shape and heavy duty exterior lamps and therefore can be used in almost all regular light sockets.

Light Bulbs: Incandescent

Incandescent light bulbs ("regular" light bulbs) cannot be recycled. Throw these in the trash.

Incandescent light bulbs do not last as long as fluorescent lamps and use much more electricity to give the same illumination, so consider purchasing fluorescent lamps instead of incandescent to save money over time and conserve energy.

M

Magazines

Magazines and catalogs are accepted at curbside and at all recycling drop off sites in Steele County. They can be placed in with all other papers, preferably in paper bags, for recycling. [Click here](#) for more information about Steele County's Residential Recycling program.

To make the most of each magazine prior to recycling, think about sharing with friends, neighbors and co-workers or donate to doctors' or dental offices or nursing homes.

Manure

Take full nutrient credits for manure to reduce the need for commercial fertilizers. Incorporate manure in order to recover all of the nitrogen available and reduce the risk of pollution potential. Small hobby and horse farms should consider composting manure. Limit land application of manure on frozen or snow covered soils. Follow appropriate set back distances from water and neighbors. Call the Steele County Planning and Zoning Office at 507-444-7475 for further assistance.

Pet manure or "droppings" can be bagged and thrown in household trash.

Materials Exchange

This service matches businesses that have unwanted, but usable materials with other businesses that could use those items, such as office furniture, office supplies, cleaning chemicals, pallets, packing peanuts, drums etc. The statewide Materials Exchange uses a computer network to publicize the program and connect waste generators with potential users of the unwanted business materials. For more information, to list materials available or to get information about items desired, log onto the materials exchange website at <http://www.materialsexchange.org> Interested parties may also contact the Southeast Minnesota Recyclers' Exchange (SEMREX) Executive Director, Sharon Schriever, at 507-328-7022.

Medications

With the exception of chemotherapy drugs, prescription and non-prescription medications from residents can be disposed in regular household trash. Do not flush medications down a toilet or drain. Chemotherapy drugs are considered hazardous wastes and should be returned to the hospital or pharmacy where purchased or obtained – they are extremely toxic. For more information on how to dispose of unwanted medications at home, visit the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency website at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/hhw/pharmaceuticals.html>

Mercury Wastes

Thermometers, thermostats, button batteries and other mercury containing items are considered hazardous and must be disposed properly. Mercury containing items from Steele County homes should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities.

Businesses should treat any item that contains mercury as a hazardous waste. For more information, visit the MPCA website at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/air/mercury.html>. Businesses that generate only a small amount of hazardous materials, including mercury, may be eligible for the Very Small Quantity Generator (VSQG) program in Rice County. Call the Rice County Solid Waste Department for more information about the VSQG hazardous waste disposal program at 507-332-6833.

Metal: Scrap

Many types of metals are accepted by scrap metal dealers and recycling centers. Look in the yellow pages under "Recycling Services" or "Scrap Metal - Processing and Recycling."

Owatonna Metal Recycling is the one scrap metal dealer in Steele County. Call them at 507-451-1470.

Milk Containers

Plastic milk jugs are accepted in Steele County's Curbside Recycling Program and at all Recycling Drop Off Sites. [Click here](#) for more information about the County's Residential Recycling program.

Empty paperboard milk containers and empty bags of milk should be thrown in the trash.

Minnesota Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP)

MnTAP is a non-regulatory program based at the University of Minnesota that works with Minnesota businesses providing technical assistance in the areas of pollution prevention, waste management and related environmental protection activities. They have developed or collected materials that businesses can use to reduce waste and emissions based on current industrial practices and available technology. Among their many services are telephone assistance, site visits, technical assistance and referrals. All services are free of charge. For more information, visit MnTAP's website at <http://www.mntap.umn.edu/> or call 1-800-247-0015.

N

Nail Polish & Nail Polish Remover

Unusable or unwanted nail polish and nail polish remover contain hazardous chemicals and should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities. Empty or dried bottles of nail polish may be thrown in the trash.

Naval Jelly

Naval jelly is a corrosive cleaner and should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities.

Buy the smallest amount of hazardous cleaners you need to do the job or try alternative cleaners that contain less or no hazardous ingredients. Basic information on what to look for when purchasing cleaners may be found online at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/oea/p2week/everyone-cleaners.cfm> or call the Steele County Recycling Hotline at 507-451-5443 for a list of recipes for non-toxic home cleaners.

