

Reducing waste when you move



Tips and tricks to reduce waste
(and stress) when you move out
of your current home and into
your new one.



Moving out

Giving yourself enough time to sort through your things before you move will keep you from feeling overwhelmed and allow you to find the best reuse, recycling and safe disposal options for things you decide to get rid of. Being conscious about packing choices will also help to prevent waste and added stress as you pack and when you unpack at your new home.

Getting rid of stuff



An important step in moving is deciding what items you want to bring with you to your new home and which you would like to get rid of before you move. Sort your items into “keep” and “get rid of” categories and then process the “get rid of” items by donating or selling them. If donating and selling isn’t an option, but sure to dispose of them properly. Find a detailed list of donation opportunities in Hennepin County in the donation opportunities PDF, linked below.



[Donation opportunities \(PDF\)](#)

Clothing, dishes, furniture, and tools

These items can be donated to a charitable organization. Some organizations will pick up from your home. If you live in a multifamily building, contact your property manager to learn more about donation options.

You can also sell these items at a garage sale, consignment shop, or online through neighborhood groups or online marketplaces.

Special disposal

Mattresses and box springs

Mattresses and box springs in good condition can be sold or given away. Mattresses in good condition can also be donated to Bridging: bridging.org/give-stuff



Curbside mattress pick-up service is available to Hennepin County residents as well as condo and apartment building managers in select cities. Learn more about mattress pickup options:

secondchancerecyclingmn.com/mattress-recycling

Hennepin County Drop-off facilities accept mattresses, futon mattresses, crib mattresses, and box springs from households for a fee.

Recycle

You can recycle many items, including boxes, glass bottles and jars, condiment containers, cans, paper and cardboard, and plastic bottles, jugs and cups, through your curbside or building recycling program. Refer to the recycling guide at hennepin.us/recycling to see what items can be recycled.

If you have larger quantities of recyclables, contact your hauler or property manager to ask about special pick-up options or bring them to a Hennepin County Drop-off Facility: hennepin.us/drop-offs.

Safe disposal

Some items should not be disposed of in the trash or recycling and require a bit of extra effort to dispose of safely. Knowing what you want to get rid of ahead of time will make taking this effort easier when you move.

Hazardous waste



Hazardous waste from households includes automotive products, cleaners, lawn and garden products, mercury-containing items, paints, stains, paint thinners, and pesticides.

Hennepin County Drop-off facilities accept these items. They can also be brought to seasonal collection events for disposal.

Learn more about hazardous waste disposal at:



[hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide/
household-hazardous-waste](https://hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide/household-hazardous-waste)

Medicines



Medicines flushed down the drain or disposed of in the trash can contaminate bodies of water, harm wildlife and end up in drinking water supplies. Prescription drug abuse is also a growing problem, especially among teens.

Dispose of your medicines at one of the over 60 medicine drop box locations in Hennepin County. Find the location nearest you at hennepin.us/medicine.

Electronics



Electronics are accepted for recycling by some manufacturers and retailers, including Best Buy, Recycle Technologies, Repowered, and Staples. Contact your city or curbside waste hauler to see if they will pick up TVs, computer monitors and laptops. If you

live in a multifamily community, contact your property manager for disposal options.

Hennepin County Drop-off facilities accept electronics including audio and video equipment, cameras, cell phones, DVD players, computers, monitors, game systems, mobile devices, printers, telephones, TVs, radio and music players, and rechargeable products. There are fees for some items.

Learn more about electronics disposal:



hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide/items/electronics

Find a full list of retailers that accept TVs, computer monitors and laptops:



hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide/tvs-computer-monitors-laptops

Packing

Once you've decided what to keep, donate, or dispose of, you'll find yourself with less to pack. That's great! There are some steps you can take while packing to not only reduce waste now, but also help to prevent unneeded purchases and stress when you get to your new home and begin unpacking.

Reuse boxes and packing materials

Save money and reduce waste by sourcing boxes and packing materials from your community. Post on digital community bulletin boards (like NextDoor and Facebook groups) to ask your neighbors if anyone just moved and has boxes and packing materials to give away. Check those same places for posts from people already looking to give away materials. Other great places to access free sturdy boxes are grocery and liquor stores or by saving them when you receive packages in the mail.

Minimize your need for things like packing paper and bubble wrap, and shrink the number of boxes you will have to use, by utilizing soft items you already own to pack up your more fragile items. For example: use throw pillows and blankets to wrap breakable pots, vases, or other ceramic and glass items.



If you live in a multifamily property keep an eye on the recycling dumpster or cart area at the start of the month to intercept boxes and packing materials that new tenants are disposing of while they move in.

Pack an “open first” box

Pack a box that you will keep with you the first day of your move. Clearly label it as “open first” and don’t pack it into a moving truck if you are using one. Bring it directly to your new home yourself. Things to have in the box include anything you will need quickly upon arriving at your new home. Creating a box like this will help avoid needing to buy new versions of things you can’t easily (or quickly) locate within your other boxes. It will also make unpacking easier.

Examples of what to include: scissors or a box opener, your inventory of what is in each box, dishes and cutlery for each person in your household (one each so you can eat), easy to prep food for a meal or two, toilet paper, dish soap and sponge, hand soap, hand towel, shower curtain, bedding, necessary toiletries, and medicines that are needed daily.

Labeling and inventorying while you pack



Label boxes by the room the items will go in at your new home. For instance, if you are packing things for your new living room, label the box “living room.” Label it on all sides except the bottom. Cross off any pre-existing labels from past moves when reusing boxes to avoid confusion.

