

Green Living

Frequently Asked Questions about Recycling; Composting Guidelines; The Work of the Environmental Concerns Committee; Suggestions for Sustainability in a Warming World; Kendal at Oberlin's Strategic Plan, Goal 6 (2022-2027)

Under the auspices of the Environmental Concerns Committee
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(change is in red)

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Recycling Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Where can items be recycled at Kendal?** For cottage dwellers there is a Trash Room in your parking lot. In the Apartment Building, there is a Trash Room on each floor near the elevator. Most paper, cardboard, glass, and metal and some plastics can be recycled in these Trash Rooms.

If in doubt, throw it out. PLEASE don't contaminate the recycling bins in the trash rooms or the green-and yellow "Abitibi" paper retrievers in the Facility Services parking lot with inappropriate items.

It is important that when recycling, that ALL your recyclables are EMPTY, CLEAN, AND DRY.

Put items for recycling unbagged in the bins.

2. What kinds of paper and cardboard can be recycled?

- newspapers and inserts
- office paper (paperclips should be removed but staples are ok)
- magazines and catalogs
- envelopes (plain and with windows)
- junk mail and brochures
- phone books
- plain greeting cards
- brown paper bags
- paperback, hardback, and textbooks books (if you are recycling more than 2-3 books, please deposit them directly in the green-and yellow “Abitibi” paper retrievers in the Facility Services parking lot)
- shredded paper, if put in a CLEAR plastic bag and deposited directly in the green-and yellow “Abitibi” paper retrievers in the Facility Services parking lot
- all corrugated cardboard (remove ALL Styrofoam, plastic bags, and other packaging materials; break-down all boxes before placing them in the recycling bins)
- box board such as tissue and cereal boxes (remove liners and flatten boxes)
- pressed paper items such as egg cartons
- toilet paper and paper towel tubes

Did you know that paper makes up nearly 30 percent of waste generated each year?

3. Can shredded paper be recycled? See FAQ #2

4. **Can hardback books and textbooks be recycled?** See FAQ #2

5. **What paper and cardboard goods CANNOT be recycled?**

- Paper napkins, paper towels, paper plates and paper cups including coffee cups BUT these can be composted (see Composting Guidelines, pg 9-10). Waxed paper, wrapping or tissue paper, color construction paper, carbon paper, photographs, slides, and sticky notes CANNOT be recycled.
- Kendal paper cups and other food service items labeled “compostable”; these compostable items go on the conveyer belt in the Langston.
- greasy pizza boxes (these can be composted in the composting bins by the loading docks across from the staff parking lot)
- dirty pastry boxes
- milk, juice, soup, and broth cartons
- waxed box board of any kind, e.g., some frozen food boxes

6. **What kinds of glass can be recycled?** Glass bottles and jars of any color can be recycled if they are clean and dry. Lids and tops must be removed, but it’s ok to leave on any plastic or metal rings. Broken glass, mirrors, and light bulbs should NOT be placed in the glass recycling bin. (See FAQ #16)

7. **Can metals be recycled?** Acceptable items are aluminum and other metal beverage **CANS** and all food cans including pet food cans (steel, tin, bi-metal). Items should be clean and dry. The lids can be recycled if they are put into the can (stepping lightly on the edge of the can helps keep them there).

Manufacturing aluminum cans from recycled ones uses 95 percent less energy than creating cans from new sources.

8. **Can aluminum foil and aluminum food containers be recycled at Kendal?** No.

Recycle responsibly. Support rather than interfere with the system. Contamination of the recycling system makes many recyclable items become unmarketable, thereby defeating the purpose.

9. **What kinds of plastics can be recycled?** Only a few #1s and #2s are recyclable. Recyclable are **ONLY:**

- water and soda bottles
- detergent containers

#3, #4, #5, #6, and #7 and #1 and #2 plastics not listed above CANNOT be recycled and should be put in the trash.

10. **Can plastic bags be recycled?** Plastic bags cannot be recycled at Kendal but they, along with dry cleaner bags, bread wrappers and other thin plastic bags, can be recycled at Giant Eagle and some other nearby stores. Check Earth911.org for recycling sites.

