

“One Person’s Trash...”

your guide to reducing,
reusing and recycling



Buncombe County
Solid Waste Department
828-250-5462
buncombecounty.org

Spring 2025

Debris Cleanup Continues Around Buncombe County



As Buncombe County continues recovering from the impacts of Hurricane Helene, we want to thank our residents for their patience and resilience. With support from FEMA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and AshBritt, the County has removed a significant volume of debris since cleanup efforts began. Your cooperation has been vital, and we’re providing the latest updates to keep everyone informed and involved.

Right-of-Way Debris Pickup

The right-of-way (ROW) debris removal mission has come to an end. The final day for ROW collection in Buncombe County was March 31, 2025. Residents were previously instructed to place any storm-related debris at the edge of the ROW by March 1. After that deadline, residents and business owners were able to apply for assistance through the Private Property Debris Removal (PPDR) program, which remained open for applications until April 15, 2025.

Ongoing Waterway Debris Removal

Debris cleanup is underway in rivers, streams, and tributaries across the County and is expected to continue until June 30, 2025. Multiple crews are actively working in the water and along the banks. For your safety and to support the effectiveness of these operations, we ask residents and volunteers to avoid entering these areas until the crews have finished and fully demobilized. Once the debris is cleared and it is safe to return, residents and volunteers are welcome to help restore and enjoy these spaces.

Title Property Removal in Progress

Crews are also working to extract title property—such as damaged or displaced vehicles, RVs, campers, and boats—from waterways, private land, and remote locations. If you are missing title property or know

it was damaged during the storm, please contact your insurance provider as soon as possible to begin the claims process.

Important Guidelines for Handling Debris

To assist the County and USACE with safe and efficient debris collection, please do not use black bags for storm-related waste. Contractors are legally prohibited from collecting any debris that is bagged in black plastic. For safety and visibility, we ask that all debris be placed on tarps, in clear bags, or in organized piles. If you’ve already used black bags, please slash them open and expose the contents before placing them curbside to ensure collection.

Volunteer Opportunities and Spring Cleanup Support

Several local organizations are continuing their cleanup efforts this spring. If you’d like to volunteer or support these initiatives, please consider connecting with Asheville Greenworks, MountainTrue, or Friends and Neighbors of Swannanoa. Your help makes a lasting difference.

Vegetative Debris and Safe Burning Practices

If you’re dealing with excess vegetative debris, such as branches and brush, and choose to dispose of it by burning, please do so safely. Contact your local fire department for up-to-date guidelines and make sure there are no active burn bans in your area due to weather or air quality conditions. Buncombe County remains committed to supporting residents throughout the recovery process. For the most accurate and current information, visit buncombecounty.org/solidwaste or call the One Buncombe Hotline at 828-250-6100. Thank you for doing your part to keep our community clean, safe, and strong.

ONE MILLION POUND

food scraps celebration

SATURDAY, APRIL 26 10-12PM

RSVP HERE

FREE EVENT!

includes:

- compost demo
- free compost (bring your own bucket)
- kids’ activities
- more!!

Stephens-Lee Community Center
30 George Washington Carver Ave



What Goes Where?

Recycling properly in Buncombe County starts with knowing what materials are accepted. Accepted materials include clean, dry paper products, such as cardboard, envelopes, junk mail, magazines, newspapers, and office and school papers. Metal cans and plastic and glass bottles, jugs, and jars are also recyclable.

Setting up a well-labeled recycling bin inside your home helps make sorting easier for everyone. Before placing items in the bin, containers should be emptied, rinsed, and air-dried to prevent contamination. Breaking down large cardboard boxes not only saves space but also time. Boxes should always have all packing materials removed and be flattened.

Keeping recyclables loose rather than bagged is key to the recycling process since plastic bags can interfere with sorting equipment. Hazardous materials, such as hoses, cords, batteries, chemicals, and medical sharps, should never be placed in recycling bins, as they can damage equipment and create safety risks. Contaminants like greasy pizza boxes, dirty recyclables, and diapers should also be kept out of the recycling.

If you're ever unsure or want more tips for recycling correctly, visit buncombecounty.org/solidwaste. The more we know, the better we recycle.



