

Personal Trash Inventory (PTI): Step-by-Step Guide

STEP 1: Find out what is allowed in trash, composting, and recycling!

Reducing waste, recycling and composting are effective ways to decrease the creation of greenhouse gases, a driver behind Climate Change. But in order to reduce waste, we must first measure how much waste we create!

Most municipalities have rules on what you are allowed to throw away in the trash or recycle. For example, in Jersey City, at present, only number 1 and 2 plastics can be recycled. There's an app to help you meet these requirements!



Download the [Recycle Coach](#) app for a Personalized Calendar of recycling, collection requirements, a 'what to recycle' sorting tool, and more based on your municipality.

Jersey City has 12 locations where organic ingredients are collected and processed through composting. Bring your organic trash [here](#).



A COLLABORATIVE NETWORK
sustainablejc.org

Step 2: Preparation for Collecting Recyclables and Trash

To do the PTI, you must **collect all of your trash and recycling for one week** instead of placing them outside for pickup. For your recycling, you must separate paper/cardboard from glass/metal/plastic). Jersey City Division of Sanitation Guide for how to separate recycling and collection schedules [here](#).

You should have **6 containers** that can hold: 1) a week's worth of paper 2) 1 week's of cardboard, 3) a week's worth of glass-metal-plastic, 4) a week's worth of compostable material, 5) a week's worth of the rest of the trash, 6) Not recyclable, not allowed in trash.



Step 3: Sort trash into piles

For this step, please [refer to the official SJC Personal Trash Inventory \(PTI\) Instructions as DETAILED GUIDE for more information](#). The categories below are the types of materials you can collect in your week.

1. Recyclable paper
2. Cardboard
3. Glass, metal, and recyclable plastic
4. Compostable
5. Trash stream
6. Not recyclable, not allowed in trash.



Step 4: Collect a week's worth of trash and recycling

Collect all your trash for a week.

- 1) Collect any paper, cardboard, envelopes, junk mail, etc. into the paper and cardboard containers.
- 2) Thoroughly rinse out any food containers so that they are not contaminated, attract unwanted visitors to your house, or generate undesirable odors. Put these in the appropriate bin.
- 3) Put any compostable material into a separate container, follow the [guidelines](#) as to what is and what is not accepted at composting drop spots in JC.



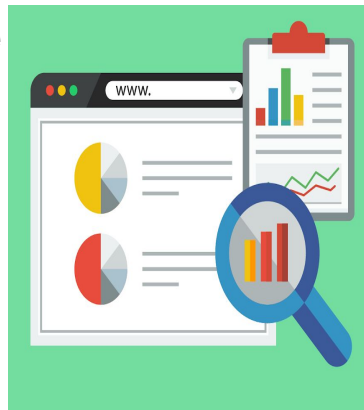
4) If it isn't recyclable or compostable, it goes in the trash bin. Here are some tips for throwing away trash -

- a) Recommend you do not include any food wrappers in the trash stream yet. Rather wash them thoroughly and put them in with the recyclables. However, the blood soaked pad under the chicken needs to go into the trash stream.
- b) Did something break this week that you want to throw away? Is there something you no longer want and are considering throwing it out (or into the back of a closet)? This includes clothes, shoes, socks, pens? Put this into a separate pile.

5) Start your inventory the day after [recycling collection](#). Choose the size of the containers larger than you think you need.

Step 5: Analyze the results

If you have a scale, you can see how you stack up compared to the national average. The average amount of trash generated per person is about 27.5 pounds* per person per week. How did you compare to the [national average](#)?



- Weekly paper stream 8 pounds per person (paper and cardboard)
- Weekly glass-metal-plastic: 8 pounds per person (including non-recyclable plastics)
- Weekly food and household: 11 pounds per person

*Not including Yard Trimmings

Step 6: Take the Survey

Now that you have collected your trash and weighed it, you should complete the survey below.

Before SJC can work on initiatives to reduce trash, we must have an accurate estimation on the amount of trash that is produced in the city. To best assist us, share your results with us!



You can report the results of your Personal Trash Inventory on on [Google Form](#) AND we would be really grateful if you would record [Photos and Videos of your Inventory here !](#)

Step 7: Can we do better?

We challenge you to choose one of the below categories and reduce the trash it generates in the next month.

- Repurpose potential trash if you can find another use
- Repair potential trash, avoiding purchasing a replacement
- Purchase items that can be reused instead of single use items, especially plastic
- Reduce food waste by only purchasing what is needed, bring food waste to a local compost
- If a plastic or metal product (ex. aluminum foil) couldn't be recycled, find a competing product with a recyclable container
- Can't find a substitute that is recyclable or compostable? Can you make a lifestyle change so you don't need the product? Refuse to contribute to the problem.

*Do Better.
Be Better.*

Helpful Links

- Full Guide for the PTI can be found [here!](#)
- If you need a scale you might want to consider buying something like [this one from Amazon.](#)
- We would love to hear your results; you can report the results of your Personal Trash Inventory on [this Google Form](#)
- We would be really grateful if you would record [Photos and Videos of your Inventory here](#)
- There is an app that might help you in your efforts: [Recycle Coach \(click here for link\)](#)
- Here is the [Privacy Policy](#) associated with all SJC's surveys