Needles

Needles and sharps can injure garbage haulers and other workers who handle these wastes, so household sharps must be disposed properly. Consumers who wish to dispose of sharps in the Steele County Landfill are asked to place all sharps point first in a heavy duty plastic liquid laundry detergent bottle with a screw top cap. Keep the cap on when storing spent needles. When the container is at least half full, cap and tape the lid, label "Do Not Recycle – Household Sharps" and place in household trash.

Information on other disposal alternatives for sharps may be found in an online fact sheet provided by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/hhw/sharps.html>

Newspapers

Newspapers, including all the inserts, are accepted at curbside and at all recycling drop off sites in Steele County. They can be placed in with all other papers, preferably in paper bags, for recycling. [Click here](#) for more information about Steele County's Residential Recycling program

O

Office Paper

Office paper, envelopes (including those with cellophane windows), junk mail, scratch paper and school papers are accepted at curbside and at all recycling drop off sites in Steele County. Place them together in paper bags for recycling. Do not place paper loose in recycling bins, as they will blow away on windy days. [Click here](#) for more information about Steele County's Residential Recycling program.

Oil: Motor

State law requires used motor oil to be recycled. Steele County has two tanks into which oil change do-it-yourselfers can recycle used motor oil and transmission fluid free of charge. One tank is located at the Steele County Recycling Center in Owatonna that is operated by Waste Management. This facility is

two blocks north of Cash Wise grocery store off State Avenue. A second tank for used oil is located at the Steele County Landfill off Hwy. 218 between Owatonna and Blooming Prairie.

Retailers who sell motor oil are also required to either accept used motor oil from citizens or post a sign stating where the nearest place to recycle oil is located.

Oil Filters

State law requires used motor oil filters to be recycled. Steele County accepts oil filters for recycling free of charge in two locations: at the Steele County Recycling Center in Owatonna that is operated by Waste Management and located two blocks north of Cash Wise grocery store off State Avenue and at the Steele County Landfill of Hwy, 218 between Owatonna and Blooming Prairie. Some retailers and auto service centers also accept used oil filters from the general public either free or for a small fee. Call the store for details.

Oven Cleaner

Oven cleaners typically contain hazardous chemicals and must be disposed of properly. Steele County homes that need to get rid of oven cleaners or other hazardous household cleaning chemicals should bring these to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities.

P

Paint

Liquid paints cannot be placed in household trash for landfill burial. Latex, oil-based and aerosol paints from Steele County homes should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities. Usable paints are placed on shelves at this facility for other adults to take home for reuse free of charge.

If paint is dried it is no longer considered hazardous and may be disposed in household trash. Leave the cover off so the hauler will know the paint is dried. Empty metal paint cans may be recycled with all other cans and bottles in Steele County's residential curbside and recycling drop off sites. [Click here](#) for more information about the County's Residential Recycling program.

Latex paint may be dried out at home. Line a cardboard box with a heavy duty plastic trash bag, place some kitty litter, sawdust or shredded paper and pour an inch or two of paint in the box at a time. Store in an area away from children and pets, preferably in a garage, screened porch or balcony. When the paint is dried, repeat the process until all paint is dried. Throw the box of dried latex paint in the trash. Oil based paints do not dry out as easily as latex and are potentially flammable, so do not use this home disposal method on oil based paints.

Paint Thinners

Paint thinner, removers, turpentine, mineral spirits and strippers are considered hazardous. Steele County households may bring these to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities. Businesses are not allowed to bring paints to the HHW facility. [Click here](#) for information about hazardous waste disposal options for Very Small Quantity Generators (VSQG) of hazardous wastes.

Used paint thinner may be recycled at home. Pour the used paint thinner into a glass container with a good seal and label it “paint thinner.” Keep the commercially labeled thinner container for reuse later. Use a glass container to recycle the thinner because it will not degrade and you can see the contents. Let the paint thinner sit for several weeks until all paint particles settle to the bottom. Pour the clean paint thinner off the top into the commercially labeled paint thinner container, leaving the paint sludge behind. This thinner may be reused. Let the bottom paint sludge dry completely by leaving the lid off in a well ventilated area away from children and pets or bring the wet sludge to a HHW facility for disposal. Dried sludge may be placed in the trash.

