**Recycling: Cost–benefit analysis**

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| ***Environmental effects of recycling*** |
| **Material** | **Energy savings** | **Air pollution savings** |
| [Aluminum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aluminium_recycling) | 95% | 95% |
| [Cardboard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paper_recycling) | 24% |  — |
| [Glass](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glass_recycling) | 5–30% | 20% |
| [Paper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paper_recycling) | 40% | 73% |
| [Plastics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plastic_recycling) | 70% |  — |
| [Steel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferrous_metal_recycling) | 60% |  — |

There is debate over whether recycling makes financial sense.

It is said that *dumping* 10,000 tons of waste in a landfill creates six jobs. *Recycling* 10,000 tons of waste, however, can create over 36 jobs.

The U.S. Recycling Economic Informational Study says 50,000 U.S. recycling plants have created over a million jobs.

Although New York leaders first thought recycling would be "a drain on the city," they later realized that recycling could save the city over $20 million.

Such savings are often due to the reduced [landfill](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landfill) costs. A study by the Technical University of Denmark found recycling is the most efficient method to dispose of household waste, 83% of the time. One exception is drink containers. Incineration is more cost effective, says a 2004 assessment by the Danish Environmental Assessment Institute.

Some benefits that are hard to put price tags on. Incineration causes air pollution. Recycling lowers pollution and reduces greenhouse gases. Landfills cause leaching of chemicals into the ground and water supply. Recycling reduces that problem. Recycling reduces energy use. It reduces waste. It reduces our use of resources, which in turn reduces mining and timber cutting that damage the environment.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) favors recycling. The EPA says recycling cut carbon emissions by 49 million metric tonnes in 2005.

Recycling is more efficient in densely populated areas.

**Sources**

Much of this data is taken from The League of Women Voters (1993). *The Garbage Primer*. New York: Lyons & Burford. pp. 35–72. [ISBN](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Standard_Book_Number) [1-55821-250-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/1-55821-250-7). , which attributes, "*Garbage Solutions: A Public Officials Guide to Recycling and Alternative Solid Waste Management Technologies,* as cited in *Energy Savings from Recycling,* January/February 1989; and Worldwatch 76 *Mining Urban Wastes: The Potential for Recycling,* April 1987."