Inventory your items by listing what is in a box on the outside of the box to make unpacking easier. For example, list “slow cooker, pots and pans, pressure cooker, air fryer” on a kitchen box containing those items so you can find them without searching through every kitchen box. Make unpacking even easier by keeping a master inventory list that you can reference when looking for something specific. Keep the inventory list in your “open first” box.

Be sure to label heavy boxes as “heavy” on all sides but the bottom so that whoever goes to lift the box isn’t caught off guard with the weight. Using smaller boxes for heavy items is also a good idea. This will help to not only avoid injury, but also protect the items in the box from damage if dropped.



Labels are available to purchase from many retailers that include inventory sheets and labels designated by room type (living room, kitchen, etc.). Labels are also available that say “fragile” and “heavy.”

Keeping fragile items safe during your move

Keep fragile items safe during your move by packing them in sturdy boxes and securing the bottom of the boxes with extra tape. Layer the bottom of the boxes with soft packing material or soft items you already own like clothing or blankets. Use dividers for glasses and stemware (liquor store boxes come with dividers that work great for this). Fill hollow items like glasses and jars with packing paper or fabric items like napkins and towels. Wrap each individual item separately. Plates should be packed vertically to avoid breaking.



Label boxes that contain fragile items as “fragile” with either a marker or a sticker. This will help remind those carrying and stacking the boxes to take extra care.

Moving in

Unpacking



Give away your moving boxes and packing supplies by posting them on digital community bulletin boards (like NextDoor and Facebook groups) or giving them to a friend. If you plan to move again and have room to store them, keep boxes for your next move.

Properly dispose of items left behind

If the previous tenants of your new home left behind any hazardous materials, be sure to dispose of them in one of these ways:

- Bring them to a Hennepin County Drop-off Facility ([hennepin.us/drop-offs](https://www.hennepin.us/drop-offs)).
- Bring them to a Hennepin County community collection event ([hennepin.us/collectionevents](https://www.hennepin.us/collectionevents)).

Bring non-hazardous materials to a city-hosted cleanup day ([hennepin.us/recycling](https://www.hennepin.us/recycling))

Cleaning during move out and move in

Save money while cleaning and keep pets and family members healthy by making your own cleaning products using these recipes. Find a full recipe guide for green cleaning in the green cleaning recipe guide PDF, linked below.



[Green cleaning recipe guide \(PDF\)](#)

Green cleaning recipe

All-purpose cleaner



Ingredients:

- ¼ cup white vinegar
- 1½ teaspoons non-antibacterial liquid dish soap
- Water
- Lemon juice (optional)

Instructions:

In a 16 oz. spray bottle, add the vinegar and fill with water. Add dish soap last. Add lemon juice if desired.



Green cleaning recipe

Toilet bowl cleaner



Ingredients:

- 1 cup baking soda
- 1 cup white vinegar
- 1 pumice stone
- 1 toilet brush

Instructions:

Sprinkle baking soda into toilet bowl, then drizzle vinegar and scrub with toilet brush. Next, use a pumice stone to remove lime in bowl.



Settling in

Set up recycling

Find out how recycling service works in your city by contacting your city recycling coordinator. Find contact information at hennepin.us/recycling.

If you live in an apartment building, condo, or townhouse, ask your property manager where the recycling bins or dumpsters are located. Property owners and managers are required to provide residents with the opportunity to recycle.

Make recycling convenient in your home by placing containers wherever you generate recycling. Remember to recycle items from the bathroom, kitchen, laundry room and office. Order a recycling guide, recycling magnet, and labels for your home on the environmental resources order form, linked below.



environmentalresources.hennepin.us/items



Integrate organics recycling

Learn about what organics recycling options are available in your city at hennepin.us/organics. If you live in a city where organics recycling service is not offered, contact your city council members, mayor and hauling company to let them know you are interested in the service. And in the meantime, check to see if there are any drop-off options available that are convenient for you.

If you live in an apartment building, condo, or townhouse, ask your property manager if organics recycling is available at your property and where the bins are located. If organics recycling is not available through your property, find the closest organics drop-off to you at hennepin.us/organics.

Order an organics recycling guide, magnet, and labels for your home: environmentalresources.hennepin.us/items

Access resources to help you set up organics recycling in your home at hennepin.us/organics.



Identify disposal options

An important step of settling into your new home is identifying disposal and donation options near you.

- Find drop-off facility information and locations at **hennepin.us/drop-offs**
- Find the closest medicine disposal box at **hennepin.us/medicine**
- Find the closest place to donate unwanted items at **hennepin.us/choose-to-reuse**
- Join neighborhood groups on sites like NextDoor and Facebook to sell or give away unwanted items to neighbors

Getting stuff

Give yourself some time to settle into your new place with things you already own before purchasing more items. When you start to look for additional things for your home, visit local reuse retailers or look on digital community bulletin boards (like NextDoor and Facebook groups). Find a reuse retailer in Hennepin County that has what you are looking for by searching by category at **hennepin.us/choose-to-reuse**

Moving checklist

- Donate items that are in good condition that you no longer want
- Dispose of or donate unwanted mattresses and box springs
- Dispose of hazardous waste, medicines, and electronics that you won't be bringing with you
- Find boxes and packing materials that you can reuse
- Pack an "open first" box
- Label and inventory everything you pack
- Keep fragile items safe as you pack them
- Give away moving boxes and packing supplies
- Properly dispose of items left behind by previous tenants
- Set up recycling in your new home
- Set up organics recycling in your new home
- Identify disposal options near your new home
- Get needed items for your home



