

# Recycling Outreach Guide for Minnesota

Guidelines to use when educating the community

Last updated December 2024

## Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Background and Guiding Document .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Always/Never List for Household Recycling.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Recycling Terminology.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Reuse First .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Recycling Program Types .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Material Type: Plastic .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Material Type: Glass .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Material Type: Cartons (Aseptic and gable-top Cartons).....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Material Type: Metal.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Material Type: Paper.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Multi-sort or Multi-stream and Drop-Off or Self-Haul .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Beyond the Cart Recycling.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Material Type: Plastic Bags, Wrap and Film.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Material Type: Agricultural Plastic and Boat Wrap.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Material Type: Non-reusable Clothing and Linens .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Material Type: Holiday Lights and Cords .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Material Type: Cords for Electronics.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Material Type: Electronics – (computers, cell phones, appliances).....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Material Type: Mattresses .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Material Type: Shredded Paper.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Material Type: Small Appliances &amp; Scrap Metal .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Material Type: Large Appliances .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Material Type: Carpet.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Material Type: Household Batteries .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Material Type: Lighting.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Material Type: Miscellaneous Household Hazardous Materials .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Frequently Asked Questions about Single-Sort and Multi-Sort Recycling Programs.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Preparing, Creating and Distributing Educational Materials.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Acronyms and Terminology.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Resources .....</b>	<b>39</b>

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The most up-to-date version of this document can be found on the Recycling Education Committee (REC) section of the Recycling Association of Minnesota webpage:

<https://recycleminnesota.org/resources/education-outreach/recycling-education-committee/>

## Acknowledgements

This document is meant to be a guiding document to be used voluntarily by waste educators (both public and private) statewide. The Recycling Education Committee (REC) created this document. The document is supported or reviewed by representatives from the following organizations: haulers, material recycling facilities (MRF), government, industry, non-profits, and end-market representatives.

A subcommittee of the following individuals has volunteered to field questions and annually update the Guide:

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**Goal:** To maintain an agreed upon list of what is universally acceptable/not acceptable, and build consensus on consistent messaging to communicate in an efficient and coordinated fashion throughout the state. Haulers, cities, counties, the state and other regional organizations and associations produce their own version(s) of communications materials. This guide is intended to supplement existing programs, providing guidance to promote consistent, clear, and concise recycling messaging that results in increased recycling with less contamination. Consistent messaging and signage will increase consumer confidence in their own abilities to properly dispose of recyclable materials. This increased competence and autonomy will result in better recycling for Minnesota.

**How to Use This Guide:** This is a resource for counties, cities, and recycling coordinators across the State of Minnesota. This will direct recycling communicators on how to answer questions related to recycling and formulate their own resources which will be customized to their appropriate audiences. The use of these terms is completely voluntary and is meant to encourage public education. A secondary application of this guide might be to inform contract language between haulers and cities/counties across the state. Contract language may be obtained by contacting REC members. Before crafting messaging, please look at this document's general guidance for *Preparing, Creating and Distributing Education Materials* section.

## Background and Guiding Document

In 2017, the Recycling Education Committee published its White Paper which included the “Always/Never” Acceptability List listed in the “Resources” portion of this guide.

The Always/Never list was agreed upon by a stakeholder group, REC, including haulers, cities, counties, the state and other regional organizations and associations. The Always/Never list is not intended to be a reflection of each Material Recovery Facility’s (MRF) acceptability lists, because MRFs have minor differences on materials they accept, but rather, an indication of what MRFs would like to see. For example, some MRFs might not turn away shredded paper if it is bagged appropriately. However, they do not want to promote that they accept shredded paper and the majority of MRFs do not want to see it come through their doors at all. The Always/Never list was reached after much deliberation by the REC to be suitable across the state of Minnesota, no matter the location of your collection site or MRF. That being said, there will be inherent differences and REC recognizes that the list might not apply perfectly in all cases across Minnesota.

## Always/Never List for Household Recycling

### Always Recycle in your Household Curbside Recycling Program

#### **Empty, rinse and cap all containers**

- Boxes: food, beverage, toiletries
- Cardboard
- Cartons (Aseptic and gable top cartons) (The majority of Minnesotans can recycle cartons in their curbside bin. Please check with your local hauler if you live in greater Minnesota, as there may be some exceptions in those areas)
- Glass jars and bottles
- Newspaper and magazines
- Office paper and mail
- Plastic bottles, containers, jugs (#1, 2, 5)
- Steel & aluminum cans

### Never Recycle in your Household Curbside Recycling Program

- Batteries
- Carpeting
- Ceramics, dishware, mirrors
- Diapers, pet waste and fish waste
- Ice cream cartons
- Food waste

- Hazardous materials and hazardous aerosols (motor oil, propane tanks, etc)
- Medical wastes (sharps e.g. needles & syringes, lancets, etc)
- Electronics
- Napkins, paper plates and paper towels
- Plastic bags
- Fabrics/textiles
- Scrap metal
- Shredded paper (Shredded paper should not be put in your curbside bin, however many MRFs and municipalities have special recycling program for the material. Check locally for more information and instruction)
- Styrofoam™ and other foam block packing material
- Tanglers (hoses, extension cords, holiday lights, etc)
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (face masks, plastic gloves, etc)
- Meal prep packaging
- Plastic envelopes (such as those from online retailers)
- #3, #4, #6, #7 plastic
- Small items smaller than a fist (such as loose bottle caps, pieces of paper smaller than a postcard, prescription bottles, straws, plastic cutlery, etc)

## Recycling Terminology

### Program terminology:

Overall program term: Recycling

**Symbol/Logos:** The three chasing arrows have become a universal recycling symbol, however it is often misleading. The symbol does not guarantee the recyclability of a material in curbside recycling programs. Some plastic items, like plastic bags, have the recycling logo on them but they are widely prohibited in curbside recycling programs. Therefore, do not instruct residents or businesses to look for recycling symbols to verify the recyclability of items.



The recycling numbers and chasing arrows on plastics are RICs or Resin Identification Codes. They are often confused with the chasing arrow recycling symbol and were not designed to communicate which plastics are recyclable or not. However, the RIC's can

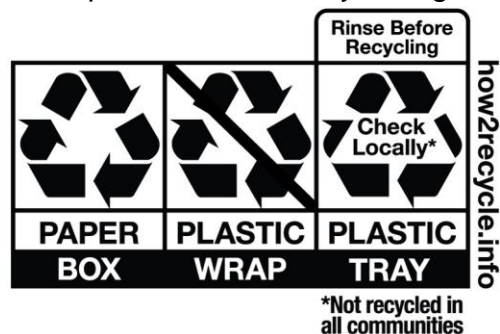
be used by recycling programs to communicate which types of plastics are recyclable. For example, stating that “plastic bottles with #'s 1, 2, & 5 on the bottom are recyclable” would be a way to communicate recyclability of a product.

