

Borough of Fair Lawn
Clean Communities Program



Clean & Green
Guide

Clean Communities Grant

The clean communities program was created in 1986 with funding from taxes levied on the sale of litter generating products. In December 2002, the Clean Communities Fund was reauthorized allowing 21 countries and 559 municipalities to be eligible to receive funding.

Fair Lawn has utilized this funding for the following programs:

- Volunteer Litter Clean-Up and Removal Events
- Educational Assemblies at Fair Lawn Schools
- Public Education Campaigns
- Enforcement of Borough Dumping/Littering Laws
- Street Sweeper Maintenance
- Purchasing of Equipment and Supplies (Street Garbage Cans, Litter Clean Up Supplies, etc.)
- Storm Drain Marking

The grant is administered by the Fair Lawn Recycling Division. If you have suggestions on how we can improve the program, please contact us at 201-794-5341 or email litter@fairlawn.org.

Quick Phone Number Reference

Fair Lawn Recycling Division / Clean Communities Program – 201-794-5341

NJ Department of Environmental Protection Hotline – 877-927-6337 (877-WARN-DEP)

Bergen County Utilities Authority Household Hazardous Waste – 201-807-5825

Fair Lawn Clean Communities Program

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For more information on the Council, visit their website at NJCLEAN.ORG.

Clean Air

Air Pollution Reduction, and Why It's Important:

The air we breathe every minute, every day, is something that most of us take for granted. Until we see the haze in the air on a hot summer's day or smoke emanating from factories, air pollution is invisible to the naked eye. Over the last twenty years, more people are suffering from heart disease, lung cancer, and respiratory diseases such as asthma and emphysema as a result of the air pollution. Everyday choices in your life can help reduce the air pollution and make everyone's life a little bit healthier.

What Causes Air Pollution?

The main cause of air pollution is man-made chemicals, or *unnatural sources*. These take the form of factory emissions, cars, planes, aerosol cans, and even second-hand cigarette smoke. There are also *natural sources*, which come from wildfire smoke and volcanic ash.

How Does Pollution Affect the Earth?

Although air pollution particles initially linger in the atmosphere, eventually they fall back to Earth. This ends up contaminating the surface of our water sources and soil everywhere. Not only does this impact our crop production, but also the animals living around our planet.

An example of air pollution is acid rain - the product of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide when mixed with the atmosphere's oxygen and water. The components of acid rain usually come from coal power and vehicles. Acid rain destroys not only the planet, but also everything existing on it from rivers to buildings.

How Can I Help?

In the Home:

- Conserve energy by turning off and/or unplugging lights and appliances not in use. If an appliance has a light that is on, such as a small red one to indicate it is working, it is drawing energy that must be generated.
- Purchase energy efficient products (www.energystar.gov).
- Wash clothes in warm or cold water, rather than hot.
- Lower your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees.
- Plant trees in locations around your home to help shade it in the summer and allow light in the winter.
- Choose not to smoke in your home, or work towards entirely quitting.



Driving / Auto:

- Purchase vehicles that are low-polluting and more fuel efficient (www.epa.gov/greenvehicles).
- Keep your tires properly inflated and aligned.
- Perform regular maintenance on your vehicle such as tune-ups and oil changes.
- Use public transportation, walk or ride for a clean alternative.

Anti-Idling Program



Motor vehicles are one of the leading contributors to air pollution. Too many cars, trucks, and buses are left idling while their drivers and occupants run errands, “warm up,” or wait on school pick-ups. Make the choice to turn the key and shut the engine off.

Is it that bad?

Yes, idling your car is worse than you think it is for the environment and the people around you.

- Breathing exhaust fumes can aggravate asthma, allergies, and cardiovascular disease.
- Every gallon of gas burned produces more than 20 pounds of greenhouse gases.

- An idling vehicle emits 20 times more pollution than one traveling at 30mph.

But what if I need to?

