

WASTE MATTERS

REDUCE WASTE!
MANAGE IT RIGHT!



CAG 40
NO 40 YEARS OF

Citizen consumer and civic Action Group

**GREEN
ACTION
WEEK**

2025

WASTE - A CLOSER LOOK

What is waste?

Any material discarded or no longer useful, from candy wrappers to industrial debris. Under the SWM (Solid Waste Management) Rules, 2016, it includes domestic, sanitary, commercial, institutional, horticulture, street sweepings, and treated biomedical waste.

Effective waste management involves segregation, safe collection, transport, recycling, composting, or disposal.

Types of waste



Biodegradable waste: Food scraps, and leaves.



Non-biodegradable waste: Plastics, glass, metals.



Hazardous waste: Chemicals, batteries, medical waste.



E-waste: Phones, laptops, TVs.



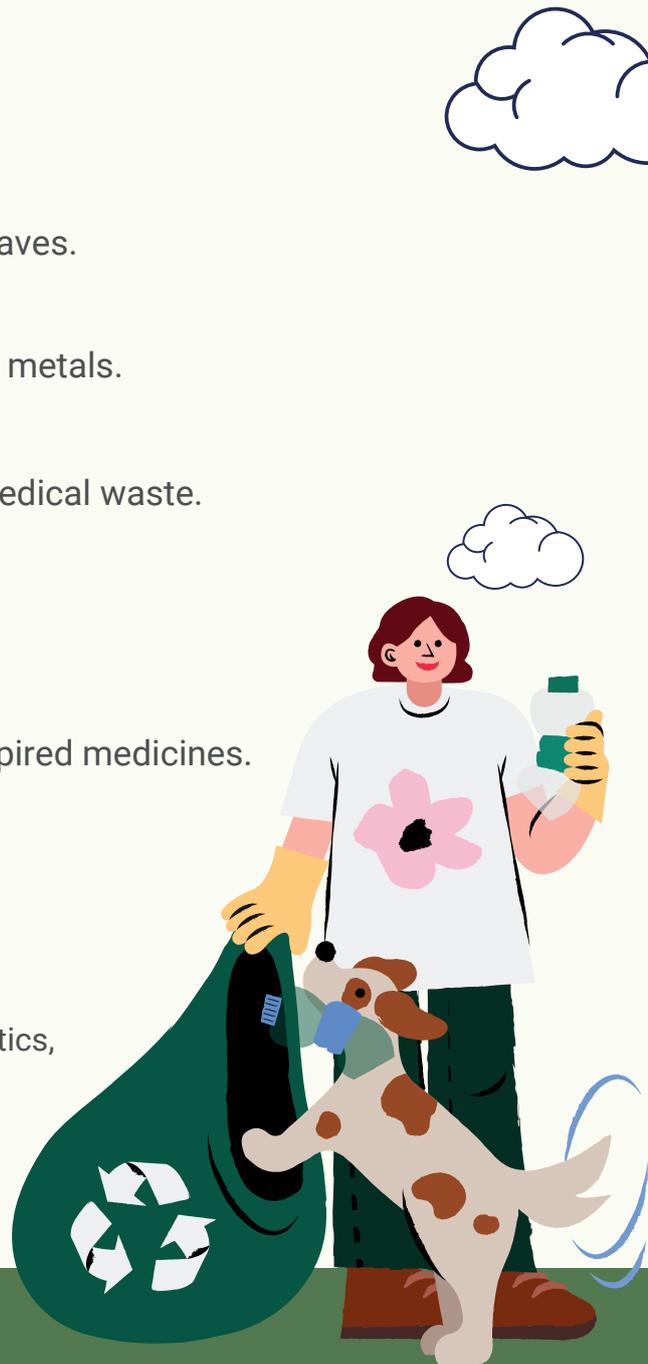
Biomedical waste: Syringes, bandages, expired medicines.

Each person in India generates ~164 kg of waste annually!