- Grocery bags and other similar thin shopping bags can be reused for a project at Kendal if they are deposited in the container outside the back door at the east end of the Auditorium (nearest the Fox and Fell).

Plastic take-out bags from Dining Services can be reused or recycled with other plastic bags. They cannot be used for the special project mentioned in the bullet point above.

If you have small appliances or other items listed below **THAT ARE IN WORKING ORDER**, check with Kendal's Resale Shop to see if they will take them.

11. Can small electronics and household appliances be recycled? Items, such as those listed below, can be dropped off at Facility Services. They are not necessarily recycled but are taken by Facility Services to the Lorain County Collection Center for proper disposal or reuse. If they are heavy, you can contact Facility Services to have them picked up. Do NOT leave these items in the Trash Rooms. “Small electronics” include:

- TVs (up to 60”) and remotes
- printers
- computers and peripherals such as mice, printers, keyboards, scanners, hard drives, joysticks
- DVD and Blu-Ray players and DVDs
- video games and video game consoles
- audio and speakers
- cell phones, corded and cordless phones
- MP3 players
- headphones
- vacuums
- fans
- e-readers, such as Kindles
- cameras
- electric cords and cables, power strips
- CD players and CDs
- data terminals and modems
- diskette drives and diskettes
- handheld battery devices, such as electric toothbrushes
- portable radios
- turntables and vinyl records
- VHS tapes and cassette tapes

12. **What can I do with worn out batteries?** Put both rechargeable and regular batteries in the bucket under the open mailboxes labeled "Used batteries." A resident volunteer collects them and takes them to Oberlin College, which has a contract with a hazardous waste disposal company to dispose of them responsibly. (See Earth911.org for places to deposit car and other large batteries.)

13. **What can I do with empty ink and toner cartridges?** Place in the plastic container marked "printer ink cartridges" under the open mailboxes and a resident volunteer will take them to the Lorain County Collection Center in Elyria.

14. **What should I do with garden and plant waste?** Garden waste does NOT go in the Trash Rooms. Put garden refuse in paper bags – either your own or those provided by the Horticulture Committee, available in the Trash Rooms at each parking lot. Cottage residents should place bags of garden waste outside their Trash Rooms. Apartment residents should put garden waste outside an entrance door to the Apartment Building door and let Facility Services know where it is. For a large amount of garden waste, residents may leave it by their garden and notify Facility Services for pick up. This is then composted by the Barnes Company.

15. **How should I dispose of syringes, razor blades, and other sharp items?** Put them in a closed container such as a plastic container with a lid and then put them in the trash.

16. **How should I dispose of hazardous materials such as paint, garden chemicals, pesticides, and toxic-material containers?** Do NOT put these items in the trash or leave them in the trash room. Facility Services does not store or collect them. See Earth911.org for disposal.

17. **How should I dispose of light bulbs?** Place fluorescent light bulbs in the bucket in the Trash Room labeled “Fluorescent Light Bulbs.” Wrap incandescent light bulbs in newspaper and put them in the trash.
18. **How should I dispose of outdated or unused prescription medicines?** Take them to the Oberlin Police Department for disposal. Do NOT flush them down the toilet or sink drain.
19. **How can I dispose of a mattress?** See Earth911.org
20. **What CANNOT be recycled in a Kendal trash room?**
- appliances (If appliances are small and in working order, check to see if the Resale Shop will take them. If not, see FAQ #12)
 - bubble wrap and plastic food wrap
 - Styrofoam and another plastic packing materials
 - clothes hangers
 - diapers
 - food waste (see Composting Guidelines, pg 9)
 - garden hoses
 - plastic bags (see FAQ #11)
 - items smaller than your fist such as individual salad dressing containers
 - batteries (see FAQ #13)
 - plastic lids both press on and screw on
 - yogurt and cottage cheese and similar containers
 - medicine and nutritional supplement bottles
 - plastic cups, glasses or straws
 - rubber balls and sports equipment
 - syringes, razor blades, other sharp items (see FAQ #16)

- broken glass (wrap in newspaper before putting in the trash)
- tires
- waxed cartons including waxed frozen food boxes, e.g., Lean Cuisine
- garden waste (see FAQ #15)
- electronics and computers (see FAQ #12)
- hazardous waste such as paint, garden chemicals, and toxic material containers (see FAQ #17)

21. **Other hard-to-dispose-of items:** See Earth911.org. See also the Lorain County Collection Center, available at <https://www.loraincountyohio.gov/184/Lorain-County-Collection-Center>

Please note that just because something is “collected” by a “collection” or “recycling center” or placed in an outside-Kendal “recycling receptacle,” there is no assurance that the item will, in fact, be recycled.