Paper

Steele County’s Residential Recycling Program accepts a wide range of papers for recycling, including newspapers with all inserts; telephone books; magazines and catalogs; office paper; envelopes, including those with cellophane windows; school papers; newsletters; junk mail; hard and soft covered books and boxboard such as cereal boxes, cake mix boxes, cracker boxes and shoe boxes. Corrugated cardboard is also accepted for recycling, however it must be prepared properly to ensure curbside pick up. [Click here](#) for more information about Steele County’s Residential Recycling program.

Pesticides: Non-Agricultural

Pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, rodenticides, fungicides and fertilizers that contain weed killers are accepted from homes in Steele County free of charge. Bring unwanted pesticides to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about the Rice and Steele County HHW facilities. Empty pesticide containers from homes can be disposed in household trash, as can empty pesticide containers from businesses, however these must be triple rinsed, with rinse water used up according to label directions in the same way as the rest of the pesticide.

Pesticides: Agricultural and Commercial

Through a partnership with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Steele County is now able to accept up to 100 pounds of agricultural and commercial pesticides from facilities in Steele County free of charge. To ensure good service to all Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facility visitors, agricultural and commercial pesticides are ONLY accepted by appointment and only during the regular HHW facility operating season (May through September). [Click here](#) for more information about the Steele County HHW facility or call the Steele County Landfill at 507-583-7766 for more information on this waste disposal program or to set up an appointment.

Empty pesticide containers from businesses can be disposed in the trash, however they should be triple rinsed prior to disposal, with rinse water used up according to directions in the same way as the rest of that pesticide.

Pet Waste

Bag pet wastes and throw these in the trash. Do not dispose of pet wastes in a storm drain and do not add these wastes to a backyard compost pile.

Phone Books

Phone books are required by Minnesota State law to be recycled. These may be recycled with all other papers in Steele County's Residential Recycling program. Businesses may drop off phone books at any recycling drop off site in the county if they cannot recycle phone books with other papers at the worksite. [Click here](#) for more information about Steele County's Residential Recycling program.

Plastics

A good rule of thumb with regards to recycling plastics in Steele County is: "Forget the number - look at the shape. If the container is bottle shaped or has a narrow neck, it is recyclable." [Click here](#) for more information about Steele County's Residential Recycling program. Plastic bags are not recyclable in Steele County's Residential Recycling program, however, several larger grocery, discount and retail stores in Steele County accept clean plastic bags with no stickers, papers, plastic handles or strings attached.

Product Exchange

Steele County's Household Hazardous Waste Facility has shelves where used, but usable household products are available for reuse by adults. This includes such items as latex, oil based and aerosol paints, stains, varnishes and automotive products. These are available for people to take home whenever the HHW facility is open during the months of May through September. [Click here](#) for more information about hours of the Steele County HHW facility. Call the Steele County Landfill (ph. 507-583-7766) if you wish to verify the availability of a desired product or make an appointment to take household products from the HHW facility on a day or time the HHW facility is not normally open.

Propane Gas/Tanks/Cylinders

Refillable portable propane gas tanks and cylinders are accepted by many propane and LP gas distributors. Look under "gas" in the phone book yellow pages for a distributor near you. The small, disposable propane gas cylinders may be thrown in the trash when empty. Some scrap metal salvage dealers accept empty disposable propane cylinders for recycling, but typically the cylinders must be depressurized prior to recycling. Look in the yellow pages under "Recycling Services" or "Scrap Metal - Processing and Recycling" for names of facilities and call prior to recycling disposable propane cylinders at a scrap metal facility.

Owatonna Metal Recycling is the one scrap metal dealer in Steele County. Call them at 507-451-1470.

R

Recyclable Materials

Participation in Steele County's residential recycling program is free for any home in Steele County. Small businesses may also recycle the same materials accepted in the residential recycling program by bringing recyclable materials to one of the seven recycling drop off sites located throughout Steele County. [Click here](#) for detailed information about what is collected in Steele County's curbside collection program that is offered to residents living in all four cities of Steele County. The website also lists the curbside recycling pick up schedule and locations of the seven recycling drop off sites situated throughout the county. Recycling bins are provided free of charge upon request. [Click here](#) for the locations at which the recycling bins can be picked up.