Rapid urbanisation, packaged lifestyles, single-use plastics, a “use-and-throw” mindset, and low awareness of segregation are all fuelling the surge in waste.

DO YOU KNOW?

India generates around 62 million tonnes of municipal solid waste annually, yet only 20% is processed scientifically; the rest 80% ends up in dumpyards or open dumps.



IT'S YOUR WASTE - AND MINE

What happens when waste is not managed properly?



Affects our environment: Soil & water contamination, air pollution from burning, methane emissions in dumpyards.

Affects our health : Breeding grounds for disease vectors, respiratory ailments, and toxin exposure 

Reducing our waste, and managing it correctly is SO IMPORTANT, that we even have laws about it

- **Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016** – Introduced by the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC); makes segregation mandatory and promotes composting and recycling.
- **Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 & Amendments** – Regulates the manufacture, sale, and use of plastic products.
- **Hazardous Waste Management Rules, 2016** – Governs handling and disposal of dangerous waste.
- **E-Waste Management Rules, 2016 & Amendments** – For electronic waste handling.
- **Air Quality Directive (CAQM)** mandates anti-fire measures at dumpyards and the enforcement of SWM rules.



**WANT TO GET IT RIGHT?
HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO DO!**



THE FIRST STEP

REDUCE

AVOID WASTE BEFORE IT STARTS

Prevention is better than disposal – buy only what you need.



01

Do you really need those?



02

AVOID SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

Carry your own refillable bottle to cut down single-use plastic.

03

I always carry my own bag!



MORE STEPS TO CHANGE

Use cloth/jute bags (no plastic), refillable bottles, and reusable tiffin boxes. Buy minimal packaging, cook responsibly, and avoid disposables.

RE-USE

01 GIVE ITEMS A SECOND LIFE

Passing things on keeps them out of the bin and in use. Shop at thrift stores or other resale platforms instead of always buying new.



02 MAKE THINGS LAST LONGER!

Repair – Mend clothes, fix shoes, and service gadgets instead of replacing them



03 EVERY REFILL COUNTS!

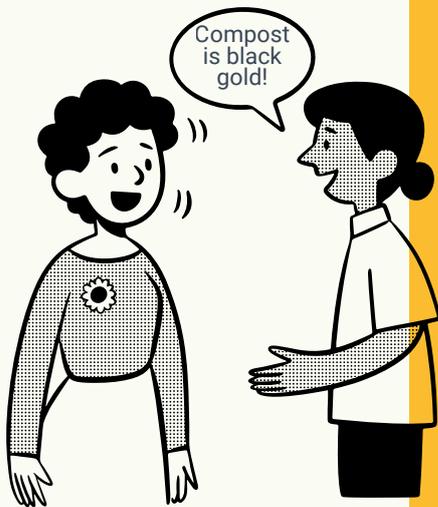
Refill – Choose refill packs for groceries, cleaning supplies, and toiletries instead of new bottles.



SEGREGATE

WHY SEGREGATE?

Keeps materials valuable for reuse and recovery
Enables composting of biodegradable waste
Reduces dumpyard load significantly



01



02

SEGREGATE LIKE THIS

- **Green Bin (Biodegradable waste):** Food & garden waste
- **Blue Bin (Non-biodegradable waste):** Paper, plastic, metals
- **Red Bin (Domestic Hazardous):** sanitary waste, used blades, bandages, expired medicines
- **Black Bin:** E-waste, batteries, bulbs

KEEP OUR WASTE WORKERS SAFE

Wrap sharp items before placing in your bin. Sanitary pads and soiled diapers should also be wrapped in paper and marked with a red dot.

03



KNOW YOUR BIN - GET IT RIGHT!

GREEN BIN

BIODEGRADABLE WASTE

Food & garden waste



BLUE BIN

NON- BIODEGRADABLE WASTE

Paper, plastic, metals



RED BIN

DOMESTIC HAZARDOUS WASTE

Sanitary waste, used blades,
bandages, expired medicines



BLACK BIN

E-WASTE

E-waste, batteries, bulbs



WHAT NEXT?