Credit: AL_Watt | E+ | Getty Images

SMART SHOPPING GUIDELINES



40% of food in the U.S. is never eaten. Careful shopping is the easiest way to save more food and dollars in your budget.

MAKE A LIST

Shoppers who use and stick to lists have lower grocery bills and make fewer shopping trips.

SKIP THE CART

Bigger carts call us to fill them. Hand baskets help improve your grocery store discipline.

SCRUTINIZE DEALS

Five bananas for \$1 is a good deal only if you eat all five. Many stores offer the sale price even if you buy less than the stated quantity.

SHOP THE BULK BINS

Many stores offer grains, nuts, and other dry goods in bulk bins that allow you to purchase only the quantity you need.

TAP THE SALAD BAR

For recipes that call for small amounts of different vegetables, shop at the salad bar. They will cost more per ounce, but less overall.

USE A PORTION PLANNER

When you're not sure how much you'll need for your dinner party, use an online portion planner.

KEEP IT COLD

Buy perishable and frozen foods last so they spend less time at room temperature. And be sure to shake the water from produce—water encourages rotting and adds weight. If you won't be home for a while, keep cold groceries in a cooler in your car.

SUPPORT IMPERFECTION

Scarred and oddly shaped fruits and vegetables are perfectly normal. If we don't buy them, the store will throw them away.

BUY THE LAST ONE

Buying the last item on the shelf discourages stores from overstocking to create the appearance of abundance.

Save Food, Save Money

According to the USDA, about 30-40% of our food supply ends up being wasted, and a substantial amount of that happens right in our homes. When we waste food, we not only throw away the money we spent, but also the resources used to produce it, like water, energy, and labor. This waste contributes to larger environmental issues, such as the release of greenhouse gases from decomposing food in landfills. By being mindful of how we handle our food, we can make a positive impact on both our wallets and the planet.

One way to reduce food waste at home is through careful planning and shopping. By creating a meal plan and a corresponding shopping list, you can avoid purchasing unnecessary items that are likely to go unused. It's important to stick to the list and resist the temptation of impulse buys, which often end up spoiling before they can be consumed. Additionally, being mindful of portion sizes can help reduce leftovers that may otherwise go to waste.

Proper food storage is another key strategy for reducing food waste. Learning how to store fruits, vegetables, and other perishables correctly can extend their shelf life. For instance, certain fruits and vegetables should be stored separately to prevent premature ripening, and understanding the use-by and best-before dates can help prioritize what to use first. Freezing food is another excellent way to extend its life. By freezing surplus food, households can preserve it for future meals, reducing the likelihood of it spoiling in the fridge.

Embracing a mindset of sustainability and creativity can make a significant difference. For example, vegetable scraps can be used to make broth, and overripe fruits can be transformed into smoothies or baked goods. Every small effort to reduce food waste adds up. By planning wisely, storing food properly, and finding creative ways to use what we have, we can help protect our environment and our food won't go to waste.

Cut Food Waste This April

April is Food Waste Reduction Month, but we're committed year-round! Asheville City Council proclaimed April 2025 "Food Waste Reduction Month" during a council meeting this month. Buncombe County and the City of Asheville take turns proclaiming it annually, and past proclamations can be found on the Buncombe County website. To celebrate, conduct a home food waste audit and share your observations with friends or play a game of food waste bingo! Follow Food Waste Solutions WNC at @wncfoodwaste and visit their website for challenges, events, and prizes. Register for the Food Waste Drop-off Program to keep your scraps out of the landfill. In the city, look for the "Save the Food Asheville" logo on sanitation trucks and social media as we share tips to reduce waste. Have a cooking tip or compost bin photo to share? Use hashtags #savethefoodav1 and #savethefoodwnc!

For more tips, visit SaveTheFood.com.

From Waste Free Kitchen Handbook by Dana Gunders, 2015. Used with permission from Chronicle Books, San Francisco.

SAVETHEFOOD.COM



Skip Single-Use Plastics



Plastic straws are a prime example of the sort of plastic item we have grown used to using once and throwing away. But these small, everyday plastics add up quickly, and they're a major contributor to litter in our parks, waterways, and roadsides right here in Buncombe County.