- 10 seconds of idling uses more fuel than turning off the engine and restarting it.
- Modern car engines require only 30 seconds of warm up time in cold weather.
- Frequent restarting has a minimal, if any, impact on engine components like the battery and motor.
- Cars that are left idling are more likely to be stolen.

So What Can I Do?

- Turn off your car! Don't let it idle.
- Use an ice scraper to instead of idling to remove snow from the windows.
- Don't use a remote starter.

Did you know?

That leaving an idling vehicle is actually illegal? Not only does it hurt the environment, but the entire state of New Jersey has laws against it. Fair Lawn ordinance 150-9 prohibits idling for more than three (3) minutes, with a maximum penalty is \$1,250. **Curious about the exact state laws and regulations against idling? Visit www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/idling_fact_sheet_1.pdf for more information.**

“Litter cleanup costs the United States \$11.5 Billion dollars per year.” — Keep America Beautiful

Clean Lands

Fair Lawn is a community covered in natural beauty; however, these resources are consistently polluted. Accidents, spills, leaks, illegal dumping, littering, and simple carelessness have taken a toll on our natural resources not only in Fair Lawn but across the world. It's easy to make a difference by thinking globally and acting locally.

Broken Windows Theory

The broken window social theory simply states that if signs of deterioration of a neighborhood appear and are not immediately corrected, the deterioration will grow worse. One broken window that is not repaired will cause a chain reaction and lead to more broken windows.

This theory is evident with litter. One piece of litter or illegal dumping, whether it's a full take-out meal container or a cigarette butt, will show others that it is acceptable to litter in that area. This follows the "But Everybody's Doing It" philosophy - one humans maintain from a young age.



How Can I Help?

You can help break the cycle of litter by:

- Picking up litter on your street.
- Removing graffiti from your property as soon as it appears.
- Reporting illegal dumping to local authorities.
 - Try to get a license plate number so the criminal(s) can be found.
- Show pride in your community and take initiative in making it better.

Volunteer Litter Clean-Up Days

To help our community, the Recycling Division holds several volunteer litter clean-up days each year. These events are held on specific Saturdays from 8:45AM to Noon. Volunteers are provided with gloves, bags, pick-up sticks, and lunch. Transportation to the clean-up sites is provided by the Fair Lawn Minibus through the health department. Event dates are posted on the Borough website (www.fairlawn.org), the Borough e-mail list and Facebook page.



If your civic group or organization would like to hold their own Litter Clean-Up Event, contact the Clean Communities Coordinator for a supply of garbage bags, gloves, and to schedule your event.

To volunteer for an event, report public property in need of cleaning, or to get assistance for your own event, call the Fair Lawn Recycling Division at **201-794-5341** or email litter@fairlawn.org.



Garage Sale Signs

Each weekend from Spring through Fall, residents try to sell their unwanted items through garage sales. While the Borough encourages reuse of discarded items, care must be taken to advertise correctly to avoid creating a litter and aesthetics issue. Signs are not permitted to be posted in the ten (10) foot right of way. This includes being prohibited on telephone poles, street signs, trees, bus stops or anything else from the sidewalk out to the curb.

Waste Reduction

Reducing the amount of garbage produced will not only help save landfills from covering our Earth, but it will also help prevent environmental damage and save tax dollars. If every resident in Fair Lawn reduced their waste by one pound per week, the town would save approximately \$65,000 per year in garbage disposal costs.