S

Scrap Metal and Salvage

Many types of metals are accepted by scrap metal dealers and, depending on type and quantity, scrap metal dealers may offer money for recycling scrap metal. Owatonna Metal Recycling (ph. 507-451-1470) is the scrap metal dealer in Owatonna. Check the yellow pages under "Scrap Metal – Process and Recycling" for information about other scrap metal recyclers in the region.

Sharps

Needles and sharps can injure garbage haulers and other workers who handle these wastes, so household sharps must be disposed properly. Consumers who wish to dispose of sharps in the Steele County Landfill are asked to place all sharps point first in a heavy duty plastic liquid laundry detergent bottle with a screw top cap. Keep the cap on when storing spent needles. When the container is half full, cap and tape the lid, label "Do Not Recycle – Household Sharps" and place in household trash.

Information on other disposal alternatives for sharps may be found in an online fact sheet provided by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/hhw/sharps.html>

Sheetrock

New sheetrock may be disposed in the mixed solid waste portion of the Steele County Landfill for a fee. Old sheetrock may be disposed in the less expensive, unlined demolition portion of the Steele County Landfill if properly separated from materials that cannot be buried in demolition. [Click here](#) for more information about disposal at the Steele County Landfill and for disposal charges.

Shingles

Old shingles are accepted for burial in the less expensive, unlined demolition portion of the Steele County Landfill if properly separated from materials that cannot be buried in demolition. [Click here](#) for more information about disposal at the Steele County Landfill and for disposal charges.

Solvents and Solvent-Based Cleaners

Waxes, polishes, spot removers, degreasers, mineral spirits and other petroleum based products are considered hazardous. Steele County households may bring these to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities. Businesses are not allowed to bring hazardous chemicals to the Steele County HHW facility. [Click here](#) for information about hazardous waste disposal options for Very Small Quantity Business Generators (VSQG) of hazardous wastes.

Spot Remover

See information on Solvents and Solvent based cleaners above.

Stains

Stains and varnishes cannot be placed in household trash for landfill burial. These hazardous products from Steele County homes should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities. Usable stains and varnishes are placed on shelves at this facility for other adults to take home for reuse free of charge.

T

Tar and Adhesive Pails

Adhesives – petroleum based glues, caulking compounds, epoxy resins, pastes, joint fillers, wood putty, spackling compounds, rubber cement and roofing tar are all considered hazardous products and cannot be placed in household trash for landfill burial. These products from Steele County homes should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities. Usable products such as the ones listed above are placed on shelves at this facility for other adults to take home for reuse free of charge.

Telephone Books

Telephone books are required by state law to be recycled. These may be recycled with all other papers in Steele County's Residential Recycling program. Businesses may drop off phone books at any recycling drop off site in the county if they cannot recycle phone books with other papers at the worksite. [Click here](#) for more information about Steele County's Residential Recycling program.

Thermostats and Mercury Thermometers

Most thermostats and thermometers contain mercury, which is considered a hazardous chemical and therefore cannot be disposed in household trash for burial in a landfill. Steele County households may bring these to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities. Businesses are not allowed to bring mercury or products containing mercury to the HHW facility. [Click here](#) for information about hazardous waste disposal options for Very Small Quantity Generators (VSQG) of hazardous wastes.

If the liquid in the thermometer is red, it is an alcohol thermometer, not a mercury-containing thermometer, as mercury is silver in color.

Tin Cans

Tin and steel cans are recyclable in Steele County's Residential Recycling program. [Click here](#) for more information about the County's Residential Recycling program.

Labels do not need to be removed from tin cans, nor do the cans need to be crushed prior to recycling, however crushing cans saves space in recycling bins and on recycling trucks. Tin/steel containers should be rinsed. Metal lids may also be recycled. Place tin cans with all other types of recyclable cans and bottles; they do not need to be separated.

Tires

Tires are required to be recycled by Minnesota law. The Steele County landfill accepts tires for recycling for a small fee based on tire size. [Click here](#) for more information about tire recycling at the landfill. Tires are also accepted for various fees at the Steele County Recycling Center in Owatonna that is operated by Waste Management. Call 507-456-4894 for information on Waste Management's tire recycling charges. Tire dealers also often accept used tires for recycling for a small fee, so check phone book yellow pages under "Tire dealers" for more recycling options.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Unwanted toilet bowl cleaners from Steele County homes should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities.