Think about how often single-use plastics show up in daily life—at school, in the office, on hikes, or at local events. Whether it's a plastic fork from a quick lunch or a water bottle brought to a ballgame, these items often get tossed after just one use. Unfortunately, many of them end up as litter on our streets or make their way into local streams and wooded areas, where they can harm wildlife and pollute the environment for years to come.

The good news is that every Buncombe County resident can take small steps to make a big difference. It's always better to refuse, reduce, reuse, and recycle than to use something once and throw it away. You can start by changing one plastic habit a week or even a month and then build from

there. Talk to your friends, classmates, or neighbors about doing the same!

Here's how you can be part of the solution:

- Just say no to plastic straws or stir sticks at restaurants. If you like using straws, carry a reusable metal or silicone one.
- Use reusable shopping bags instead of plastic ones.
- Bring your own refillable water bottle or travel mug to fast food restaurants instead of using disposable cups.
- Use reusable produce bags or skip bags altogether when buying fruits and vegetables.
- Replace plastic and Styrofoam plates with compostable or reusable alternatives.
- Make your own takeout kit with reusable containers for leftovers.
- Check to see if your local grocery store has a bulk food section where you can bring your own containers instead of using plastic bags.

Once you've refused and reused everything you can, be sure to recycle what's left—correctly. In Buncombe County, all recyclables should be empty, clean, and dry. Items like plastic straws, disposable utensils, cup lids, and loose bottle caps are too small for our recycling equipment and should go in the trash. When in doubt, go find out—visit buncombecounty.org/solidwaste for answers to your recycling questions and to learn more about reducing plastic waste in our community.



Household Hazardous Waste Could Be on Your Shelf

Many household products come with warning labels to alert us of potential danger, yet it's easy to forget about them once they're stored away in garages, basements, or under sinks. In an average home, families may have up to 100 pounds of hazardous materials sitting unused. These unneeded products, known as Household Hazardous Waste (HHW), include items like old paint, bug spray, gasoline, stain, lawn chemicals, and antifreeze—products that are no longer needed but still pose a risk if not properly handled.

Clearing out HHW not only makes your home safer for your family but also helps protect emergency responders in the event of a fire or natural disaster. These substances should never be poured down the drain, dumped outside, or placed in the regular trash. Fortunately, Buncombe County provides safe disposal options for residents through our HHW collection program.

HHW and paint are accepted only on select Tuesdays at the Buncombe County Landfill. We encourage residents to clip and save the HHW schedule for future reference. When preparing to drop off materials, it's important to sort your items and take inventory of what you're bringing. Clearly label the contents of each container, as state regulations prohibit us from accepting any chemicals that are unlabeled. Residents should also be aware that proof of Buncombe County residency is required at the time of drop-off, and for safety reasons, we ask that anyone bringing materials unload them whenever possible.

There is no charge to drop off certain materials, such as pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, motor oil, antifreeze, and lead-acid batteries. However, paint and related items—including water-based sealers, paint

thinners, enamels, polyurethane, gasoline, and kerosene—do carry a fee of \$2 per gallon. There is a limit of 20 gallons of paint per person per event.

In addition to HHW, the landfill also accepts televisions and computer monitors during regular operating hours, provided that residents can unload these items on their own. There is a \$10 fee per TV or monitor, regardless of the size. If you have other electronics or need assistance with unloading, please bring your items during the same Tuesday HHW drop-off hours.

Aside from TVs and monitors, most electronic waste is accepted from residents at no charge. Businesses, however, may drop off electronics for a fee of 30 cents per pound but are not permitted to participate in the HHW program.

The Buncombe County Landfill is located at 85 Panther Branch Road, just off 251 North (Old Marshall Highway) north of Alexander. When you arrive, you'll check in at the scale house, where staff will direct you to the appropriate collection area. For more details about the HHW drop-off schedule, accepted items, and safe disposal practices, please visit buncombecounty.org/solidwaste.

2025 Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics Recycling Drop-Off Schedule

9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on these Tuesdays:

- May 6 & 20
- June 3 & 17
- July 1 & 15
- August 5 & 19
- September 9
- October 7
- November 4
- December 2



How BearWise Are You?