Freecycling Unwanted Items:

Do you have unwanted items that are still in good condition? Don't want to hold a garage sale? Why not just give them away instead of sending them to a landfill? Goodwill, the Salvation Army, and shelters in the surrounding area will be more than happy to accept your gently used clothing. Additionally, there's Freecycling, which allows you to subscribe to a mailing list where people offer unwanted items for free. Join the Bergen County mailing list and start giving your items to someone besides the garbage man.

www.freecycle.org



Join a Book Swap:

Are books cluttering your shelves? Join a book swap where you can exchange books with others from around the country. In exchange you can get a book you haven't read for just the cost of shipping! Some online bookstores also allow you to sell your used books on their platform for a small fee. There are also sites for swapping music, DVDs, and video games.

www.paperbackswap.com

www.bookmooch.com

Or for additional websites, go to:

www.makeuseof.com/tag/the-best-bookcrossing-websites/

Illegal Dumping:

Illegal dumping of any item is a crime that affects the entire community. The cost is not only expensive, but also detrimental to the environment. Solid waste violations usually involve regular household garbage, construction materials, or a combination of the two. Residents are encouraged to report illegal dumping to the Fair Lawn police or by calling the NJ Department of Environmental Protection at 877-WARN-DEP (877-927-6337) immediately and to utilize the Litter Marshal Program.

NJ statute N.J.S.A. 13:1E-9.3 states that anyone dumping more than .148 cy 30 US gallons of liquids at an illegal site face a mandatory \$2,500 fine, up to 90 days in jail, loss of driver's license for 6-12 months, and forfeiture of the vehicle used.

Grasscycling: The Smarter Way to Cut Grass



Grass clippings are a major part of the town's solid waste stream (garbage & recycling). While recycling grass and yard waste is mandatory in New Jersey, it is costly to collect and transport yard waste materials to a composting facility. Recycling your own grass is easy and cost-efficient. Use a mulching lawn mower, or simply replace the blade on your existing mower with a mulching type. When you cut your grass, allow it to remain on the ground to be reabsorbed and provide vital nutrients to your yard.

You save:

- Time by not bagging the grass and transferring it to a barrel. You save 20-25% of your lawn care time.
- Money by not having to use as much fertilizer.
- Aggravation as the cut grass makes your lawn look nicer and reduces weed growth.
- Water as the cut grass helps reduce water evaporation, allowing your lawn to be watered less.

Correctly Mowing Your Lawn

To maintain your lawn properly, avoid mowing more than the top third of the growing grass. Done consistently, this will result in an attractive, neatly trimmed lawn because the small clippings will filter down to the soil. Most lawns thrive when mowed to about 2-3 inches, especially in the summer. The taller grass will shade the soil, cool the roots, and prevent weed growth resulting in a healthier lawn.

What About Thatch?

Lawn experts agree that grass clippings do not create thatch in lawns. Thatch is formed from accumulation of grass roots and stems. The more you fertilize and water, the faster it grows and the faster thatch accumulates.

What Does It Do for the Earth?

When you recycle grass clippings back into the soil, you'll return nearly two pounds of valuable nitrogen to every thousand square feet of lawn each year. That may not be enough to keep the lawn extremely healthy, so you may need to add an additional 1.5 pounds of nitrogen each year.

Alternatives to Grasscycling

If you don't want grass clippings on your lawn, consider using them for the following purposes:

- Tilling them into the garden soil. New Jersey soil is commonly low in organic materials and the grass adds the needed organics
- Use them in a backyard compost pile. The grass is half of the required "browns and greens" needed to efficiently compost

For more information on soil types or to have your soil tested, contact the Rutgers Cooperative Extension at 201-336-6780.

Backyard Composting



Since the beginning of time, nature has recycled its own organic waste through a process known as composting. A walk through the woods and this process can be observed. Leaves that have fallen during the autumn are composting on the ground, nourishing the plants and trees that grow in the forest. Composting is nature's way of recycling.

Composting is simple, providing your garden with nutrient rich compost that you can use for potting soil, lawn care, or garden as a soil amendment or around trees and bushes. Not only do you reap the benefits of the compost, but you help the Borough of Fair Lawn save money in collection costs.

Download a flyer with full details on how to compost at:

<https://www.fairlawn.org/sites/default/files/field/files-docs/backyardcomposting.pdf>

What is it?

Composting is a term that is used when someone controls the breakdown of natural solid waste. The organisms living on and around the organic matter eat and break it down to a crumbly mixture. This process happens to all organic material; however, the process can vary in speed depending on the environmental factors.

