

# It's Time To Get Back To The Basics Of Good Recycling

The fact is that some recycling actions make a bigger impact than others. So please remember these three rules the next time you recycle:



**Recycle clean  
bottles, cans, paper  
and cardboard.**



**Keep food and  
liquid out of your  
recycling.**



**No loose plastic  
bags and no bagged  
recyclables.**

**You'd be amazed how big an impact just  
following these simple rules can have!**

# Basic Recycling Rules And Tips

Recycle clean bottles, cans, paper, and cardboard.



## Plastic Bottles & Containers

Recycle plastics like empty bottles, jars, jugs, and tubs. Plastic bottle caps can be recycled, too, but put them back on their empty containers first. Remember, the chasing arrows symbol doesn't necessarily indicate recyclability.



## Food & Beverage Cans

Recycle all empty tin, aluminum, and steel cans. Remove plastic lids from any food or beverage cans before recycling. Aerosol cans can also be recycled, but be sure they're empty and don't include the aerosol caps.



## Paper

Paper, newspaper, and magazines are good to recycle. Soiled or wet paper should be put in the trash.



## Flattened Cardboard & Paperboard

Flatten and recycle all cardboard and paperboard. Break down and flatten cardboard boxes to make room for more materials to fit in your recycling bin. Be sure to close the lid on your recycling bin to keep materials dry.



## Glass Bottles & Containers

Glass recycling rules vary by city, county and state. Check your local recycling program. Your community could accept glass in its curbside program or there could be drop-off locations. If not, it will have to just go in the trash.

Check your local recycling program to confirm.

# Do Not Bag Recyclables. They Must Be Loose In The Bin!

No plastic bags, film or flexible packaging



## NO Bagged Recyclables

Never bag your recyclables. Instead, put the items directly into your recycling container. It's the best thing you can do to ensure items get a second life. If you collect your recyclables in a bag, simply transfer the items from the bag into your final recycling bin and reuse the bag!



## NO Plastic Bags

Loose plastic bags are almost never accepted in curbside programs because they get tangled in equipment and threaten worker safety. So remember, no loose plastic bags and don't bag your recyclables. Find where you can recycle plastic bags at [plasticfilmrecycling.org](http://plasticfilmrecycling.org).



## NO Plastic Wraps & Film

Plastic wrap, bubble wrap, plastic sandwich bags, and freezer bags should not go in the recycle bin. But reuse them whenever possible.



## NO Flexible Packaging

Currently, flexible packaging like chip bags and juice or soup pouches cannot be recycled in curbside programs because it's made from multiple materials. Put these items in the trash.

# Not Everything Made From Plastic Is Recyclable, And That's Ok!

## Trash it instead



### NO Garden Hoses, Rope, Leashes, Wire & String

"Tanglers" like garden hoses, ropes, electrical cords and string should ALWAYS go in the trash, never in the recycle bin. These items wrap around equipment and threaten the safety of MRF workers. They can even shut down an entire recycling center.



### NO Dirty Diapers

Dirty diapers and pet waste should ALWAYS go in the trash, never in the recycle bin! They can contaminate acceptable recyclables and transform it into trash. Keep your recyclables clean.



### NO Cups with Plastic or Wax Coating

Cups with plastic or waxed coatings are not recyclable. The plastic lid should be trashed as well.



### NO Polystyrene Foam & Plastic

Polystyrene foam and plastic "to-go" containers and cups are made of non-recyclable materials and cannot be collected curbside. Packing peanuts can't be recycled either, although some shipping stores will take back peanuts for reuse.

# Items Do Not Have To Be Squeaky Clean To Be Recycled

Keep items clean and dry



## NO Food Waste

Scrape out all cans and jars, empty liquids, and put scraps in the compost if available. Food scraps and liquids may seem harmless, but they could transform a whole load of recycling into trash.



## NO Soiled Paper Towels

Soiled paper towels (and napkins or tissues) are not recyclable—but the cardboard tube is! Compost soiled paper towels when you can.

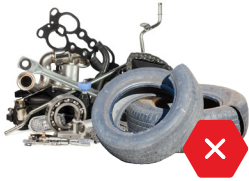


## Pizza Boxes?

When cardboard pizza boxes are free of leftovers or liners they CAN be recycled. You be the judge! Recycle it if it's not too greasy.

# Large Household Items Don't Belong In Your Recycling Bin

## Common recycling questions



### NO Scrap Metal, Auto Parts & Tires

Metal waste (car parts, propane cylinders, lawn mowers, and microwaves) are safety hazards and can damage recycling equipment so never put them in your curbside recycling or waste bins. Check locally for your collection options or take them to a local retailer or scrap recycler.



### NO Large Household Items

Household items such as clothing, textiles, shower curtains, swimming pools, and fencing don't belong in the recycling bin. Check local programs or thrift stores for reuse opportunities before putting them in the trash.



### NO Furniture

Furniture does not belong in curbside recycling or trash collection! Many organizations accept donated furniture they can resell to the public. Unusable furniture should be dropped at your local junkyard



### NO Appliances

Appliances are not accepted in curbside recycling or trash collection. Organizations like Habitat for Humanity's ReStore accept new and gently used appliances for donation and resell them to the public. For proper disposal, check with your manufacturer or take the item to your local transfer station.

# Check With Your Local Recycling Program

## Common recycling questions



### Food & Beverage Containers

These types of lightweight cartons have environmental advantages but the way they're constructed make them too difficult to recycle for curbside programs. Check with your community if there are opportunities to recycle them locally.



### Glass Bottles & Jars

Glass recycling rules vary by city, county, and state. Check for local recycling programs – there could be drop-off locations, curbside pickup, or hybrid options.



### NO Needles

NEVER put medical waste in curbside recycling OR directly into the trash! Needles can cause serious injuries to workers, so dispose of them in a safe container like Waste Management's MedWaste Tracker® box or contact your local service provider.



### NO Electronics

Televisions, laptops, and small electronics like cellphones are not accepted in waste bins. Electronic materials are often banned by law from disposal, so contact your city or manufacturer for recycling options. Local e-waste programs often accept these items for donation and refurbish them or they can ensure they are properly recycled.



## NO Batteries

Batteries can destroy acceptable recyclable material, injure workers and even cause fires! Lithium-ion batteries and other batteries don't belong in curbside recycling or trash containers. Contact your municipality or local service provider for a safe and convenient solution for recycling batteries, particularly rechargeable lithium batteries.



## NO Clothing/Textiles

Clothing, rugs, bedding, and other textiles are not recyclable. Put them in the trash or donate them. Goodwill, Salvation Army, Value Village, and other organizations often accept textiles. Textiles that are unusable in their current form can be repurposed as insulation or furniture stuffing.



For more recycling resources,  
visit [wm.com/recycleright](https://wm.com/recycleright)

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