Composting Guidelines

Food waste can be composted at Kendal if it is put in a green compostable bag (available near the Langston conveyer belt). After the bag is full, tie it shut, bring it to the Langston, and leave it on the conveyer belt. It will be picked up by a vendor for commercial composting.

What you can include in the green bag:

- baked goods, such as bread, and their ingredients
- butter
- cheese (no plastic wrappers)
- coffee grounds and filter paper

- dairy, eggs, and egg shells
- fruits and vegetables, peels, and cores
- grains and pasta
- meat, poultry, and bones
- tea and tea bags
- small amounts of paper napkins or paper towels when containing food waste

Kendal single-use compostable cups and soup containers should also be left on the conveyer belt.

Other compostable items are acceptable but **CANNOT** be included in the green bag. These can be taken to the recycling bins by the loading dock across from the employee parking lot. **PLEASE DO NOT THROW ANY PLASTIC BAGS IN THESE COMPOSTING BINS.**

What you can put in these composting bins:

- small numbers of paper napkins and paper towels
- paper plates and non-coated paper cups

What you CANNOT put in the compost bins:

- aluminum foil
- cardboard
- cellophane wrappers
- cleaning supplies and cloths
- glass
- metal
- plastic film
- plastic bags or wrappers
- single serve packets
- parchment paper
- Styrofoam containers
- twist ties

Composted food releases less of the potent greenhouse gas, methane, than food decomposed in landfills.

Sustainable Living Guidelines

Electricity

- Switch from incandescent or florescent to LED (light emitting diode) light bulbs
- Use “smart” power strips that turn off attached electronics when these are in sleep mode. Otherwise, turn off surge-protected power strips if plugged-in devices are not in use.
- Turn off lights when leaving a room.
- Close blinds or drapes in rooms not in use to reduce heat gain or loss.

LED bulbs use 90% less energy than incandescent bulbs, and half as much as fluorescents. They also give off less heat and last much longer.

Water

- Turn off water while brushing your teeth.
- Turn off water while soaping, shampooing, or shaving in the shower.
- Shower as quickly as possible.
- If your shower head is not “low flow,” ask Facility Services to install one.
- Wash only full loads in the dishwasher.

Laundry

- Wash only full loads of laundry.
- Use cold water to wash and rinse

- Use a drying rack instead of a dryer.
- If using a dryer, use the “auto dry” setting, not the “timed” drying setting on the dryer.
- Use “green” laundry products free of phosphates, fragrances, dyes, bleach, and surfactants, such as Kind, Earth Breeze, or Tru Earth Eco-strips Laundry Detergent.
- Use powdered detergent, which comes in a cardboard (recyclable) box instead of liquid detergent or pods, which come in plastic containers.

Shopping

- Buy less.
- Use reusable shopping bags.
- Combine your trips to save on mileage.

Computing

- Turn off your computer when not in use, activate its “sleep” setting, or better yet, use a “smart” power strip.
- Use recycled-content paper for printing.
- Print on both sides of the paper.
- Use the blank side of used paper when possible.
- Read documents in their electronic version instead of printing them out.

Participate in the democratic process by voting for climate activists and writing or phoning to support green legislation.

Gardening

- Use a water recycling system or a rain barrel.
- Use a water reducing system such as a soaker hose or drip irrigation.
- Water early in the morning or late in the afternoon to reduce evaporation.
- Compost plant waste (see Recycling FAQ 15).

