RECYCLE OFTEN.
RECYCLE RIGHT.®

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Mixed Curbside Residential

RECYCLING MYTHS

To Learn More Visit: RecycleOftenRecycleRight.com

#Recycling101

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 basic rules the next time you recycle:

1 **Recycle empty plastic bottles, cans, paper and cardboard.**

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

3 **Empty recyclables directly into your cart.** NO bagged recyclables. Return plastic bags to a local grocer.

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

But what about the other materials we encounter in our day-to-day lives?
Use these recycling rules, expert tips, and dispel all recycling myths to be an effective recycling ambassador every day.

©2019 WM Intellectual Property Holdings, L.L.C. The Recycle Often. Recycle Right.® recycling education program was developed based upon national best practices.

Identify the myths of recycling **and become an expert.**

MYTH: Most Americans recycle all they can.

ANSWER: False

Research shows convenience and commitment are required for maximum recycling. For instance, is there more than one location in a household to store recyclables? If not, recyclables in areas other than the kitchen get thrown away. Additionally, is there only one committed recycler in a household (usually) the person who picks up after everyone)? If so, studies indicate making this a family/partner affair, where everyone participates, allows the most recycling of the right materials.

MYTH: The recycling arrows (Mobius) on a container mean it is recyclable at a Material Recovery Facility (MRF).

ANSWER: Only in some cases

Manufacturers strive to get eco-friendly information on their product labels. It sells. The FTC requires that a product have at least 60% access to local programs (like Material Recovery Facility processing) across the U.S. to include the Mobius on their products. However, the Mobius is not a reliable indicator of whether something gets recycled. There are thousands of plastic products and packaging, and each one has its own unique chemical recipe. Many plastics cannot be made into new products at this time. Recycle plastics by shape: bottles, jars, jugs, and tubs.

MYTH: Containers must be squeaky clean in order to be recycled.

ANSWER: False

While all bottles, cans, and containers should be clean, dry, and free of most food waste before you place them in your recycling container, they don't need to be spotless. The goal is to make sure they are clean enough to avoid contaminating other materials, like paper. Try using a spatula to scrape cans and jars, or using a small amount of water and shake to remove most residue.

©2019 WM Intellectual Property Holdings, L.L.C. The Recycle Often. Recycle Right.® recycling education program was developed based upon national best practices.

MYTH: It doesn't matter if something belongs in the recycling cart, the hauler will sort everything anyway.

ANSWER: False

There are increasing amounts of non-recyclables sent to Material Recovery Facilities, and every single one of them must be removed by hand by trained staff and/or mechanically sorted, or they end up contaminating high value recyclables. Non-recyclable garbage placed into recycling containers increases the cost of the recycling process and will increase the cost of garbage and recycling collection service.

Similarly, recyclable items placed into garbage containers are usually hauled to a landfill. Recyclables in a landfill cannot be recovered effectively. Even if further processing takes place, the full value is lost. The right thing to do is to put all the right recyclables in the recycling container and non-recyclables into the garbage containers. Recyclables with the greatest impact are bottles, cans, and paper.

MYTH: Hoses, tanks, shower curtains, swing sets, etc. are made of plastic, so they must be recyclable.

ANSWER: False

If it's not "bottles, cans, or paper" it probably doesn't belong in your curbside mixed recycling cart and may even require special handling. Just because an item is made from plastic, or contains plastic parts, doesn't mean recycling facilities can handle it. There are other resources (e.g., Earth911.org) that can help answer questions about what to do with non-recyclables or household hazardous waste.

MYTH: All types of glass bottles and jars are recyclable.

ANSWER: Varies by jurisdiction

Glass recycling varies by jurisdiction. Glass collection varies widely in communities across the U.S. Some communities collect glass at drop off locations only, some collect glass separately at the curb or with other containers, and many include glass with all other recyclables. Bottle bill laws in CA, CT, OR, IA, MI, ME, VT, MA, NY allow for the return of a per-bottle deposit when bottles are returned to return-centers or retailers for recycling. Please refer to your community's website for information on glass recycling in your local community.

MYTH: Aerosol cans are acceptable in the recycle bin.

ANSWER: Varies by jurisdiction

Most of recycling programs accept empty/dry aerosol cans. Aerosol cans without the caps are recyclable if they are empty/dry. If they are not, then they could be dangerous. Some fires are caused in baler chambers from trace amounts of can chemicals, and cans have been known to become projectiles when densified/baled if propellant is still present. Waste Management facilities and commodity vendors accept steel, mixed metal, and aluminum aerosol packages. Multi-material aerosol packages are not recyclable. There is no gray area here from a processor standpoint. However, some cities still list aerosols on their no-recycle lists. Check with your local municipality for further information.

©2019 WM Intellectual Property Holdings, L.L.C. The Recycle Often. Recycle Right.® recycling education program was developed based upon national best practices.

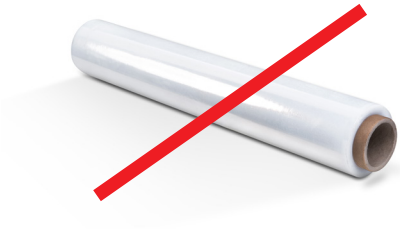
Understanding basic recycling **rules and tips.**

RECYCLE ALL BOTTLES, CANS, PAPER, AND CARDBOARD

Item	Rule	Expert Tip
Plastic Bottles & Containers	Recycle plastics like empty bottles, jars, jugs, and tubs by their shapes. Chasing arrows don't necessarily indicate recyclability.	Caps are now recyclable, but you must put them back on empty containers before tossing in the bin.
Food & Beverage Cans	Recycle all empty tin, aluminum, and steel cans.	Empty aerosol cans can also be recycled. If the can has a plastic lid, you should remove it.
Paper	Paper, newspaper, and magazines are good to recycle.	Soiled and wet paper should be placed 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.

