

Proper Disposal Tires

A Guide to Doing it right in Lawrence and Mercer Counties



Tires?

We discard a lot of tires. Estimates are that we scrap more than 300 million tires annually. Tires are designed to last a long time and as a result are very persistent in the environment. Tires are classified as municipal waste by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, however, similar to some other common household wastes, they can pose serious health, safety, and environmental issues if not properly managed.

The good news is that tires are 100% recyclable or useable as an alternative energy source.

What are the concerns about improperly discarded Tires?

- **Health risks.** Tires are ideal breeding areas for mosquitoes as the mosquitoes will lay their eggs in the stagnant water that collects in them. Different mosquito varieties can carry serious diseases such as dengue fever, Zika, and encephalitis (caused by the West Nile virus). The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends removing tires from your property because of these risks.
- **Fire risks.** Tire fires can result in air pollution and in oily runoff that can contaminate soil, surface water, and ground-water. The oily material is also highly flammable. Tire fires result in thick smoke throughout the surrounding area which can contain pollutants harmful to human health including polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, benzene, styrene, phenols, and butadiene. Tire fires also threaten nearby water supplies with harmful contaminants such as lead and arsenic contained in the oily runoff. Fires involving tires are costly and can be difficult to control and extinguish.
- **Illegal dumping.** Tires are frequently tossed along roadways, over hillsides, and in waterways because people don't know where to take them or are too cheap to pay for proper disposal. Illegally dumped tires breed mosquitoes and other vectors, lower property values, encourage more dumping, and waste tax money because they are expensive to remove once they have been dumped.
- **Landfill space.** Tires do not compact well and take up valuable space in landfills. In Pennsylvania, whole tires are banned from landfill disposal.

What happens to properly disposed tires?

Tires may be shredded, retreaded, used as an alternative fuel source, or cut into quarters and landfilled. Shredded tires are recycled into crumb rubber that is used in landscape projects, molded rubber goods, civil engineering projects, and athletic fields.

Where can I take my old tires?

- Many tire dealers will accept small quantities (ten or less) from residents. Be sure to call your tire dealer for information. Fees will apply and may vary depending on the tire contractor your dealer is using.
- Annual collection programs for tires are hosted by two local non-profits: Shenango River Watchers and Tri-County CleanWays. Hermitage residents have access to a program offered by their municipality.
- The easiest way to avoid the need to dispose of old tires is to recycle your tires when you buy new ones.



Recycling/Solid Waste Department