



Benchmark Recycling Standards

After many years of stakeholder discussions, public engagement, and the review of two stakeholder-developed reports of recommendations, Michigan is on the path to a long overdue update of Part 115, Solid Waste Management, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended. Proposed language to update Part 115 has been drafted and is undergoing review by stakeholders and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The recommended changes broaden the focus of Part 115 from providing safe and long-term disposal capacity, to also recognizing solid waste as a resource. As recommended, a revitalized planning process will include Benchmark Recycling Standards to work toward a day when all Michigan residents are able to recycle materials as easily as they can dispose of them in a landfill. This document provides an overview of the recommended Benchmark Recycling Standards.



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It is Michigan's goal to achieve a 45 percent municipal solid waste recycling rate, and as an interim step, a 30 percent municipal solid waste recycling rate by 2025, through the benchmark recycling standards. This goal is intended to be a guide to encourage continual progress toward achieving improved materials management. The goal is not written or designed to penalize any community not achieving the recycling rate goal; rather, that each Materials Management Plan is required to set its own Materials Utilization Goals that are appropriate to the unique situations within the communities included in the plan. The Benchmark Recycling Standards are intended to be a minimal and achievable level of access to residential recycling opportunities.

Terms

“Access” to curbside recycling means a household has either curbside recycling that is automatically provided or the ability to request recycling services from the resident's hauler. “The ability to request” means that all haulers servicing more than 10 percent of the community population will offer recycling services that can be chosen by the resident. “Access” is not defined as any individual resident being able to choose a single hauler that offers recycling services, when all other haulers may not.

Materials Utilization Goal is a measurable, objective, and specific set of goals chosen by a planning area to increase recycling and reduce waste generation.

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- 2022: 90 percent of the single-family dwellings in urbanized areas have access.
- 2025: 90 percent of the single-family dwellings in areas with more than 5,000 residents have access.
- 2028: Communities with less than 100,000 residents have at least 1 drop-off for every 10,000 residents without curbside recycling at their dwelling.
- 2028: Communities with more than 100,000 residents have at least 1 drop-off for every 50,000 residents without curbside recycling at their dwelling.

Service Requirements include:

- Curbside: In communities that fall within the benchmark thresholds (urbanized areas by the year 2022 and communities with more than 5,000 residents by the year 2025), recycling must be collected at least once every 14 days. Materials are either collected separately, delivered to a processing facility to be separated from commingled solid waste, or delivered to a compliant materials recovery facility for sorting.
- Drop-off: In communities that fall within the benchmark, thresholds communities with a population of less than 100,000 should have 1 drop-off per 10,000 residents without access to curbside recycling at their residence, and communities with 100,000 population or more should have at least 1 drop-off per 50,000 residents without access to curbside recycling at their residence. Drop-off locations must be available at least 24 hours per month.

Mechanisms to ensure access may include (but are not limited to):

- Voluntary action by recycling service providers to offer recycling services to customers (bundled service or for a fee).
- Municipality-provided curbside recycling services.
- Franchise or contract agreements with the private sector.
- Establishing an ordinance specifying that haulers shall offer recycling services.

Roles and Responsibilities

Each Materials Management Plan is required to identify their own Materials Utilization Goals and implementation strategies to meet their goals and the Benchmark Recycling Standards (proposed Section 11578). If a county chooses not to write a Materials Management Plan, or in the case that the Benchmark Recycling Standards are not met, the State will write the plan. A plan written by the DEQ will trigger the requirement that all haulers operating in the planning area will provide recycling access per the Benchmark Recycling Standards (proposed Section 11526a(3)).



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