

Recycling 101 for Business

A closer look at recycling, recycling guidelines, why it's important, and how it benefits your facility.

Presented by Republic Services®





This resource will cover:

- **What is Recycling & Why is it Important?**
- **What is Recycling Contamination?**
- **Recycling Guidelines**
- **What's Recyclable & What's Not?**

About Us

Republic Services is a leader in the U.S. environmental services industry. We responsibly operate 340 collection operations, 220 transfer stations, 186 active solid waste landfills and 76 recycling centers across 41 states. Our focus on sustainability ensures future generations enjoy a cleaner, safer and healthier world.

What is Recycling and Why is it Important?

What is Recycling?

Recycling is the action of converting waste into reusable materials or objects. The recycling process consists of a series of activities beginning with the collection of used, reused or unused items that would otherwise be considered trash; sorting and processing the recyclable products into raw materials; and remanufacturing the recycled raw materials into new products.



Why is Recycling Important?

Recycling has many benefits for both our environment and our economy.

Recycling helps to conserve natural resources, such as land, trees and minerals. For example, the more paper we recycle, the fewer trees need to be replenished. Recycling also helps prevent the excess mining of ores such as aluminum by recycling the same resources over and over again.

Recycling conserves energy. It takes more energy to make something out of raw materials than something that has already been used. For example, making paper from trees uses approximately 7,000 gallons of water, but it takes only 360 gallons to make paper from recycled paper fiber.¹

Recycling reduces pollution. When manufacturers use recycled materials to make their products, it creates less pollution than making them from raw materials. It also reduces the amount of greenhouse gases produced in the manufacturing process.

Recycling saves landfill space. In the U.S., we produce roughly 262 million tons of trash each year. Slightly more than half of that is going to landfills. By recycling, we help to conserve space inside the landfill for those items that can't be recycled.²

Recycling provides jobs and generates revenue.

Recycling and reuse businesses in the U.S. employ approximately 1 million people and generate about \$236 billion in annual revenue.³



1. Recycle Nation website of ISRI – <https://recyclenation.com/2019/02/10-fun-facts-about-recycling/>

2. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/national-overview-facts-and-figures-materials#NationalPicture>

3. Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries - <https://www.isri.org/recycling-commodities/recycling-facts-figures>

What is Recycling Contamination?

Recycling contamination occurs when materials are sorted into the wrong recycling bin, or when materials are not properly cleaned. For example, food residue is a common contaminant of plastics and paper.

If a dirty plastic takeout container is placed into your facility's recycling container, an entire truckload of otherwise recyclable material could end up in the landfill.



Recycling Guidelines



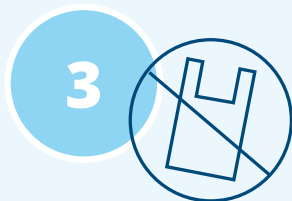
Know what to throw.

Become familiar with the four major categories of recyclables – paper, flattened cardboard, metal cans and plastic bottles.



Empty. Clean. Dry.™

Be sure your recyclables are empty, clean and dry before placing them into recycling containers. Clean recyclables don't contaminate other types of materials.



Don't bag it

No bags should go into the recycling bin. Never put recyclables in bags or containers.

What's Recyclable and What's Not?

Retail Recycling

YES

Cardboard packaging
Gift bags and most wrapping materials
Paper

NO

Metal hangers
Clothing
Plastic wrap

Office Recycling

YES

Manila folders and paper
Bottles and cans from the lunchroom
Cardboard boxes
Mail

NO

Plastic utensils, straws and polystyrene
Shredded paper (*unless contained in a paper bag*)
Soiled coffee cups

Restaurant Recycling

YES

Clean plastic and cardboard takeout containers
Boxes from food and other supplies
Clean bottles from kitchen ingredients
Plastic cups

NO

Soiled takeout containers
Plastic utensils, straws and polystyrene
Used napkins or paper towels

Services Recycling

YES

Empty product bottles
Cardboard boxes
Paper

NO

Product bottles with product still inside
Plastic wrap and plastic grocery bags
Used aluminum foil

Note: These are common materials accepted for recycling by industry. Not all recycling services are available in all areas and recycling rules may vary by location. Check with your local provider to determine what's recyclable in your area.

Now that you know the recycling basics, are you ready to perform a recycling and waste audit at your business? If so, check out this DIY recycling and waste guide [How to Perform a Facility Recycling Audit](#).

Are you an IFMA member? Get your first month free with the purchase or new recycling and waste services. Visit Info.RepublicServices.com/IFMA for more information.