Dining

- Minimize food waste by ordering or purchasing only what you will eat.
- Use reusable cups, plates, mugs, and eating utensils.
- Avoid single-use water bottles. Instead, use a refillable water bottle and fill with filtered water at Kendal's drinking fountains.
- At meals use your refillable water bottle rather than purchasing bottled water.
- Chose plant-based and locally-sourced foods when possible.
- If using take-out at Dining Services, ask for the green, square, compartmented containers or compostable containers. Wash and return both types of containers to the Langston conveyer belt.
- At home, put all food waste in a compostable bag and place it on the Langston conveyer belt.
- Purchase locally-grown and organic produce at the Farmers Market in the Oberlin City Hall Parking Lot on Main Street, mid-May to mid-October, Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Check Oberlin Farmers Market website for winter location.

Americans throw out 40% of the food they buy.

Eat plant-based foods. Even shifting from high to low meat consumption can shrink your carbon footprint by a third.

Transportation

- Plan trips to limit the use of your car.
- Walk or bicycle to destinations when reasonable.
- Car share or car pool, and combine errands.
- Use Kendal transportation.
- Buying another car? Consider a hybrid, hybrid-plug in, or an EV (charge it on campus).

Write officials to encourage bills that limit truck and car emissions

Apartment and Cottage Living and Banking

- Buy less or not at all. Add “Refuse” to “Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.”
- Try lowering the thermostat in winter, adding sweaters and layers. In summer, turn the thermostat up a few notches, adding ceiling fans.
- Use green cleaning products, i.e., free of bleach, phosphates, and fragrances.
- Use bar soap rather than liquid hand soap, which comes in plastic bottles.
- Clean with rags or Skoy cloth (reusable, sustainable, biodegradable) instead of paper towels
- Repurpose or donate items no longer used or wanted.
- Use the Woodshop to repair items rather than replacing them.
- Monitor your carbon footprint at myclimate.org
- Divest. Take your money out of institutions that invest in fossil fuels and support those that engage in socially responsible investing. One site that monitors this is greenpages.org
- Report leaky doors and windows to Facility Services.
- Turn heat down or air conditioners up while on vacation.

Give it away; make someone’s day.

Apps to help live more sustainably

- **Tap.** This app helps find clean water sources and avoids the use of single-use water bottles. Tap directs users to restaurants, cafes, refill stations and water fountains across 7,100 cities in 30 countries.

- **Happy Cow.** A restaurant/shopping source for vegan and vegetarian options with 180,000 restaurants, cafes, and grocery stores that cater to healthy eating.
- **Think Dirty.** Use this free app to scan the barcode of 350,000+ cleaning and personal care products to decode the unintelligible list of toxic ingredients and read explanations of each ingredient and why it's considered "dirty."
- **Giki Zero.** On the basis of a few questions, this carbon-calculating app determines how many kilograms of carbon you use each year. A more detailed questionnaire can give more detailed results and suggestions on how to lower your carbon footprint.
- **Good on You.** This app gives clothing brands sustainability ratings that encompass three main areas: People, planet, and animals. They take into account treatment of workers, environmental impact, and animal welfare from the extraction of raw materials through to the product's end-of-life impact.
- **Bikemap.** Browse 11 million bike paths in 100 different countries with Bikemap. It also shows the route to the grocery store and provides visual and auditory cues.

For the average person, choosing a bike over a car reduces personal carbon emissions from transport by 67%.

The Environmental Concerns Committee

Among its major activities, the Environmental Concerns Committee (ECC):

- Works to align Kendal at Oberlin's environmental programs with the
 - City of Oberlin's Climate Action Plan

