

Bin Recycling and Beyond the Bin

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Supplying industry with raw materials without destroying earth's environment is possible when citizens "recycle it all and recycle it right." Curbside recycling makes a huge impact on the environment by providing many thousands of tons of raw materials to local and distant manufacturing plants, which in turn allows them to use less energy and produce less pollution. *However, curbside programs do not, and cannot be expected to, **recycle it all.***

In fact, co-mingled recycling programs are experiencing significant problems due to contamination caused by carelessness or wishfulness, or both. Because the bins are so big and the instructions are so simple, many citizens are tempted to toss everything in the bin.

But paper mills in the Pacific NW are encountering devastating increases in damage to their equipment due to glass and plastics incorrectly placed in co-mingled bins. A wide array of miscellaneous plastics and bags, incorrectly placed in commingled recycling bins, clog the conveyor sorting systems or get caught between papers and boxes. When baled and sent to the paper plant, they clog filters and machines that would otherwise be making great paper from old paper.

The first rule to recycling is "If in doubt, find out or leave it out!" Only give recyclers what they say they collect for recycling, if it is not on the Yes list, it should not go in the bin. Next, it must be free of all food and other debris. In fact, in most cases paper intended to stay strong when wet is NOT recyclable because of plastic or additives to the paper. Paper towels and tissues, paper cups, paper plates, food (wet food) containers, etc; these are NOT recyclable.

Avoid nesting materials with unlike materials because they will be less likely to be correctly sorted by automated or hand sorting processes. For example if several plastic yogurt tubs are jammed inside of a paperboard cereal box they may not get separated and would end up becoming a waste product of a paper recycling process. The contamination rates are causing financial and operational hardships, and threaten the future of recycling.

Your curbside bin (or commingled recycle bin at a transfer station) should contain only those items that your collection service indicate. Due to the problems caused by improper recycling, and global market disruption that resulted, different communities and different companies have been forced to change some of their programs. INQUIRE WITH YOUR collection service, or check the Lane County Garbage Guru, to find out if something is recyclable www.lanecounty.org/garbageguru. Plastics recyclability depends on both the resin type (as seen inside the chasing arrows symbol AND the shape—which indicates a permanent change to the plastic.

Because mechanical equipment sorts flat papers from the containers, it is very important to keep tin cans, plastics and cartons in their original dimensional shape. If space allows do not flatten anything, if it does not, only flatten paper boxes. And remember, glass MUST be set out separately.

Here's a list of items that are recyclable Beyond the Bin.

We've also created an online look up tool: www.Lanecounty.org/garbageguru

Do NOT place the following items in your curbside bin.

Plastic block Styrofoam and packing peanuts: Packing Peanuts can be taken to any mailing service stores or check various materials exchanges like craigslist or freecycle, that may list artists and nonprofits wanting packing peanuts. [St Vincent de Paul accepts block foam](#) at three locations: Seneca and Division stores in Eugene and the Thurston store on Main Street in Springfield. There is no cost for small residential quantities, for commercial quantities they may charge a small fee to cover costs. For more information about recycling larger quantities call (541) 743-7191. Styrofoam cups, meat trays and etc. are NOT recyclable.

Plastic Bag and film wraps: Includes plastic 6-pack rings. Nothing with food contamination accepted. Most grocery stores have bag recycling programs. Safeway Albertsons, Fred Meyer at a minimum. International Paper is very interested in commercial quantities of all sorts of plastic, call 541-744-4100. And so is AgriPlas, 503-390-2381. Reuse is always best, if you're a dog owner, leave some behind for other people to use next time you're at the dog park.

Plastic CDs and jewel cases Video and Cassette tapes: No local collector in Lane County. If you travel to Portland for other reasons, Agilyx will accept all forms of Polystyrene, www.agilyx.com/about-us/faqs or call the Metro Recycling Hotline, 503-234-3000.

Small Appliances (i.e. toasters, vacuums, etc): Take all items (working or not) to St. Vincent de Paul, they will be processed for recycling if not appropriate for reuse. 541-687-5820. Lane County Transfer Stations have a scrap metal bin that accepts such items as long as they are 75% metal and contain no fluids.

Shoes: Drop off at any Goodwill or St. Vincent de Paul collection center. Any and all shoes/belts, even mismatched or unmated. Like clothing, shoes are recycled on international markets if not selected for reuse.

Fluorescent bulbs: Compact fluorescent bulbs and tubes less than 4 ft. can be returned to many lighting and hardware stores in the Eugene/Springfield area. Check our website for the current list of locations at <http://www.lanecounty.org/lamps> or call 541-682-4120 for a disposal appointment at the Household Hazardous Waste facility.

Oil and Grease: Sequential Biofuels will accept all liquid vegetable oils rancid or not at their gas stations on McVay Hwy near 30th Ave, and at 18th and Chambers in west Eugene; for more information at 541-736-5864, <http://www.sqbiofuels.com/>. For commercial pick up of cooking oil and grease contact EC Restaurant Supply at 541-995-6025.

Batteries: All Lane County transfer stations accept not only car batteries, but household button and all rechargeable, or disposable lithium batteries. Many local electronics and Radio Shack stores will collect them as well. Keep in mind, *Alkaline Batteries (AAA - D) sold in Oregon after 1996 are ok as garbage*, but all others should be delivered to the above locations for recycling.

Windows: Window glass is not recyclable at this time. Windows in their frames along with other reusable construction materials may be accepted at BRING Recycling www.bringrecycling.org (541) 746-3023 or the Habitat for Humanity's [Restore in Cottage Grove or Eugene](#) or the [Restore in Florence](#).

Mattresses: St. Vincent de Paul recycles old mattresses into new mattresses, dog beds and wood, metal and fiber commodities. Small fee, 541-687-5820.

Electronic equipment: It is against state law to dispose of TVs, computers, monitors and laptops in the garbage. Lane County participates in the state-wide collection program for E-Cycles, offering FREE recycling to anyone with 7 or fewer *intact* items at five Lane County's transfer sites: Glenwood, Cottage Grove, Veneta, Florence and Vida. Other miscellaneous electronics, such as VCRs, DVD players, video game units, phone related equipment, printers and other computer related equipment, are not banned from landfills, but are included in our collection program as a service to our citizens. All Goodwill stores also accept 7 or fewer items (541) 345-1801. Anyone with 8 or more units or have dismantled items, can contact one of the two local electronics processors: Garten Services (541) 868-1550, NextStep Recycling (541) 686-2366. NextStep <http://www.NextSteprecycling.org/> accepts miscellaneous electronics and computer related equipment including manuals and software. NextStep also offers computer repair services.

Cell Phones: Working Cell Phones are accepted by Woman Space (541) 485-8232. Phones are given to survivors of domestic violence for emergency 911 calls. Cell phones are also accepted at NextStep, all St. Vincent de Paul locations and at Lane County transfer stations that accept electronics.

Glasses and Hearing Aids: The Oregon Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation accepts donations of glasses and hearing aids at Key Bank, 725 A Street, Springfield <http://www.orldions.org/> (800-635-4667).

Carpet padding, old pillows, cushions and foam: Keep dry. St Vincent De Paul stores, 541-687-5820.

Books and magazines: Drop off at any St. Vincent de Paul collection center. Whatever they cannot reuse in their stores, they will recycle to local markets.

Art Supplies: Material Exchange Center for Community Arts (MECCA) accepts used art supplies and other used items including scrap fabrics, calendars, greeting cards, buttons, candles that may be repurposed in art work. Call (541) 302-1810 or visit the website for a comprehensive list of materials they will accept <http://www.materials-exchange.org/>.