Bears are curious and will follow their powerful noses to just about anything with an odor (it doesn't have to be a good odor). Bears may also investigate anything they've learned can yield a food reward: garbage, birdseed, pet food, chickens, beehives...you get the idea.

Use our **Be BearWise Checklist** to learn what attracts bears and how you can keep bears away from your home and property.

BBQ Grills, Smokers

- ✦ Grill and/or smoker is stored inside when not in use. **If not:**
- ✦ Drip pans and grates are cleaned after every use.
- ✦ Grill/smoker is kept covered.
- ✦ Utensils are stored indoors.
- ✦ Food is not left unattended when cooking or eating outdoors.

Be BearWise: Keep a look-out when you cook-out. Thoroughly clean grills and smokers.



Trash, Recycling

- ✦ All trash containers are cleaned often to reduce odors.
- ✦ Recycling is rinsed out and clean.
- ✦ Bear-resistant trash containers are always closed and latched.

If containers are not bear-resistant:

- ✦ Regular trash cans are stored inside a sturdy locked building or bear-resistant enclosure.
- ✦ Garbage is put out the morning of pick up (not the night before).



Be BearWise: For certified bear-resistant containers and ways to modify your standard trash cans, visit BearWise.org.

Vehicles Parked Outside

- ✦ No food or anything with a fragrance is left in vehicles, car trunks or truck beds, including pet food, birdseed, food, beverages, scented air fresheners and trash.
- ✦ Vehicle windows are kept fully closed and doors locked.



Be BearWise: Keep a small trash bag in your vehicle and empty daily. Use an odor-removing spray. Roll up and lock up.

Feeding Birds

- ✦ Birds/hummingbirds are not fed when bears are active in your area.
- ✦ Bird food is stored in bear-resistant containers or inside a sturdy, locked building.

If you feed birds when bears are active:

- ✦ Bird food and feeders are brought in nightly.
- ✦ Fallen birdseed and leftover food is picked up daily before dark.



Be BearWise: Download our bulletin: **Attract Birds, Not Bears** for feeder-free options.

Feeding Pets, Strays

- ✦ Food is not put outside for stray animals or wildlife.
- ✦ Pets are fed indoors.

If you must feed pets outside:

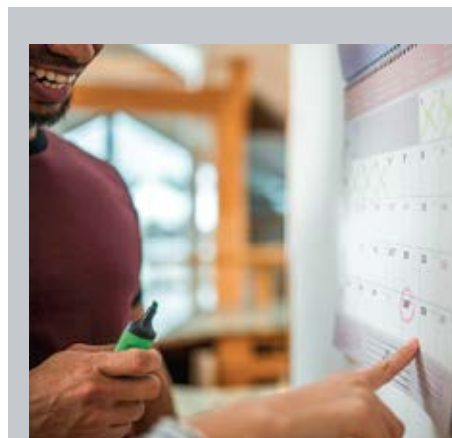
- ✦ Pets are fed in single portions; bowls are removed and feeding area cleaned as soon as pets have eaten.
- ✦ Pet food is stored in a sturdy locked building or bear-resistant containers.



Be BearWise: Download our bulletin: **Dogs + Bears = Problems** for more safety tips.



BearWise® Helping People Live Responsibly with Black Bears



Stay Up to Date

Make sure to sign up for CodeRED BCAlerts to receive updates on your phone and email. It's an easy way to stay informed about emergencies and community information, including waste collection changes, recycling updates, and debris resources. Visit <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/en-US/BFB79E06651B> to sign up.

Credit: AzmanL | E+ | Getty Images

RECYCLE ALL TOGETHER

PLASTIC

Bottles, tubs, jugs and jars

No pumps Empty and rinse

METAL

All cans

Empty and rinse

GLASS

Bottles and jars

Empty and rinse

PAPER

Paper, cartons and cardboard

Flatten cardboard

KEEP THESE ITEMS OUT!