©2019 WM Intellectual Property Holdings, L.L.C. The Recycle Often. Recycle Right.® recycling education program was developed based upon national best practices.

NO PLASTIC BAGS

Item	Rule	Expert Tip
NO Bagged Recyclables	Do not bag recyclables. They must be loose in the bin!	If you store your recyclables in a bag, simply dump them out when you get to your bin and reuse the bag!
NO Plastic Bags	Plastic bags are included in a few curbside programs, check with your local program.	Do not bag recyclables. Plastic bags get tangled in equipment and threaten worker safety. Find where you can recycle them at plasticfilmrecycling.org.
NO Plastic Wraps & Film 	Plastic wrap, bubble wrap, plastic sandwich bags, and freezer bags should not go in the recycle bin.	Reuse whenever possible for presents, moving, or storage of similar items.
NO Flexible Packaging	Flexible packaging like chip bags and juice or soup pouches cannot be recycled in curbside programs.	This type of packaging is made from multiple materials preventing it from being recycled. It must be trashed.

©2019 WM Intellectual Property Holdings, L.L.C. The Recycle Often. Recycle Right.® recycling education program was developed based upon national best practices.

TRASH IT INSTEAD

Item	Rule	Expert Tip
NO Garden Hoses, Rope, Leashes, Wire & String	Garden hose, rope, leashes, wire, and string should never go in the recycle bin.	These wrap around equipment, threaten the safety of MRF workers, and can shut down entire recycling centers! Ensure they only go in the trash.
NO Dirty Diapers	Dirty diapers' and pet waste's yuck factor increase when they end up where they shouldn't—the recycle bin!	These will soil all of the recyclables, turning the load to trash. Trash these instead and keep 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 unrecyclable materials, and cannot be collected curbside.	Packing peanuts aren't recyclable either, however some shipping stores will take peanuts back for reuse.

©2019 WM Intellectual Property Holdings, L.L.C. The Recycle Often. Recycle Right.® recycling education program was developed based upon national best practices.

KEEP ITEMS CLEAN AND DRY

Item	Rule	Expert Tip
NO Food Waste	Scrape out all cans and jars, empty liquids, and put scraps in the compost.	Food scraps and liquids may seem harmless, but they could turn a whole load of recycling to trash.
NO Soiled Paper Towels	Soiled paper towels, napkins, and tissues are not recyclable.	Compost the soiled stuff, and remember to recycle the paper towel cardboard tube.
Food & Beverage Containers	Recycle empty milk cartons, juice boxes, and food cartons.	Make sure containers are completely empty to avoid contamination.
Pizza Boxes	Cardboard pizza delivery boxes without leftovers, grease, or liners should be recycled.	Tear off the soiled parts and recycle the rest.

©2019 WM Intellectual Property Holdings, L.L.C. The Recycle Often. Recycle Right.® recycling education program was developed based upon national best practices.

COMMON RECYCLING MISTAKES

Item	Rule	Expert Tip
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, and comingled options.
NO Needles	Medical waste doesn't belong in curbside recycling or waste!	Needles can cause serious injuries to workers, so dispose of them in a safe container like our MedWaste Tracker box, or contact your local service provider.
NO Scrap Metal, Auto Parts & Tires	Metal waste (car parts, propane cylinders, lawn mowers, and microwaves) cause damage and are safety hazards if put in curbside recycling or waste bins.	Check locally for special collection options or take them to a local retailer or scrap recycler for donation or proper recycling.
NO Large Household Items	Commonly, household items such as clothing, textiles, shower curtains, swimming pools, and fencing don't belong in the recycle or waste bin.	Check local programs for local reuse and recycling options first, before putting them in your waste bin.

©2019 WM Intellectual Property Holdings, L.L.C. The Recycle Often. Recycle Right.® recycling education program was developed based upon national best practices.

COMMON RECYCLING MISTAKES

Item	Rule	Expert Tip
NO Furniture	Furniture does not belong in curbside recycling or trash collection!	While very damaged or unusable furniture is best suited for your local junkyard, many organizations accept donated furniture they can resell to the public.
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.
NO Electronics	Televisions, laptops, and small electronics like cellphones are not accepted in curbside recycling or waste bins. In some states, these materials are even banned from your bins!	Check for local e-waste programs that often accept these items for donation and refurbish them to give them another life or can ensure they are properly recycled.
NO Batteries	Batteries can destroy recyclable material and even worse – they injure workers and cause fires! Lithium-ion batteries and other batteries don't belong in curbside recycling or trash containers.	Order a Waste Management Recycle By Mail battery kit, or contact your local service provider for a convenient solution.

©2019 WM Intellectual Property Holdings, L.L.C. The Recycle Often. Recycle Right.® recycling education program was developed based upon national best practices.

COMMON RECYCLING MISTAKES

Item	Rule	Expert Tip
NO Clothing/Textiles	Clothing, rugs, bedding, and other textiles are not recyclable. They can be placed in the trash or given a second life through reuse.	Goodwill, Salvation Army, Value Village, and other organizations that take donated items often accept textiles. Even textiles that are unusable can live a second life as new products such as insulation or furniture stuffing.

©2019 WM Intellectual Property Holdings, L.L.C. The Recycle Often. Recycle Right.® recycling education program was developed based upon national best practices.

RECYCLE OFTEN.
RECYCLE RIGHT.®

Find more recycling resources like posters, bin labels, videos, and activities at

www.RecycleOftenRecycleRight.com

#Recycling101

©2019 WM Intellectual Property Holdings, L.L.C. The Recycle Often. Recycle Right.® recycling education program was developed based upon national best practices.