The chasing arrows recycling symbol can also be used on paper, plastic and other materials to also identify that the item is made out of recycled content material. It also does not mean the item is recyclable.

A more effective way to communicate recyclability is to use the [How2Recycle](#) logo when educating residents about recyclability of items, recognizing that the How2Recycle logo is not used on all products and that several items are also recyclable that do not have the How2Recycle logo. Educating community members to look for the How2Recycle logo should always be paired with providing a recycling guide that states the items that can be recycled in your community.

*“How2Recycle is a standardized labeling system that clearly communicates recycling instructions to the public. It involves a coalition of forward thinking brands who want their packaging to be recycled and are empowering consumers through smart packaging labels.” -How2Recycle*

Example of a How2Recycle logo for a frozen meal package:



## Signage considerations

### Color:

Blue is the accepted color to indicate recycling for signs and bins/carts. CMYK and RGB are widely used color system codes for printing and web designs. Use the following color codes for signs and other major documents:

- **CMYK: 100, 57, 0, 40**
- **RGB: 0, 66, 53**

### Images:

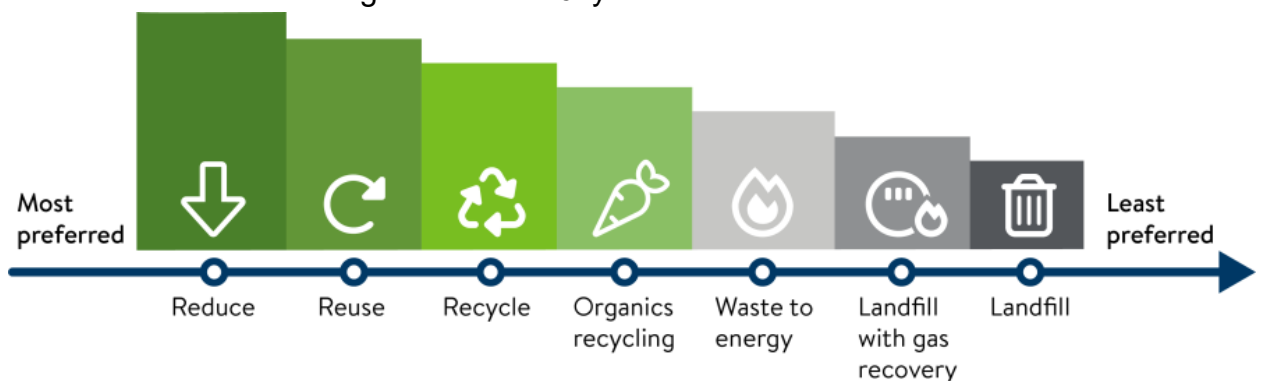
- Images should be large; minimal text
- Culturally appropriate images are best practice  
(i.e. coconut milk can, fish sauce bottle, items that have writing in a language other than English, etc.)
- When possible, include images of the actual items that will likely go into the bin/cart (i.e. sports drink bottles at a sporting event)
- Image Resources  
Links for all images resources are provided in the Resource Section at the end of this document.
  - [MPCA Flickr Account](#)
  - [The Recycling Partnership](#)
  - County websites
  - [Waste Wise REC DropBox](#)

## Highest and Best Use of Materials

### Overall message for considering highest and best use:

- Choose to reuse: Waste should be managed in an Integrated Solid Waste Management System in accordance with the hierarchy of preferred waste management practices, with an emphasis on reduction, reuse, and recycling to promote resource conservation and environmental protection. Before educating that an item should be recycled, consider if it can be reused or repurposed by yourself or someone else first. The Figure below shows the solid waste management hierarchy adopted by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and emphasizes the need to focus efforts at the top, where environmental benefits are most significant.

Minnesota's waste management hierarchy:



Source: [www.pca.state.mn.us](http://www.pca.state.mn.us)



### **Reuse resources:**

Links for all resources are provided in the Resource Section at the end of this document.

- The [MPCA](#) is a great resource for information on waste reduction, repair, and reuse.
- Some Counties have created searchable online databases of reuse retail options, such as Hennepin County's [Choose to Reuse Directory](#) and Dakota County's [Reduce & Reuse Map](#). The MPCA is requiring counties to focus more resources on waste reduction so check with your county to see what resources are available. You can use these tools to search for businesses and organizations that reuse, repair, rent, resell or accept donations in those communities.
- [Reuse Minnesota](#) Supports sustainable living and reducing waste. The Reuse Minnesota business community connects you to local, thrifty and eco-friendly goods and services.
- Buy Nothing groups on Facebook
- [NextDoor](#)
- Facebook Marketplace
- [Craigslist](#)
- [Do an online search for reuse and repair businesses in your area](#)

## **Recycling Program Types**

Recycling programs use different names to describe their type of collection. REC does not have recommendations at this time for program terminology, but this may be a secondary goal of the group. Use the following terms when explaining a program:

- Single-sort or Single-stream (Also referred to as mixed or commingled)
- Multi-sort or Multi-stream (Also referred to as dual-stream)
- Drop-Off Recycling or Beyond the Cart Recycling

## **Outline for Single-Sort/Single-Stream Recycling and Multi-Sort/Multi-Stream Recycling Programs**

How to read this section

### ***Preparing Material for Recycling:***

- Use these phrases to ensure the proper steps are taken to effectively recycle materials.

***Acceptable and non-acceptable materials for category are included in a chart for each material type:***

- Use these terms when explaining what items are/are not accepted in a category
- A sub-list for items **NOT accepted for recycling at the majority of Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs), but one or more MRFs do accept them. Check with your local MRF** is used in some cases. Stakeholders recognize that the recycling process is not one-size fits all, and haulers and processors will inevitably have processes or technologies that call for different collection parameters. However, the best practice for acceptability of these items in recycling programs is to adhere to these Acceptability Lists in order to promote a coordinated message when possible.
- A sub-list for **commonly collected for recycling at specialty drop-off locations, but not in the curbside bin/cart**, is also used in some cases. More information about how to recycle these items at drop-off locations is described in the Drop-Off Recycling section of this document. Items with “... **are accepted for recycling at the majority of MRFs, but one or more MRFs do not accept them. Check with your local MRF.**” Stakeholders recognize that the recycling process is not one-size fits all, and haulers and processors will inevitably have processes or technologies that call for different collection parameters. However, the best practice for acceptability of these items in recycling programs is to adhere to these Acceptability Lists in order to promote a coordinated message when possible.
- Some materials are hyperlinked to the FAQ section of the guide that gives additional information as to why something is recyclable or not.

## Single-sort or Single-stream Recycling

### ***Overall Preparing Materials for Recycling Instructions:***

These instructions should be listed on recycling guides.

