

[back to article](#)



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# Landfill ban on items starts next month

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Beginning Oct. 1, some of your trash will not be welcome inside the Davidson County landfill, but it has little to do with you, personally.

North Carolina law will soon ban used motor oil and oil filters, plastic bottles, wood and used clothing from entering county landfills.

The new law intends to save room and extend the life of landfills by putting recyclable materials to new uses, explained Tammy Michael, superintendent for Lexington's sanitation department. The goal is to reduce the daily amount of garbage and trash entering the landfill, called the waste stream.

"We're asking people to make sure and separate the items they throw away into items that can be recycled," Michael said.

State law earlier banned most paper, aluminum, steel and plastics. Slowly, more materials are being added to that list. Michael said the next round of waste regulations would keep electronics and televisions out of landfills, prompting solid waste officials to begin planning new recycling programs.

Earlier regulation was aimed at protecting the environment from harmful substances.

"Eventually, everything is going to go back into the water supply if landfills are unlined," Michael said. "Fortunately, modern landfills, like the one in Davidson County, are lined so they can't contaminate the soil and groundwater."

Now officials are concerned with reusing as much as possible to save room in existing landfills. Davidson County opened a second phase to its landfill that could last for decades if the public is careful about recycling.

Officials are asking solid waste customers to recycle all clear or colored glass, aluminum, steel, newspaper, cardboard, phone books, unwaxed paper food containers and used clothing.

Wooden items like pallets, furniture and scrap building materials must be recycled. A local recycling company, Todco, located on Roy Lopp Road near the landfill, will recycle unwanted wooden household items for about \$5 per truck load or \$24 per ton.

Used motor oil and oil filters, paint, used cooking oil, harsh chemicals and other harmful substances can be recycled at the Davidson County Hazardous Household Waste Facility, also housed at the landfill.

For now, there are no enforcement policies in place to make sure people are following the new state law. Customers are asked to separate their recyclables and keep banned items out of the landfill, but there's no way to fine or otherwise punish those who do not.

"At this point, we'd like people to adhere to the new laws for the sake of our environment and prolonging the life of our landfill. We don't have the manpower or the budget to go through the collected waste looking for these items," Michael said. "But if we all help out, we could save ourselves some money down the road."

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