YOU SEPARATED YOUR BIODEGRADABLE WASTE. HERE'S WHAT TO DO WITH IT.

Most of our daily waste is biodegradable: food waste, garden leaves, and vegetable waste. Instead of sending it to dumpyards, we can turn it into something useful.



Composting:
Convert kitchen and garden waste into natural soil enhancer.



Vermi-composting:
Use earthworms to enhance the soil.



Biogas: Put biodegradable waste in a digester to make cooking gas and fertiliser.

YOU SEPARATED YOUR NON-BIODEGRADABLE WASTE. HERE'S WHAT TO DO WITH IT.

Plastic, glass, and metals don't rot like food waste, but they can be reused or recycled.



Recycle: Clean bottles, cans, and papers before giving them for recycling.



Upcycle: Use jars for storage, bottles as planters, boxes as organisers.



Scrap Shop: Sell old books, newspapers, and plastic/metal items to local scrap dealers (kaayalankadai).



Collection Centres: Drop batteries, old phones, and electronics at authorised E-waste collection centres.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR MYTHS FROM YOUR FACTS?

 **MYTHS** Mixed waste is okay; cleaning isn't needed.

 **FACTS** Clean, dry recyclables are crucial for safe and efficient processing.

YOU SEPARATED YOUR HAZARDOUS WASTE. HERE'S WHAT TO DO WITH IT.

Some waste is harmful even in small amounts. This includes paints, used blades, expired medicines, syringes, and bandages. Such waste must be handled carefully.



Medicines: Return expired medicines to pharmacies or drop them at authorised collection drives. Never flush them.



Medical Waste (syringes, bandages, needles): Put them in a puncture-proof container (like a thick plastic bottle) before handing them over to collection centres or biomedical bins.



Sanitary Waste: Used sanitary pads/diapers in paper and put them in the red bin with properly wrapped with paper or cloth with a red mark.

WHY DO ALL THIS?

- 01 Cuts down dumpyard waste.
- 02 Reduces harmful methane gas.
- 03 Gives us free compost and clean energy.
- 04 Keeps plastics and toxins out of the environment.
- 05 Protects waste workers from cuts, infections, and toxic exposure.



ALWAYS SEPARATE. NEVER BURN.

ARE YOU READY TO BEGIN?

TRY THIS AUDIT TO HELP YOU REDUCE YOUR WASTE AND IMPROVE YOUR WASTE MANAGEMENT

1. **Collect** your waste for 1 day.
2. **Sort** it into: Reduce / Reuse / Segregate.
3. (Optional) **Weigh** each category.
4. **Note** actions for improvement.

DISPOSED	CAN I REDUCE?	CAN I REUSE?	WHICH BIN?	MY ACTION PLAN
Plastic bottle	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	Non-Biodegradable	I will carry a refillable water bottle.
Food scraps	✓ Yes	✗ No	Biodegradable	I will compost.
Battery	✗ No	✗ No	Hazard	I will drop it at a safe disposal/collection ce
Takeaway box	✓ Yes	✓ Yes	Non-Biodegradable	I will carry my tiffin/steel box next time.

TRY IT NOW

START SMALL - BUILD BIG!



BE READY

Carry reusable bag, bottle, tiffin.

BE CREATIVE

Re-use paper. Repair, mend and fix anything you can.



BE ORGANISED

Sort waste and compost.



BE MINDFUL

Reflect and plan to reduce single-use the next day.



DO YOU KNOW?

A 100 students could divert 6 tonnes/year from dumpyard and generate 2 tonnes of compost!



CAG 40
YEARS OF ACTION

Citizen consumer and civic Action Group

No.103 (First Floor), Eldams Road, Teynampet,
Chennai 600 018

T: +91(44) 2435 4458 | 2435 0387

helpdesk@cag.org.in

www.cag.org.in



@CAGChennai

