

A "Dirty Dozen" of Curbside Recycling CONTAMINANTS

Designed mostly for the Bellingham, WA, region* but hopefully useful in other settings as well.

*(See helpful local websites www.ssc-inc.com AND nwrecycling.com)

1. NO food particles ON or IN recyclable material

Otherwise recyclable items become garbage when they carry food remnants. At least rinse out all material to be recycled. (Unclean peanut butter jars are the worst!)

2. NO plastic bags or plastic wrapping of any sort in any curbside bin

Bags and their ilk can be collected (if clean and dry) and taken elsewhere, though. Check your local grocery store for containers that take soft ("film") plastics - - or ask them to, if they don't yet! Once you start watching and recycling your soft plastics, you'll be amazed at how many there are. Plastic packaging is everywhere!

SIX-PACK RINGS can be cut up and put with other "soft" plastic recycling.

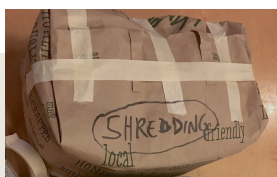


3. NO materials held IN plastic bags

The bags are bad enough, but when contents can't be seen and assessed as appropriate by pick-up agents, the whole bagful might well get thrown "away" and not recycled.

4. NO loose shredded paper

Loose shredding causes a dangerous mess in the sorting machinery! Bag it up in brown paper sacks, tape it shut and use a marker to write "Shredding" on the outside. Only then is it okay to put with other Mixed Paper. (Or check with nearby composters to see if they want it.)



5. NO scrap metal

Most metals can be recycled separately (not curbside), incl. bottle caps and screw-on wine caps.

6. NO hazardous waste

PLEASE take hazardous wastes to the local toxic disposal facility. Learn where this important community resource is! (Ours is right up near the B'ham Airport.)



7. NO non-recyclable plastics

Such as plastic pumps, tableware, utensils, toys, plant boxes, and any containers that held potentially hazardous products such as motor oil, antifreeze, paints, pesticides, etc. (See also #2 above.)

8. NO loose caps or caps ON glass bottles or jars

Plastic containers can (for our region) be **recapped after they are flattened**, but loose caps will jam the sorting machinery. Metal lids and caps from glass containers can be put with other metals.



9. NO sealed containers with a quantity of liquid

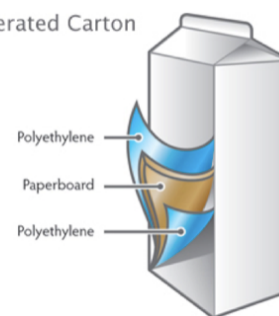
10. NO ceramics or non-recyclable glass

Such as plates and bowls, mirrors and windows.

11. NO insulated paperboard containers

The insulated paperboard boxes that carry most refrigerated milk, juice, frozen foods (including ice cream) are no longer wax-lined, but have multiple layers of plastic (which is why they insulate - - and why they can't even be effectively composted).

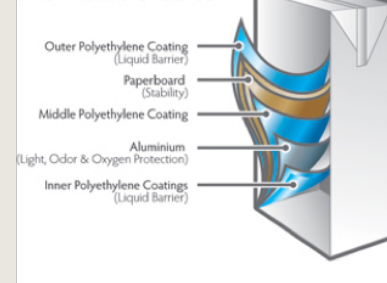
Refrigerated Carton



12. NO shelf-life, non-refrigerated boxes that held liquids

Often made by and called "Tetra" packs, these have a variety of materials that make them non-recyclable (and non-compostable).

Shelf-stable Carton



Bonus NO-NO:

Plastic Hot or Cold Cups!

They are NOT recyclable, and even so-called "compostable" cups are generally plastic-lined and must be trashed (some expensive new "eco-cups" notwithstanding). They sometimes may be labeled *compostable* (perhaps technically true, given enough time), but at least our local city composter doesn't want them from curbside pick-up because their process isn't long enough to break them down. (Same is the case for "compostable" tableware: must be trashed.) ***Much better to bring your own reusable cups (and shopping bags).***