

The Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority received the following urgent notification from Republic Services for all Morris County towns and residents:

Fires have been breaking out in New Jersey's recycling facilities due to the improper disposal of pressurized containers, metal chemical cylinders, and rechargeable batteries. New Jersey's recycling facilities process and sort paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, plastic containers, aluminum cans, steel (tin) cans, glass bottles, and glass jars for domestic and international markets.

Employees and equipment are in danger of being burned when flammable products are improperly disposed of in curbside recycling bins. Material recycling facilities have been razed to the ground because of fires from hazardous waste thrown into the recycling mix. When crushed or overheated, batteries and/or fumes from toxic liquids can spark, causing a chain reaction of flames igniting nearby bales of paper or plastics at recycling facilities. This is also a problem for staff in curbside recycling compactor trucks.

Eric Gabrielson of Republic Services distributed photos of some unsafe items that have been delivered to the recycling facility in Mine Hill. Gabrielson said, "Most folks probably don't consider everything containing batteries in them these days." He continued, "Here's a photo of the remains of a laptop computer that was pulled off the baler belt." Luckily it was caught and dragged out of the building before it caused any damage.



This photo shows the remains of a laptop that was dropped into a curbside recycling container. During the sorting process at the recycling facility, the Lithium Ion battery in it exploded and caught fire.



These photos show cans of paint thinner, denatured alcohol, acetone, propane tanks, and auto fluids that were captured at Republic Services' recycling facility before they ignited. Dangerous substances can harm people and equipment if not disposed of properly.

Anthony Marrone, the Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority’s (MCMUA) Hazardous Waste Specialist, advises residents to read the labels on any product to see if there is a Danger & Warning notice regarding possible harm to people or the environment. “If containers have flammable contents, oil-based paints and stains, or pesticides, for example, make a HHW appointment at www.MCMUA.com.” Marrone said. “If it is completely empty, the container can be thrown into the garbage.” He continued, “Don’t put the can into your recycling bin. Please remember there are people in the solid waste industry who might get hurt.”

Working with Eric Gabrielson of Republic Services, the MCMUA created the following list of materials and their proper disposal method:

Unacceptable Metal Containers/Items	Proper Disposal
Gas cans, i.e. metal red DOT cans, TruFuel (ethanol free gas)	If fuel is in the container, make a HHW appointment. Empty cans can be throw into the garbage.
Automotive Chemicals, i.e. brake cleaner	If chemicals are in the container, make a HHW appointment. Empty cans can be throw into the garbage.
Aerosol Cans, i.e. hairspray, spray paint	If material is in the container, make a HHW appointment. Empty cans can be throw into the garbage.
Paint Remover, Lacquer Thinner, Turpentine, Paint Thinner, Acetone, Oil-based Paint	If paint product is in the container, make a HHW appointment. Empty cans can be throw into the garbage.
Camping Propane Tanks	Accepted at the HHW facility. Make an appointment. Do not throw into the garbage.
Oil Filters	Accepted at the HHW facility. Make an appointment. Do not throw into the garbage.
E-Waste, i.e. iPads, Laptops, Tablets	Accepted at the HHW facility. Make an appointment. Do not throw into the garbage.
Rechargeable Batteries	Accepted at the HHW facility. Make an appointment. Do not throw into the garbage.

Non-rechargeable Batteries	Tape terminal ends and throw into the garbage.
Blow Torch Tanks	Contact the manufacturer for proper disposal information. Do not throw into the garbage.

Acceptable Metal Containers	Proper Disposal
Non-pressurized (empty) food cans/containers	Residents should recycle non-pressurized (empty) food cans/containers in their curbside recycling bins.

The MCMUA’s Household Hazardous Waste facility accepts many types of chemicals and harmful substances. Residents can make an appointment to properly dispose of their materials, find out about the dates for a drop-off event, or see the list of acceptable or unacceptable materials by going onto the MCMUA’s website. Check out www.MCMUA.com.