



**KENT COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Recycling to resume in Kent County on May 4

GRAND RAPIDS, MI – The Kent County Department of Public Works announced today that the Kent County Recycling & Education Center at 977 Wealthy St. SW will resume accepting recyclable material starting Monday, May 4, after the five-week shutdown due to COVID-19. The residential recycling drop-off stations at North Kent Recycling & Waste Center and the Recycling Center will also reopen that day. Neither facility will be open on Saturdays at this time.

The Recycling & Education Center was closed on March 27 to limit exposures of COVID-19 to Kent County staff and other workers. The Kent County Department of Public Works has put in place appropriate measures such as prescreening workers, increased cleaning frequency at work stations, staggering work stations to meet social distancing rules and increased personal protective gear to keep the recycling center's 40 workers safe as they come back to work.

"We thank residents who have stored their recyclables during the shutdown for their patience and commitment to recycling and reducing the amount of waste that ends up in landfills," said **Kristen Wieland**, Kent County DPW Communications Manager. "We encourage anyone with recyclables piling up in their garages to begin putting them out at the curb for collection now that we're operating again."

In addition to worker safety, the shutdown was necessary due to disruptions in recycling markets for processed materials. As other manufacturing processors shut down their facilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Kent County DPW's ability to get recyclables to processors and end-users was constricted. Kent County DPW has confirmed material sorted at the recycling center will be accepted by processors.

In March, the Recycling & Education Center received upgrades to its paper sorting equipment. These upgrades will improve the quality of paper sent to paper mills and will significantly reduce the daily maintenance time spent keeping the screens clean. The upgraded equipment also helps to keep workers safe by avoiding tangles that forced equipment shutdowns in the past.



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The Department of Public Works urges residents with stockpiled materials to recycle to follow the established guidelines for recycling in Kent County, which are available in the [recycling guide on its website](#). If residents have been storing materials for recycling in bags or other containers, they are asked to remove all materials from bags before dropping them off or placing them in a recycling cart. If residents use a recycling drop-off station, they are reminded to keep 6-feet of distance between themselves and other recyclers.

“We’ve heard countless stories from dedicated recyclers who have been holding on to their recyclables and now have overflowing garages,” said **Wieland**. “I’m sure people are excited to get some of their space back, knowing their recycling is going to get processed and put back into new products.”

Kent County DPW wants to hear from you. If you’ve been storing your recycling, please send a picture before dropping it off or putting it in your cart. Residents can share the creative ways they have stored their recycling or their accumulation of recycling during the shutdown on Facebook and Instagram using the hashtag #returnofrecycling or sending an email to recycle@kentcountymi.gov.

The Kent County Department of Public Works operates municipal solid waste disposal and recycling facilities to ensure the safe and effective disposal of residential and commercial solid waste. Additionally, Public Works operates the Kent County Waste-to-Energy Facility, a waste processing electrical generation facility.

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