### **Never Recycle in your Household Curbside Recycling Program**

- Batteries
- Carpeting
- Ceramics, dishware, mirrors
- Diapers, pet waste and fish waste
- Ice cream cartons
- Food waste
- Hazardous materials and hazardous aerosols (motor oil, propane tanks, etc)
- Medical wastes (sharps e.g. needles & syringes, lancets, etc)
- Electronics

- Napkins, paper plates and paper towels
- Fabrics/textiles
- Plastic bags
- Scrap metal
- Shredded paper (Shredded paper should not be put in your curbside bin, however many MRFs and municipalities have special recycling program for the material. Check locally for more information and instruction)
- Styrofoam™ and other foam block packing material
- Tanglers (hoses, extension cords, holiday lights, etc)
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (face masks, plastic gloves, etc)
- Meal prep packaging
- Plastic envelopes (such as those from online retailers)
- #3, #4, #6, #7 plastic
- Items smaller than a fist (such as loose bottle caps, pieces of paper smaller than a postcard, prescription bottles, straws, plastic cutlery, etc)

## Material Type: **Plastic**

### Special Instructions:

- Empty, rinse, and replace cap. Throw away any straws, pumps and sprayer tops. Make sure to check the plastic resin number. Clear #1 plastic can look similar to #6 or #7 plastic.

Accepted	Not Accepted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #1, 2, and 5 containers, bottles and jugs such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Soda, juice and water bottles</li> <li>○ Milk and juice jugs</li> <li>○ Ketchup and salad dressing bottles</li> <li>○ Dishwashing and laundry product bottles and jugs</li> <li>○ Shampoo, soap and lotion bottles</li> <li>○ Yogurt, pudding and fruit cups</li> <li>○ Margarine, cottage cheese, cream cheese and other tubs and lids</li> <li>○ Clear berry and produce containers</li> <li>○ Clear plastic egg cartons</li> <li>○ Clear to go cups</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Accepted for recycling at the majority of MRFs, but one or more MRFs (outside the metro) do not accept them:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #5 containers like yogurt, pudding and fruit cups, margarine, cottage cheese, cream cheese and other tubs and lids and some deli containers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #3, #4, #6, #7 plastic</li> <li>• Plastic straws</li> <li>• Pumps and sprayer tops from bottles</li> <li>• Utensils</li> <li>• Styrofoam™, foam cartons, and foam packing material</li> <li>• Chip bags, granola and candy wrappers</li> <li>• Garden hoses</li> <li>• Bulky rigid plastics (ex: Kiddie pools, laundry baskets, window blinds)</li> <li>• Microwaveable food trays</li> <li>• Motor oil and other containers that held hazardous products</li> <li>• Pouches</li> <li>• Toys</li> <li>• Plastic gloves</li> <li>• Meal prep packaging</li> <li>• Drink pouches</li> </ul> <p><b>NOT accepted for recycling at the majority of MRFs, but one or more MRFs do accept them:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black containers and bottles</li> <li>• Clear, rigid packaging from toys, electronics and other products</li> </ul> <p><b>NOT accepted for recycling at any MRF, but commonly collected for recycling at specialty drop off locations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plastic bags, film, and wrap</li> <li>• Tyvek envelopes</li> </ul>

## Material Type: **Glass**

### Special Instructions:

- Empty, rinse, and replace cap\*\*. If the cap cannot go back on the container, smaller metal caps (i.e. bottle caps) or plastic caps should be disposed of in the trash, as they will likely fall through the MRF sorting machine and end up as waste or a contaminant. See “Caps on or off?” on page 34 for more information.

Accepted	Not Accepted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Food and beverage bottles and jars</li></ul> <p><b>Accepted for recycling at the majority of MRFs, but one or more MRFs do not accept them:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mason jars</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ceramics/pottery</li><li>• Drinking glasses</li><li>• Glass dishes</li><li>• Mirrors</li><li>• Vases</li><li>• Window glass</li><li>• Glass bakeware</li><li>• Nail polish and hobby paint containers</li></ul> <p><b>NOT accepted for recycling at any MRF, but commonly collected for recycling at specialty drop off locations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Light bulbs</li></ul>

\*\* For educational purposes and to have a consistent message about caps, most communities tell residents to place the cap back on the container. However, the main market for glass recycling in the Twin Cities, and a large part of the state, is Strategic Materials and they do not want to receive caps. They separate the glass into the three colors so it can be sold to various companies. They prefer that caps are not placed back on the containers because they have to separate the caps from the glass. Some caps are fairly easy to remove and recycle, but others add to the amount of contaminants they receive that must be thrown away. See “Caps on or off?” on page 34.

## Material Type: **Cartons (Aseptic and gable-top Cartons)**

### Special Instructions:

- Empty, rinse, and replace caps
- Do not flatten
- No straws

Accepted	Not Accepted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear plastic egg cartons</li></ul> <p><b>Accepted for recycling at the majority of MRFs, but one or more MRFs do not accept them:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Milk and juice cartons</li><li>• Juice boxes</li><li>• Soup, broth and wine cartons</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ice cream cartons</li><li>• Plastic coated paper takeout cartons</li><li>• Foam egg cartons</li><li>• Foil drink pouches</li></ul> <p><b>NOT accepted for recycling at the majority of MRFs, but one or more MRFs do accept them:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paper egg cartons</li></ul>

## Material Type: **Metal**

### Special Instructions:

- Empty, rinse and remove lid.
- Place loose metal lids inside can. Pinch opening of can closed if possible to keep lids inside.
- Remove all food and roll aluminum into large ball (to at least about the size of your fist).
- Do not flatten metal cans and containers.

Accepted	Not Accepted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food and beverage cans</li> <li>• Decorative popcorn and cookie tins</li> </ul> <p><b>Accepted for recycling at the majority of MRFs, but one or more MRFs do not accept them.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aluminum foil (must be clean)</li> <li>• Aluminum trays, tins, or pie tins (must be clean)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Batteries</li> </ul> <p><b>NOT accepted for recycling at the majority of MRFs, but one or more MRFs do accept them:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aerosol cans (e.g. shaving cream)</li> <li>• Cardboard can (i.e. oatmeal container or crescent roll container)</li> </ul> <p><b>Not accepted for recycling at any MRFs, but commonly collected for recycling at specialty drop off locations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Containers that held hazardous products such as paint thinner</li> <li>• Holiday lights</li> <li>• Loose metal caps</li> <li>• Paint cans</li> <li>• Pressurized cylinders like propane and helium tanks</li> <li>• Scrap metal, such as pots and pans, hangers, shelves, nails, auto parts, pipes and poles</li> <li>• Wire</li> </ul> <p><b>NOT accepted for recycling at any MRF, but commonly collected for recycling at specialty drop off locations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hazardous aerosols</li> </ul>

## Material Type: Paper

### Special Instructions:

- Must be dry and free of grease
- Empty and flatten boxes
- Boxes must fit in the cart
- Must be dry