- ⊗ Aerosol cans
- ⊗ All batteries (car, lithium, etc.)
- ⊗ Ceramic items
- ⊗ Clothing or textiles
- ⊗ Diapers
- ⊗ Disposable cups (plastic and paper)
- ⊗ Electronics
- ⊗ Food-tainted items
- ⊗ Hazardous waste
- ⊗ Household glass
- ⊗ Medical waste
- ⊗ Plastic bags/wrap
- ⊗ Plastic clamshell packaging
- ⊗ Scrap metal/wood
- ⊗ Shredded paper
- ⊗ Styrofoam/peanuts
- ⊗ Tanglers (cords, hoses, wires, etc.)
- ⊗ Tires
- ⊗ Toys



If you have any questions, please contact the **Solid Waste Office at 828-250-5460** or the **Landfill at 828-250-5462**.

TV/PAINT RECYCLING EVENTS

Buncombe County Landfill also accepts the following items from residents* **ONLY** during TV/Paint Recycling events. Check our website for event details and dates.

- Electronics:** Cell phones, keyboards, etc.
- Televisions, computer monitors, and CPUs:** Every day drop-off is available for residents who are able to self-unload. \$10/item
- Paint:** Paint, paint thinners, water sealers, enamels, etc. 20-gallon limit per event. \$2/gallon
- Flammable liquids:** Gasoline and kerosene
- Pesticides:** Insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, etc.
- Unbroken fluorescent bulbs:** 20 bulbs max per month. Check online for bulb disposal guidelines.

NOTE: Bio-hazardous materials, radioactive materials, and explosives are **NOT** accepted.

*Businesses can recycle electronics by the pound for a fee. No business hazardous wastes will be accepted.

ACCEPTED EVERY DAY

The landfill also accepts the following materials every day at the Convenience Center from residents only – no commercial quantities.

- Used cooking oil
- Motor oil
- Lead-acid batteries
- Automotive fluids, oil filters and antifreeze

Buncombe County Landfill Convenience Center

Directions to the Buncombe County Landfill:

From I-240 East or West, take Exit 4A to 19/23 North. Travel 1 mile and then take UNC-A exit. At the end of the exit, turn left. Go to traffic light and turn right onto 251 North. Continue on 251 North for 13½ miles to Panther Branch Road. Turn right onto Panther Branch Road and travel 1/10 of a mile to the Buncombe County Landfill, which is located on the right. The new landfill is 6 miles north of the old landfill.

81 Panther Branch Road, Alexander • 828-250-5462
Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Buncombe County Transfer Station Convenience Center

Directions to the Transfer Station:

From I-240, take exit 1B (Brevard Road/Hwy. 191). At the traffic light, take Highway 191 North. Turn left onto Shelburne Road. Turn left onto Hominy Creek Road. The Transfer Station will be on the left. From I-40, take exit 47 (Brevard Road/Hwy. 191). At the traffic light, take Highway 191 North. After crossing I-240, turn left onto Shelburne Road. Turn left onto Hominy Creek Road. The Transfer Station will be on the left.

190 Hominy Creek Road, Asheville • 828-250-6205
Hours: Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m.–1 p.m.

Important Phone Numbers for County Residents

Junk Yards/Junk Cars – Jeffrey Byrd	828-424-8162
Bioreactor Manager – Kristy Smith	828-250-5473
Buncombe County Landfill	828-250-5462
Buncombe County Transfer Station	828-250-6205
Waste Pro – Residential Trash Pickup	828-684-7790
Mobile Home Removal – Bob Haynes	828-250-5388
Environmental Control – Kim Spillars	828-250-5470
Recycling Coordinator – Cassandra Lohmeyer	828-220-1361

Important Phone Numbers for City of Asheville Residents

Asheville City Sanitation – Trash Pickup	828-259-5857
Curbside Management – Recycling	828-252-2532

Like us on Facebook!

Get announcements directly in your News Feed about Buncombe County Government activities and programs, including solid waste and recycling. Plus, you'll be able to post your questions and comments, find county job listings, and more. Like us today at facebook.com/buncombeGov.

Follow us on Instagram!

instagram.com/buncomberecycles

We want your suggestions, questions, and comments!

Buncombe County Solid Waste Department
81 Panther Branch Road, Alexander, NC 28701
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