How Do I Compost?

Composting your leaves, grass, yard waste, and other organic material is easy. Hardware stores and garden centers sell compost bins, you can build your own bin, or you could compost without a bin. Some homemade bins are constructed with chicken wire, fence, or wood scraps. The BCUA holds composter sales every year. Call 201-807-5821 or email abonnaolynch@bcua.org for details.

Litter Marshal Program

According to the New Jersey Clean Communities Council, at least 55% of all litter found in New Jersey is deliberate and approximately 75% of people intentionally littering on urban streets are between 6 and 24 years old. Much of the intentional litter comes from occupants in vehicles as they toss garbage out of the window.

If you see someone littering, take down some basic information and report it when it is safe to do so. Littering in Fair Lawn can be reported to the Litter Marshal Hotline at 201-794-5341. Littering in Bergen County can be called into the local police department.

Required information includes the license plate of the vehicle, the date, time, location and what was littered.



“Over 51 Billion pieces of litter land on U.S. roadways every year.” — Keep America Beautiful

Hazardous Waste Disposal

Hazardous waste is not only dangerous to the environment, but has also been linked to cancers and other diseases. Proper disposal is imperative to the health of humans and animals. The Bergen County Utilities Authority (BCUA) hosts a Household Hazardous Waste Clean-Up Day several times per year. All Bergen County Residents are able to bring their materials to this event for proper disposal.



Acceptable: pesticides, herbicides, solvents, thinners, corrosives, cleaners, pool chemicals, paints, varnishes, aerosols, gasoline, photographic chemicals, antifreeze, household batteries, car batteries, small helium tanks, used motor oil and propane gas cylinders from gas grills only

Unacceptable: woodlife, formaldehyde, explosives, asbestos, compressed gas, radioactive material, silvex (2, 5-T), dioxin, ketone, PCB's or TCDD, or infectious waste.

This program is free of charge to Bergen County Residents only! Proof of residence required.

The Fair Lawn Recycling Center does NOT accept hazardous waste.

For Collection Dates, Call:

201-807-5825

www.bcua.org

Paint Disposal

Paint in liquid form is considered a hazardous material. NEVER dump paint into a storm drain, body of water, septic system, or down the drain. How you handle paint depends on the type of paint.



Oil Based: Take to the BCUA Household Hazardous Waste Collection.

Spray Paint: Take to the BCUA household Hazardous Waste Collection.

Latex Paint: Latex paint in liquid format is a hazardous material; however, once it is dried it is no longer hazardous and may be placed in the garbage. You may bring latex paint to the BCUA Household Hazardous Waste Collection or place it in the garbage AFTER following these steps for proper disposal:

1. Remove the lid and let the paint air dry. For large amounts, you can purchase hardening crystals from a paint supply store or hardware store.
2. After the paint has dried, remove it from the can with a screwdriver or other tool. Place the dried paint mass into a plastic bag and place it out for regular garbage collection.
3. The paint can is also placed out with the garbage, but the lid must remain off so the garbage contractor can see that it is empty.

Clean Water:

Water is our most precious resource. The reports on water quality and the pollution in the ocean get worse each year. Now is the time to do something about our water and reduce pollution. Much of the information in this program will ultimately help to protect our waterways, such as grass cut-it-and-leave-it to reduce the fertilizer run off.

Adopt a Storm Drain

Fair Lawn has nearly 2,000 storm drains and the Department of Public Works cannot inspect them all before storms. We are asking residents to adopt a storm drain on their street. Your responsibilities include visually inspecting the drain before a pending storm. You can then report damage or debris build up inside the drain to the DPW office (201-794-5304). The Adopter is asked to clean any light debris, such as litter, leaves or bags, off the top of the drain.

The benefit of adopting a storm drain is better rain water run off on your street and a reduction in the chances of flooding, not to mention the knowledge that you have made Fair Lawn a cleaner place and you have helped the environment.