Accepted	Not Accepted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cardboard</li> <li>• Cereal and cracker boxes</li> <li>• Magazines, catalogs, newspapers and inserts</li> <li>• Mail, office and school papers</li> <li>• Phone books and other soft cover books</li> <li>• Shoe boxes, gift boxes, tissue boxes and electronics boxes</li> <li>• Cardboard tubes from toilet paper, and paper towels (only the inner cardboard tube is recyclable, NOT the paper on the roll)</li> <li>• Toothpaste, medication and other toiletry boxes</li> <li>• Refrigerator boxes</li> </ul> <p><b>Accepted for recycling at the majority of MRFs, but one or more MRFs do not accept them.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freezer boxes (most boxes today are pure boxboard without a plastic lining or plastic fibers, making them recyclable)</li> <li>• Pizza delivery boxes (for more info see the FAQ section on page 33)</li> <li>• Cardboard cans (i.e. oatmeal container or crescent roll container)</li> <li>• Unlined Kraft paper such as used for shipping padding (flatten and place in a paper bag for best results)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greeting cards that are shiny, play music, contains aluminum foil or plastic</li> <li>• Paper berry cartons</li> <li>• Paper cups, plates and bowls</li> <li>• Paper napkins or towels</li> <li>• Paper soiled with food or grease</li> <li>• Shipping envelopes padded with bubble-wrap</li> <li>• Tissue paper</li> <li>• Waxed cardboard (such as bulk produce boxes)</li> <li>• Wrapping paper</li> </ul> <p><b>NOT accepted for recycling at the majority of MRFs, but one or more MRFs do accept them.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hardcover books</li> <li>• Paper egg cartons</li> <li>• Shredded paper</li> <li>• Cardboard cans with metal lids</li> <li>• Lined kraft bags</li> <li>• Padded paper shipping envelope</li> </ul> <p><b>Not accepted for recycling at most MRFs, but commonly collected for recycling at specialty drop-off locations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shredded paper</li> </ul>



## Multi-sort or Multi-stream and Drop-Off or Self-Haul

Multi-sort or multi-stream recycling is also sometimes referred to as source separated recycling. This means keeping material types separate into two or more streams at point of disposal (i.e. paper, metal, glass, plastic, etc. are all kept separate). Dual sort and multi-sort programs are more common in Greater Minnesota where residents sometimes self-haul materials to a drop site. Advise residents to check with their local city, county, MRF, or hauler if they have questions on which type of recycling program applies to them. Most multi-sort programs will follow the same guidelines as single-sort. Acceptability lists would remain the same.

## Beyond the Cart Recycling

### **Overall preparing materials for recycling instructions (special instructions):**

These items cannot be recycled in home recycling carts or dumpsters, but they can be recycled at special retail, county or city drop-off locations. Check with your local city, county, MRF or hauler to find out where you can recycle these items near you.

### **Outline for Specialty Drop-Off Recycling or Beyond the Cart Recycling**

How to read this section:

#### ***Material Type:***

- Use these titles for your material type categories.

#### ***Preparing Material for Recycling:***

- Use these phrases to ensure the proper steps are taken to effectively recycle materials.

#### ***Highest and Best Use for Materials:***

- Use these reminders and resources to prioritize reuse of items before recycling when appropriate.

#### ***Drop-Off Location Types that are Available:***

- Use these lists of location types as a starting point to verify the specific drop-off locations that you can provide to residents.

#### ***Acceptable and non-acceptable materials for category:***

- Use these lists when provided for acceptable and non-acceptable items. Some material types will not require lists and instead will have a short paragraph.

## **Material Type: Plastic Bags, Wrap and Film**

### **Preparing Material for Recycling:**

- Plastic bags, wrap, and film are not accepted in curbside recycling
- Must be empty, clean and dry

### **Highest and Best Use:**

Bring reusable bags or do not use a bag. Put produce directly into a shopping cart rather than taking a produce bag. For bags you do have, reuse as pet waste bags, as garbage bags around your home or donate to a second-hand store that may use them for their customer purchases.

### **Drop-Off Location Types that are Available:**

Check with the following types of businesses, organizations and public and private drop-off facilities to develop a list for your residents:

- Food retailers like grocery stores and co-ops
- General merchandise big-box stores often have collection bins or will accept it at customer service
- Public and private drop-off facilities

As a general rule to determine whether or not a plastic film will be accepted at a drop-off location, plastic film that has any stretch to it will likely be accepted.

Accepted	Not Accepted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grocery and retail bags</li> <li>• Case wrap like around beverage bottles and beverages purchased in bulk</li> <li>• Newspaper bags</li> <li>• Bread bags</li> <li>• Produce bags</li> <li>• Zip-top food storage bags</li> <li>• Shrink wrap packaging from napkins, paper towels, bathroom tissues and diapers</li> <li>• Dry cleaning bags</li> <li>• Plastic cereal box liners</li> <li>• Plastic shipping envelopes with the How2Recycle symbol (e.g. Amazon bubble wrap mailer)</li> <li>• Air pillows from delivery packages (deflated)</li> <li>• Bubble wrap</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodegradable/compostable bags or film packaging</li> <li>• Pre-washed salad mix bags</li> <li>• Frozen food bags</li> <li>• Candy bar wrappers</li> <li>• Chip bags</li> <li>• Six-pack rings</li> <li>• Flexible packaging pouches (ex. Laundry detergent pods, nuts and dried fruit)</li> <li>• Mulch bags</li> <li>• Salt pellet bags</li> <li>• Pet food bags</li> </ul>

## Material Type: **Agricultural Plastic and Boat Wrap**

### Preparing Material for Recycling:

- Agricultural plastic and boat wrap are not accepted in curbside recycling.
- Must be clean and dry. Remove rock and gravel. Remove straps and grommets from boat wrap.

### Drop-Off Location Types that are Available for Agricultural Plastic (ag plastic) and Boat Wrap

- Plastics vendor, Revolution Plastics provides farms and dairies with on-farm ag and silage plastics collection for recycling. To learn more or join the program, visit [www.revolutionplastics.com](http://www.revolutionplastics.com).
- Go to <https://recycleminnesota.org/work/agricultural-plasticboat-wrap-recycling/> to find resources and local contacts for producers that do not qualify for Revolution Plastics on-site collection program.

### Acceptable and Unacceptable Materials

Accepted	Not Accepted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Silage plastic</li><li>• Bunker cover and boat wrap that does not contain nylon mesh or reinforcements known as skim</li><li>• Oxygen barriers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Net wrap</li><li>• Twine</li><li>• Skrim</li><li>• Sidewalls</li><li>• Hydraulic hose</li><li>• Tubing</li><li>• Supersacks</li><li>• Chemical containers</li><li>• Salt pellet bags</li><li>• Bale wrap</li><li>• Backyard hockey rink liner</li></ul>

## Material Type: Reusable Clothing and Linens

### ***Preparing Material for Recycling:***

- Reusable clothing and linens are not accepted in curbside recycling
- Must be dry
- Place in tightly closed plastic bag labeled “scrap clothing and linens for recycling”

### ***Highest and Best Use for Materials:***

- Clothing and linens that are new or gently used can be reused through donation. Check with your local city or county for best guidance on available drop-sites for clothing reuse. You can also find information on ReuseMN’s website at [www.reusemn.org](http://www.reusemn.org) or Hennepin County’s Choose to Reuse website at [www.hennepin.us/choosetoreuse](http://www.hennepin.us/choosetoreuse).
- A good general rule is if you would feel comfortable giving an unwanted item to a family member and friend, donate the item. If it is not in good condition to donate or you would be embarrassed to donate to a family member or friend, dispose of item properly.

