



RECYCLING GUIDANCE

Acceptable

Plastic—all items with recycling symbol #1-7, except bags and black plastic*

Metals—aluminum or steel cans, aluminum foil, aluminum foil trays/pans, empty aerosol cans, metal coat hangers (metal can be recycled into new cans over and over)

Glass—all glass bottles, jars, and drinking glasses (in Virginia they get crushed for landfill cover, not made into new glass items; opt for cans over bottles where possible)

Paper—office paper, mixed paper, newspapers and inserts, magazines, catalogs, junk mail (including envelopes with cellophane windows), phone books, paperback and hardback books, cardboard boxes, juice cartons and boxes, soup boxes, pizza boxes (if no grease), rolls from toilet paper or paper towels

Unacceptable

Anything smaller than one's fist—e.g., metal bottle caps, cardboard tags from new clothes

Anything with food residue/grease—if bottom of pizza box has grease but lid doesn't, recycle lid only

Disposable coffee cups

Napkins, paper towels, tissues

Styrofoam (it's toxic)

Shredded paper—can compost (store in paper bag)

Plastic bags, even if they have the recycling symbol—take any and all clean plastic bags to grocery store bin (*see over for more details*)

Pots and pans

Heat-resistant glass or ceramics (drinking glasses are OK, but better to take them to a thrift store)

Glass panes, light bulbs, any broken glass (since items are hand-sorted at recycling center)

Photographs

Batteries

Handling

Clean/rinse items; shake out to get rid of water. *This is an important step so other material will not be contaminated with liquids or food residue and be rendered unrecyclable.*

Keep all recycling loose in bins, not in plastic bags

If plastic bottle and cap are both recyclable, leave cap on; if only bottle is, discard cap

If milk or juice carton has recyclable plastic cap, leave it on

Remove metal lid from glass jar

For containers with cardboard sides and metal top/bottom, recycle as is

For containers with cardboard sides and plastic ring on top, cut off and discard plastic ring

Break down and flatten cardboard boxes—tape can be left on

Don't need to remove wire from spiral notebooks

Don't need to remove every piece of plastic film on top of plastic containers (e.g., for grated cheese)—remove what you can

*Black plastic and other #5 plastics can be taken to MOM's Organic Market.

Additional guidance for plastic bags and plastic film

Recycle only clean, dry plastic bags and film by taking them to a grocery store that has a bin for recycling plastic bags (don't put them in the regular recycling). Remove receipts, crumbs, adhesive labels, and any other items from bags.

Examples include:

- Retail, carryout, produce, newspaper, bread, and dry cleaning bags (clean, dry, and free of receipts and clothes hangers)
- Zip-top food storage bags (clean and dry)
- Plastic shipping envelopes (remove labels), bubble wrap, and air pillows (deflate)
- Product wrap on cases of water/soda bottles, paper towels, napkins, disposable cups, bathroom tissue, diapers, and female sanitary products
- Plastic wrap for furniture and electronics
- Plastic cereal and cracker box liners (but not if it tears like paper)
- Any film packaging or bag that has the How2Recycle label
- Generally speaking, if the plastic bag/film stretches when you pull it, it's recyclable.

Do not include:

- Degradable/compostable bags or film packaging (like biodegradable produce bags, often recognizable by their greenish tint)
- Pre-washed salad mix bags
- Frozen food bags
- Candy bar wrappers
- Chip bags
- Cling wrap (this is an exception to the general rule that if it stretches it's recyclable)
- Cellophane (like from flowers or gift baskets)
- Zipper bedding packaging
- Generally speaking, if the plastic bag/film doesn't stretch when pulled or crinkles when compressed, it's not recyclable.

Sources: American Disposal Services recycling center tour and guidance, Mar. 13, 2018; online sources such as Recyclebank and American Chemistry Council's Plastic Film Recycling sites.