Treated Wood

Green and brown treated lumber and plywood must be disposed in the mixed solid waste area of the Steele County Landfill. [Click here](#) for information about disposal at the Steele County Landfill and for disposal charges.

Tree Debris and Brush

Minnesota law forbids landfill disposal of tree debris and brush. Owatonna has a yard waste compost site that can be used by anyone; untreated wood waste and brush are accepted for composting for a fee. [Click here](#) for more information on Owatonna's Compost Site. All cities in Steele County have community compost sites and some allow open burning within certain guidelines; call your city office for details. Rural residents must apply for a free annual burn permit from the Steele County Sheriff. Call the Steele County Sheriff's office at 507-444-3800 or stop by the Law Enforcement Center at 204 E. Pearl St., Owatonna.

Televisions

TV sets and computer monitors sets are required by Minnesota law to be recycled. These are accepted for recycling at three locations in Steele County and each location sets their own fees. The Steele County Landfill takes these electronics for recycling. [Click here](#) for more information on the Steele County Landfill and its fees. Electronics are also accepted for recycling at the Steele County Recycling Center in Owatonna, which is operated by Waste Management. Call 507-456-4894 for more information. The Retrofit Companies in Owatonna (ph. 507-455-1851) also accepts electronics for recycling for a fee. Some large retail stores such as Best Buy also accept electronics and occasionally a special collection is held at a facility. These types of collections are typically announced in the media.

V

Varnish

Varnishes and stains cannot be placed in household trash for landfill burial. These hazardous products from Steele County homes should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities. Usable varnishes and stains are placed on shelves at this facility for other adults to take home for reuse free of charge.

Very Small Quantity Generator of Hazardous Waste (VSQG) Program

Businesses that generate hazardous waste must comply with state and federal regulations to properly manage these wastes. Businesses that generate less than 220 pounds of hazardous waste a month are classified as Very Small Quantity Generators (VSQG) of hazardous waste. Steele County's Household Hazardous Waste Facility is not licensed to accept business hazardous waste; however Rice County accepts this waste from VSQG businesses. Businesses interested in bringing hazardous waste to the Rice County Hazardous Waste Facility for proper disposal must call this facility first at 507-332-6833 to arrange for an appointment and complete paperwork prior to dropping off hazardous waste. Most businesses will be required to obtain an EPA identification number. There will be a charge for disposal, but VSQG businesses will save money by bringing hazardous waste to Rice County's facility versus hiring a licensed hazardous waste contractor to pick up the waste from the business.

W

Waste Exchange

[Click here](#) for more information on Steele County's free Household Hazardous Product for used, but usable chemicals such as paints, stains, varnishes, auto products and cleaning products. [Click here](#) for information on the statewide Materials Exchange program for used, but usable business chemicals, furniture and packaging materials.

Windshield Washer Fluid

Unwanted windshield washer fluid should be brought to either the Steele or Rice County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities for free, proper disposal. [Click here](#) for more information about these HHW facilities.

Y

Yard Waste

Leaving yard waste, such as grass clippings and small amounts of leaves, on the lawn after mowing is easy and healthy for your lawn, unless the grass is unusually long or the leaves are quite deep and matting would suffocate the grass still growing on the lawn. In fact, leaving clippings and small amounts of leaves on the lawn for an entire summer gives your lawn the equivalent of one fertilizer application.

The Owatonna Yard Waste Compost Site accepts yard waste for a fee. [Click here](#) for more information on Owatonna's Compost Site. Contact your city office for information on other community compost sites in Steele County.

Yard waste may also be composted at home. Grass clippings, leaves, vines, garden wastes, sticks and other organic materials turn into a beneficial natural soil amendment over time when placed in a pile, exposed to moisture and turned periodically. Compost improves drainage and soil texture in clay soils, improves moisture holding capacity and soil texture in sandy soils and increases utilization of plant nutrients in a soil with poor organic content. For information on building and maintaining a home compost pile, call the Steele County Recycling Hotline at 507-451-5443

State law prohibits yard waste from being buried in a landfill, so these biodegradable wastes cannot be placed in household garbage.