### ***Drop-Off Location Types that are Available for Donating Gently Used Clothing and Linens***

Check with the following types of businesses, organizations and public and private drop-off facilities to develop a list for your residents:

- Public and private drop-off facilities
- Donation centers like [Goodwill](#) and [Salvation Army](#)
- Thrift and secondhand stores
- Special city curbside recycling programs. In these programs, clothes are placed in bags and set out next to recycling carts for separate pick up
- Stand-alone donation boxes
- [DonateStuff.com](http://DonateStuff.com) or search online for “clothing donation near me”

### **DONATION: Acceptable and Unacceptable Materials for Donating Gently Used Clothing and Linens**

Accepted	Not Accepted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gently used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ clothing</li> <li>○ bedding</li> <li>○ curtains and tablecloths</li> <li>○ towels</li> <li>○ fabric</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Shoes suitable for reuse, in pairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Torn or stained: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ clothing</li> <li>○ bedding</li> <li>○ curtains and tablecloths</li> <li>○ towels</li> <li>○ fabric</li> <li>○ Shoes not suitable for reuse, or single shoe without match</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Moldy clothing/fabric</li> <li>● Rags used to clean up hazardous products</li> <li>● Bloody material</li> </ul>

### ***Drop-Off Location Types Available for Recycling Non-Reusable Clothing and Linens***

Check with the following types of businesses, organizations and public and private drop-off facilities to develop a list for your residents:

- Donation centers like [Goodwill Easter Seals](#) and [Salvation Army](#)

### **Acceptable and Unacceptable Materials for Recycling Non-reusable Clothing**

Accepted	Not Accepted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Torn or stained: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ clothing</li> <li>○ bedding</li> <li>○ curtains and tablecloths</li> <li>○ towels</li> <li>○ fabric</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Shoes not suitable for reuse, or single shoe without match</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Moldy clothing/fabric</li> <li>● Rags used to clean up hazardous products</li> <li>● Bloody material</li> </ul>

## Material Type: **Holiday Lights and Cords**

Holiday lights and cords are not accepted in curbside recycling

### ***Highest and Best use:***

Donate holiday lights and electronic cords in working order. See textiles for donation for more information on reuse opportunities or visit: [Reuse Minnesota](#), [Choose to Reuse](#), or [Bridging](#)'s guide. Links to the organizations are listed below under "Resources".

### ***Drop-Off Location Types that are Available***

Check with the following types of businesses, organizations and public and private drop-off facilities to develop a list for your residents:

- Year-round or seasonal drop-off locations are available. Seasonal drop-off locations typically accept strings of lights between mid-November and late January
- Scrap metal recycling facilities
- County operated HHW drop-off facilities
- Public and private drop-off facilities
- Electronic recyclers and refurbishers like [Repowered \(fka Tech Dump\)](#)
- Scrap metal recycling facilities
- Recycling events operated by cities or counties

### **Acceptable and Unacceptable Materials**

Electrical cords, extension cords, phone chargers, and power strips are accepted.

## Material Type: **Cords for Electronics**

Cords for electronics are not accepted in curbside recycling

### ***Drop-Off Location Types that are Available***

Check with the following types of businesses, organizations and county-operated facilities to develop a list for your residents:

- Most county recycling drop-off facilities
- Electronic recyclers and refurbishers like [Repowered \(fka Tech Dump\)](#)
- Many scrap metal recycling facilities accept cords year-round.
- Recycling events operated by cities or counties

### **Acceptable and Unacceptable Materials**

Electrical cords, extension cords, phone chargers, and power strips are accepted.

## **Material Type: Electronics (computers, cell phones, appliances)**

Electronics are not accepted in curbside recycling and some are prohibited from being put in the trash.

### ***Drop-Off Location Types that are Available***

Check with the following types of businesses, organizations and county-operated facilities to develop a list for your residents:

- Most county drop-off facilities for recycling (may require a related fee)
- Electronic recyclers and refurbishers like [Repowered \(fka Tech Dump\)](#) (may have a related fee)
- Recycling events operated by cities or counties
- Retailers such as Amazon, Apple, Best Buy, Sprint have trade-in or buy-back programs

## **Material Type: Mattresses**

Mattresses are not accepted in curbside recycling

### ***Highest and Best use:***

Local charities may accept mattresses if they are in good or excellent condition (no rips, tears or stains). Charities are not allowed to sell used mattresses, but are able to provide mattresses or box springs for clients in need. Please remember to call first. Mattresses in good condition can also be donated to [Bridging](#).

Most furniture stores offer back-haul of the mattress when you buy a new one. In addition, some may be connected to reuse or recycling outlets. To make sure your mattress is recycled, ask what they do with them. The materials that can be recycled in a mattress are steel, cotton, foam, and wood.

### ***Drop-Off Location Types that are Available***

Check with the following types of businesses, organizations and county-operated facilities to develop a list for your residents:

- Mattresses may be accepted at city recycling or clean-up days. Check your city website for more information.
- **Pick Up Service:** There is a pickup option for mattresses in some areas of the Metro. For more information, visit [Second Chance Recycling](#).
- **County Drop-Offs:** Some county drop-offs accept and recycle mattresses. Check with your county for more information.



## Material Type: **Shredded Paper**

### ***Preparing Material for Recycling:***

Most MRF's do not accept shredded paper as it contaminates the other recyclables once liberated and cannot be captured for recycling. However, some single-sort recycling facilities may accept shredded paper if properly prepared in a stapled paper bag. Note: some studies have noted that even shredded paper in a stapled paper bag can get torn open through the hauling process and then lost in the sorting process. Check with city, county, MRF, or hauler to determine if shredded paper is accepted in recycling carts in your area. If not accepted in recycling carts, check with your county or city to find the next shred event or drop-off location near you.

### ***Highest and Best Use for Materials:***

Paper is more valuable and easier to recycle when it is not shredded. Before shredding paper, consider if the paper requires shredding, and only shred confidential paper if necessary. If buying your own shredded, purchase a strip cut paper shredder not a cross-cut shredder since cross cutting the paper destroys the paper fibers and makes recycling the paper difficult.