- Recommendations of the City's Climate Adaptation Task Force
- Assists the Administration, the Kendal at Oberlin Board of Trustees, and KORA in
 - Implementation of and revisions to the Kendal at Oberlin Strategic Action Plan 2022-2027, Goal 6
 - Development of the comprehensive campus plan
- Monitors
 - Recycling in the trash rooms
 - Composting
 - A special plastic-bag collection outside the Heiser Auditorium
- Encourages
 - Residents to switch from incandescent and fluorescent to LED light bulbs
 - ECC members to write state and federal officials on important environmental and climate issues
- Hosts presentations by environmental experts, for example
 - Lighting engineer Larry McGowan: "LED Lighting and Dark Sky Specs (11/20/2021)
 - Oberlin College students of Professor John Peterson: "Updates on the Digital Environmental Dashboard" (1/20/2022; 5/3/2023)
- Collaborates with
 - SSAFE (Senior Stewards Acting for the Environment), the association of 450 volunteer residents on 10 Kendal campuses in 8 states which seeks to reduce carbon emissions 50% by 2030 throughout the Kendal System and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050
 - Kendal at Oberlin's Arboretum and Horticulture Committees on plans for native plants and trees that are resistant to climate change in NE Ohio and those that sequester carbon

- The City of Oberlin’s sustainable initiatives (e.g., Kendal representation on the city’s Climate Action Task Force) and proposes initiatives for the city to consider (e.g., the rebate program begun in June 2023 to stimulate purchase of battery operated weed wackers, leaf blowers, and lawn mowers)

Kendal at Oberlin’s Strategic Plan 2022-2027 Goal 6

Goal 6: Greatly strengthen and extend Kendal at Oberlin’s conservation and sustainability initiatives, including cost-saving measures and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, consistent with the City of Oberlin’s Climate Action Plan and recommendations from its Climate Adaptation Task Force.

Introduction: The United Nations Secretary General called the August 2021 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change “a code red for humanity.” Climate scientists have concluded that carbon emissions must be reduced 50% by 2030 to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. Failure to do so will almost certainly raise the global average temperature by 2C or more, ensuring far more catastrophic floods, downpours, droughts, fires, hurricanes, heat waves, acidified seas and biodiversity loss than what has already occurred. The 2018 National Climate Assessment states that the first three types of disaster will particularly impact northeast Ohio.

Strategy A: Strive for significant reduction in Kendal at Oberlin’s carbon emissions by 2030.

- 1) Calculate Kendal’s annual carbon emissions to establish a baseline by which to measure emission cuts, and conduct an energy audit via the City of Oberlin’s Efficiency Smart Program.

- 2) Improve energy conservation on campus.
 - a) Develop a plan, using consultants if necessary, that: 1) Identifies the cheapest, most reliable and energy-efficient technologies to replace gas-fired heating/cooling with all-electric power in the apartment building, Heiser, SCC and the pool building, 2) Lays out the phasing of this transition and maintenance implications, and 3) Provides for more all-electric and hybrid plugin cars, buses, pickups, charging stations, battery-storage packs, and solar panels in garage rebuilds.
 - b) Adjust the capital budget to phase in these technologies.
 - c) Continue to replace Kendal at Oberlin mowers, trimmers, go-carts, and vans with electric models.
 - d) Continue to replace sodium light poles and bollards with LED fixtures.

Strategy B: Implement changes that will make Kendal at Oberlin a more sustainable campus.

- 1) Increase carbon sequestration sufficiently through cultivation of a sustainable landscape, with those plants and trees best suited to Ohio's warming Midwestern climate. Increase shade and wind protection in selecting trees.
- 2) For all new construction, create a storm water plan that includes techniques like permeable pavement, bioswales, and other ways to manage storm water.
- 3) Decrease food waste beyond present composting through educational programs and increased awareness.
- 4) Increase local and regional sources of food.
- 5) Continue to improve the campus, maintaining its walkability, attractiveness, and diverse population of plant and animal life.

Strategy C: Act as an advocate, educator, and community partner for environment, energy, and climate issues.

- 1) Continue to educate residents on sustainability/energy-saving measures they can take.
- 2) Partner with Oberlin College on opportunities to implement environmental solutions within and beyond Kendal at Oberlin.
- 3) Partner with other Kendal affiliates and other like-minded organizations on environmental solutions within and beyond Kendal at Oberlin.
- 4) Through appropriate venues, educate and inform residents about significant climate legislation at local, state, and federal levels.
- 5) Partner with the City of Oberlin on environmental improvements and continue to encourage resident participation in various city council committees and commissions, the Oberlin City Education and Outreach Working Group, and the planning of walkways that connect Kendal at Oberlin with the larger community.