



## Public Health and Safety



Every day, the average Canadian produces 2.5 kilograms of waste. That waste is handled in a variety of different ways, based a lot on where that Canadian lives and what services are available in their local community.

Here in Ottawa, residents can separate their waste into recyclables (paper, metal and plastic, for the most part), and waste. Certain other products, such as electronic products, can also be 'eCycled' to reduce waste going into the landfill. At the same time, the City of Ottawa is exploring an option to separate organics from waste into the future through a new composting program, and that will further reduce the amount of waste going to the landfill.

But why do we go to all this effort? Why is it important to dispose of waste properly?

Waste management is broader than just the disposal of waste. It includes the generation, collection, processing and transport of waste, as well as the minimization of the production of waste and the new strategy of treating waste as a resource.

Indeed, waste management has played a tremendous role in history, and has been credited by many historians as the single greatest advance in civilization. The Bubonic Plague, cholera and typhoid fever, to mention a few, were diseases that altered the populations of Europe. They were perpetuated by waste, improperly disposed of, that harbored rats, and contaminated water the supply. It was not uncommon for Europeans to throw their waste out of the window which would decompose in the street.

Today, advances in waste management technology have vastly improved public health and safety, but public health and safety impacts are influenced by the overall waste management strategy adopted locally, regionally and nationally. Waste Management is working with partners in Eastern Ontario to look at the various options available to ensure we handle waste properly, securely and safely to bring maximum benefits to local residents while ensuring proper disposal and treatment of waste.