### ***Drop-Off Location Types that are Available***

Check with the following types of businesses, organizations and public and private drop-off facilities to develop a list for your residents:

- Banks who may hold private shred events
- Public or private drop-off facilities
- Municipal buildings who may offer shredding for residents (ex. Coon Rapids and Linwood)
- Private document shredding companies (ex. Shred It, Pioneer Paper, Secure Shred)
- Recycling day events operated by cities and/or counties

## Material Type: **Small Appliances & Scrap Metal**

### ***Preparing Material for Recycling:***

- Small appliances and scrap metal are not accepted in curbside recycling

### ***Highest and Best Use for Materials:***

Scrap metal items, like pots and pans, silverware, hangers, and other metal household goods that are new or gently used can be reused through donation. If your appliance or metal item is in working condition, give it away, sell it, or donate it to a local social service organization or a private entity (ex. [Habitat for Humanity](#), [Better Futures Minnesota](#), or [Salvation Army](#)). If it isn't working, take it to a Fix-It Clinic or local business that repairs items. See textiles for donation for more information on reuse opportunities or visit: [Reuse Minnesota](#), [Choose to Reuse](#), or [Bridging](#)'s guide to reuse or donate. See links to organizations on "Resources" page.

### ***Drop-Off Location Types that are Available***

Check with the following types of businesses, organizations, county-operated facilities and special city programs to develop a list for your residents:

- Public and private drop-off facilities
- Scrap metal recycling facilities
- Special city curbside recycling programs
- Recycling day events operated by cities or counties

## Material Type: **Large Appliances**

Large appliances are not accepted with curbside recycling and state law bans them from being disposed of with the trash.

### ***Preparing for Recycling:***

Hire a professional to properly disconnect all appliances to make sure no Freon lines are cut from appliances with cooling systems and no gas lines are cut. Cutting lines will release the chemicals in the air, causing environmental harm. Find a reuse option for usable items. For non-usable appliances, select a recycler who will properly remove any gases to avoid Clean Air Act violations and protect the environment.

### ***Highest and Best Use for Materials:***

If your appliance is in working condition, give it away, sell it, or donate it to a local social service organization or private entity (ex. [Habitat for Humanity](#), [Better Futures Minnesota](#), or [Salvation Army](#)). See textiles for donation for more information on reuse opportunities or visit: [Reuse Minnesota](#), [Choose to Reuse](#), or [Bridging](#)'s guide to reuse or donate. See links to organizations on "Resources" page.

### ***Drop-Off Location Types that are Available***

Check with the following types of businesses, organizations, city and county-operated facilities to develop a list for your residents:

- Public and private drop-off facilities
- Scrap metal recycling facilities
- Special city curbside recycling programs
- Recycling day events operated by cities or counties
- Appliance retailers (may take back your old appliance when purchasing a new one)
- Utility companies like Xcel Energy (may offer a cash rebate and free pick up and recycling service for your spare refrigerator or freezer that is in working condition).

## Material Type: **Carpet and Carpet Pads**

Carpet and carpet pads are not accepted in curbside recycling

**As of June 2020**, Minnesota's only carpet recycler, Bro-Tex, Inc., ceased its carpet recycling program and carpet must be reused or disposed. Carpet pads continue to be recyclable as outlined below.

### ***Highest and Best Use for Materials:***

New or unused carpet can be donated at [Habitat for Humanity Restore](#). They have size requirements so make sure to read their donation instructions.

### ***Preparing Material for Recycling:***

Pads must be rolled and securely tied with duct tape or twine. Material must be dry and should no longer than six (6) feet. It should have minimal loose dirt, and should be free of wet glue, rocks and caked mud. Pads must be free from tack strips, nails, staples or knife blades.

### ***Drop-Off Location Types that are Available***

- Carpet pad can be taken to any [Hank's Specialties](#) for recycling. For a list of their retail locations visit the website in the resource list. They do not recycle carpet, only the padding.

## Material Type: Household Batteries

Batteries are not accepted in curbside recycling

### ***Preparing Material for Recycling:***

- Do not put batteries in your recycling bin or cart
- Tape both terminals of batteries to prevent fires
- Broken or swollen battery packs are a fire and explosive hazard and should be placed in a bucket of sand before you bring it to your HHW facility. Lithium and Lithium-ion batteries are very powerful and the most likely to cause fires when punctured. That is why they should not be disposed of in the garbage or recycling.

### ***Drop-Off Location Types that are Available***

For proper disposal, contact your local county environmental office. A Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facility locator link can be found in the resource list below. Also check with the following types of businesses, organizations and county-operated facilities to develop a list for your residents. Verify the type of batteries accepted at each location:

- Public and private HHW drop-off facilities
- [Call2recycle](#) (Visit website for a list of locations that accepts rechargeable batteries for recycling). Please note this list is maintained on a national level and may not include all locations that accept batteries)
- Retail stores that sell lead acid auto batteries (for vehicles, not considered household batteries)
  - Any retail store that sells lead acid batteries is required by state law to accept and recycle up to five (5) lead acid batteries at no charge; no purchase required.
- Recycling day events operated by cities or counties

### **Acceptable and Unacceptable Materials at designated drop sites**

Accepted	Not Accepted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Single use batteries<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alkaline (ex. AA, AAA, D, batteries)</li><li>• Button (ex: watch, hearing aid) Maybe Li-ion, Ni-MH or Zinc-Air)</li><li>• Coin batteries</li></ul></li><li>• Rechargeable batteries<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lithium and Lithium ion (ex:</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lead acid (vehicle) batteries*</li><li>• Other types of lead acid batteries*</li></ul>

laptops and cell phones, digital cameras, rechargeable AA, AAA, battery packs, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nickel Cadmium (Ni-Cd) (ex: hand held power tools, AA, AAA rechargeable, battery packs, etc.)</li> <li>• Nickel metal hydride (NiMH) (ex. Rechargeable AA, AAA, battery packs, etc.)</li> <li>• Nickel-Zinc (NiZN) (ex. Rechargeable AA, AAA, battery packs, etc.)</li> </ul>	
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\*only accepted at County-operated HHW drop-off facilities

## Material Type: **Lighting**

Lighting is not accepted in curbside recycling

This section includes recycling resources for the following type of lighting:

- Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs)
- Fluorescent tubes
- Light-emitting diode (LED) bulbs
- High Intensity Discharge (HID) lamps, including mercury vapor, metal halide, high pressure sodium

Minnesota state law prohibits trash disposal and requires recycling of all mercury containing lighting from households and businesses. This requirement has been in place since 1997 to reduce and prevent mercury release to the environment. Items that contain mercury include:

- Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs)
- Fluorescent tubes
- High Intensity Discharge (HID) lamps, including mercury vapor, metal halide, high pressure sodium

LED lighting contains printed circuit boards and may contain lead. It is permitted to throw in the trash, however it is best to recycle through your local HHW or electronic waste program if this is an option.

### ***Preparing Material for Recycling:***

- Lamps must be unbroken. Some local HHW programs/facilities will accept broken fluorescent lamp material that is double bagged in plastic bags and tightly

closed. Contact your local program for instructions on lamp cleanup and bagging debris for proper disposal.

- Pack and transport lamps in original packaging or otherwise handle and contain them in a manner that will prevent lamp breakage in your vehicle as you transport to the collection facility.
- Do not tape lamps together.

***Highest and Best Use for Materials:***

- Recycling through your local drop-off collection program.

***Drop-Off Location Types that may collect these lamps for recycling***

- County and regional Household Hazardous Waste Collection programs, including permanent facilities and event/satellite/seasonal facilities. Some programs do not collect lamps or collect only through events.
- Retail hardware locations that work with electric utilities and lamp recyclers to collect either all types of lighting or CFLs only.
- Community recycling/clean up events: some community recycling/cleanup events collect lighting products, consult the specific event guide to determine if this is an option, and how you should prepare material to bring to the event.

**Acceptable and Unacceptable Lamp Types for Recycling**

<b>Accepted at most public sector and retail lamp collection programs</b>	<b>Check with your local facility, often not accepted:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fluorescent lamps:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs)</li> <li>○ Tubular fluorescents – all shapes and sizes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• High intensity discharge (HID) lighting:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ High pressure sodium</li> <li>○ Mercury vapor</li> <li>○ Metal halide</li> </ul> </li> <li>• LED lighting: check with the facility or program               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example, Ramsey County collects through their HHW Program</li> <li>• Check with your local program or consult management guides for electronic waste</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lamps that do not contain mercury or circuit boards               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Incandescent lighting (bulbs with metal filaments)</li> <li>○ Halogen lighting</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Material Type: **Miscellaneous Household Hazardous Materials**

Household hazardous materials are not accepted in curbside recycling program

### ***Preparing Material for Disposal:***

Various household hazardous materials are accepted at your local county environmental office. Visit your county website for details on proper methods for preparing materials.

### ***Drop-Off Location Types that are Available***

For proper disposal and pricing, contact your local county environmental office. A Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facility locator link can be found in the resource list below. Additionally, many law enforcement offices also have unwanted medication drop boxes.

### **Acceptable and Unacceptable Materials at designated drop sites**

Accepted	Not Accepted
<b>Accepted for recycling at the majority of county drop sites, but one or more county drop sites do not accept them.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Unwanted medication</li><li>● Needles and syringes</li></ul>	



# Frequently Asked Questions about Single-Sort and Multi-Sort Recycling Programs

## How clean is clean?

Items for recycling should be reasonably free of food contamination. Empty and rinse containers that can be easily cleaned. Items do not need to be sterilized and perfectly clean. For containers that are more difficult to clean, such as a peanut butter jar, remove as much food as possible with a spatula, but some residue is acceptable. For anything oily, peanut butter residue, cooking oil, salad dressing and lotion bottles, empty them as much as possible and then add a drop of grease-cutting soap and some hot water, replace the cap and shake the container to remove more of the residue. Dump out the soapy water and then recycle.

## What is “wish-cycling” and how can residents avoid it?

At some point, most everyone has put something in their recycling cart that wasn't actually recyclable but wished it was. This common occurrence has been aptly coined “wish-cycling”. Although residents want to recycle everything, the best thing they can do to support recycling is to recycle right by only recycling the items listed on their community's recycling guide. “Wish-cycled” items can damage equipment at recycling facilities (like plastic bags, scrap metal and textiles), harm employees at recycling facilities (like lithium-ion batteries that can cause fires and aerosol cans or propane tanks that can explode), and some don't have strong markets to be turned into new products (like #3 and #6 plastics).

Often residents can still recycle these commonly “wish-cycled” items at drop-off locations, just not in their curbside recycling cart. Some examples of these items that can be accepted at drop-offs include plastic bags, scrap metal, holiday string lights, batteries and textiles.

## How do I recycle delivery pizza boxes?

For pizza boxes, remove any remaining food and consider the amount of grease before recycling. Pizza boxes with small amounts of grease can be recycled. Recycle the top, clean portion of very greasy boxes, but compost or dispose of the bottom of the box. Tear off labels, receipts and stickers before recycling or composting the box. Throw away the little plastic pizza saver stand that keeps the box from crushing the pizza.



### **Caps on or off?**

Keep caps on recyclables; see below for specific details. Loose caps should be placed in the garbage. If caps are placed loose in recycling carts, they slip through the machinery at the recycling facility and end up getting managed as garbage anyways.

For ease of messaging to residents and to improve recycling capture rates, it is best to educate residents to leave caps on ALL recyclables. For transparency to residents who inquire about whether all caps are actually turned into new products, a good explanation starts with the “like on like” explanation. That means, a plastic cap on a plastic bottle will get recycled.

Caps on plastic recyclables like water bottles, laundry detergent jugs and yogurt tubs can be made into new products when the items are recycled, sorted and baled with the caps on. The cap and its container may be different types of plastic and that is OK. They are further sorted by plastics recyclers through a “sink-float” bath.

Keeping caps on milk, broth, and juice cartons helps the cartons get recycled correctly. That is because when the cap stays on, the carton remains more 3D which makes it easier to sort at the recycling facility. It is difficult to determine with certainty if the caps on cartons are actually made into new products when the carton is sold for recycling.

If a resident inquires the best way to get metal caps recycled, recommend that they secure caps inside of a metal can and pinch the lid closed.

Caps on food and beverage glass are not recycled by glass recyclers so it is best to leave them off of the containers. Typical bottle caps or jar lids can be pinched inside a food can. Light weight aluminum caps could be recycled if they were taken to a scrap dealer but it would take a lot of caps to make that worthwhile. Similar to loose pop tabs on aluminum cans, aluminum caps are too small to be recovered at a recycling sorting facility.

### **Why is black plastic not widely accepted in recycling programs?**

The optical sorting technology used in most Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) to sort plastics by resin type (like separating a #1 PET from a #2 HDPE bottle) is not capable of identifying the polymers in black plastics since the color absorbs light. Given this, MRFs need to use manual sorting to distinguish different resin types of black plastic containers from another, which can be a difficult and expensive endeavor.

From the market perspective, black plastic is less valuable than other colors of plastic because it can't be dyed to create a new color. Clear plastic can be dyed to make black plastic, but black plastic can't be made clear. Although clear or translucent plastics have a higher demand,, there are companies, some of which are in Minnesota, using black plastics in innovative outdoor products.

**Why are paper egg cartons not widely accepted in recycling programs?**

Fiber can only be recycled about five or six times before the fibers become too short to be used in another product. The fibers in egg cartons have already been recycled multiple times and most of the fibers are likely too short to be utilized again. The same is also true for berry cartons that are made of the same type of material.

**Why are cardboard cans not always accepted in recycling programs?**

Cardboard cans generally have multiple materials (fiber, sometimes plastic, and sometimes metal) that aren't easily separated to be made into new products. An example of a cardboard can is a Pringles® container or some Planters® nuts containers.

Some MRFs accept cardboard cans with a steel metal bottom due to the value of the steel. The cardboard cans are then included in metal bales for sale and the paper attached is burned off in the metal melting process.

**Why are freezer boxes not always accepted in recycling programs?**

Although most freezer boxes are recyclable, some freezer boxes are made of plastic coated paper, which is not recyclable. If the item contained within the freezer box is sealed in plastic, the freezer box is not the barrier to freezer burn, and therefore it is not plastic lined and is recyclable. Some freezer boxes now include How2Recycle logo that indicate if the box is recyclable. Because it is still often difficult for some residents to determine if a box is coated or uncoated, some recycling facilities do not accept any freezer boxes to avoid accidental inclusion of plastic, food residue, or coated paper.

**Why is shredded paper generally not accepted in single-sort recycling?**

Shredded paper, when loose, is small enough to slip through the mechanic sorters at a recycling facility creating a mess, contaminating the glass and does not get recycled. Even if bagging shredded paper, often the bags are not sealed properly or break open during compaction in a truck causing the paper to be loose when it enters the recycling facility. That said, some haulers will accept shredded paper if it is placed in a stapled or sealed brown paper bag.

**Why aren't all glass items recyclable?**

Glass items that are 100% glass are one of the most recyclable materials, but manufacturers often add other materials to their glass products, depending on their purpose. For example: windshield glass includes a lining to protect passengers from shards in case of a car accident. Because of this, different glass products melt at different temperatures, interfering with the recycling process. In some areas glass products are crushed and used in things like roadbeds, which makes glass mixtures less of a problem. In general, glass food and beverage packaging is the most recyclable.

**Why are plastic bags not accepted in single-sort recycling programs?**

The machinery used to sort recycling at material recovery facilities (MRFs) uses conveyor belts, spinning discs and drums, screens, and more to sort recyclables by size, shape, material type and weight. Plastic bags cannot be sorted by existing machinery and instead get caught in conveyor belts and jam spinning discs and drums, bringing entire facilities to a stop until the bags are manually cut out and removed by workers. This process is dangerous for recycling workers and drastically reduces efficiency at recycling facilities. The bags ultimately removed from the equipment cannot be recycled due to contamination. Plastic bags and other plastic films can be recycled if brought back to a store drop-off or take back program.

**What do the chasing arrows with a number inside of them commonly seen on plastic containers mean?**

Plastic items typically will have a triangular resin code symbol and number. These numbers and logos were created by the plastics industry to indicate the resin code and material type of the plastic container. The code on a container is used for identification and does not automatically mean that the container is recyclable. People should always refer to their hauler or community recycling department to confirm which materials are recycled in that area. Currently only plastics #1, #2 and #5 are widely recycled.

**Why should small items not be put in curbside recycling?**

No matter the material it's made from, items smaller than an average fist can fall through gaps in the sorting facility machinery. Often, those items then contaminate other material streams like glass.

# Preparing, Creating and Distributing Educational Materials

## Plain Language

As recycling educators, our role is to ensure inclusivity and accessibility in our education, outreach and engagement materials. Refer to your county for recycling education materials. This guide is best used to inform recycling educators on up-to-date recycling acceptability lists, resources for specialty recycling, and answers to commonly asked recycling questions. This guide is not intended to be copy and pasted as any communities recycling guide. Some of the content in this guide can be too technical or full of jargon to the general public. This may create further barriers to encourage participation. To ensure your community understands the information consider the following:

- Write out acronyms
- Define terminology
- Avoid technical terms

## One Size Does Not Fit All

Be mindful of your audience and adjust your communication and education plan accordingly. Education should be tailored to the community group you are focusing on (e.g. senior, youth, immigrant and refugee populations, English as a second language, American Sign Language and deaf community, etc.) One method and message may not work universally for each group.

The following are a diverse list of educational formats to explore:

- Brochure and print materials (newspaper, newsletters, flyers)
- Community event “tabling”
- In-person meetings and presentations
- Interviews for print or recorded media events
- One-on-one education (phone, in person, email)
- Public Service Announcement (PSA) (paid or free media – billboards, newspapers, press releases, radio, TV etc.)
- Social media (ex. Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, Snapchat, Twitter)
- Website content
- Videos (be sure to transcribe and display closed caption in videos)
- Media campaign (includes one or more from the above)

### **Culturally Relevant, Interpreted and Translated Materials**

According to the 2017 American Community Survey as described by the Minnesota State Demographic Center, 11.1% of Minnesotans who are five years old and older speak a language other than English at home. The most common languages are Spanish (about 190,000 speakers), Hmong (about 58,000 speakers) and African languages – not disaggregated (about 75,000 speakers). These African languages may include Oromo, Somali, etc). In 2017, the largest group of foreign-born Minnesotans were born in: China, Laos, India, Mexico, Somali, Thailand and Vietnam. Note: this information may not show the entire picture as individuals may have chosen to not complete the language information in the Census surveys.

Language barriers and the unintentional exclusion of translations and interpreters in recycling education may impact the success of a recycling or solid waste program. Education with communities who speak English as a second language should be prioritized and coordinated accordingly.

Know your audience and learn what method is best. For example, the Hmong language is a predominately spoken language. Items written in Hmong may not connect well with the population and spoken education may be more preferred. Interpreted information is distributed through speaking and is best applied for in-person community events, meetings or presentations. When creating print materials, consider using images of items that connect with the focused culture. For example, signs for the Asian community may want to include items like a fish sauce bottle, coconut milk metal can and a newspaper commonly read by that community. Seek information from the community (community members and professionals) to learn what images and translated words work best for them.

When selecting an interpreter or translator, it's best for these individuals to have personal connection or lived-experiences with this community. There are some words that are not directly translatable and require an individual with advanced language comprehension to translate the word or concept.

The state of Minnesota has state contracts with local and domestic resources to help locate translators and interpreters.

*Spoken Language Interpreting and Related Services Statewide,*

[http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/S-885\(5\).Pdf](http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/S-885(5).Pdf) (list of vendors on state contract)

*Written Translation Statewide,* [http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/S-888\(5\).Pdf](http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/S-888(5).Pdf)  
(list of vendors on state contract)

Educational efforts should be frequent and engaging to ensure the message reaches the public and is constantly on top of mind. It is also vital to go beyond the translated brochure and continue the conversation by connecting and engaging with cultural groups in person and in a variety of methods. As a recycling educator, this is your opportunity to ensure there are more individuals who understand the campaign and ultimately reduce contamination in our recycling programs.

## Acronyms and Terminology

**Compact Fluorescent Lamp: (CFL)**

**High Intensity Discharge: (HID) lamps**

**Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)**

**Interpreter:** A person who helps people who speak a different language to orally describe information in a language for others to understand. Works best for in person presentations and conversations.

**Light-Emitting Diode: (LED) lamps**

**Material Recovery Facility: (MRF or MRFs):** A facility that separates mixed recyclables into individual material types and bales each material so it can be sold to recycling companies.

**Public Service Announcement: (PSA)**

**Recycling Education Committee: (REC)**

## Resources

### **Cultural Relevant, Interpreted and Translated Materials**

*Immigration & Language*, Minnesota State Demographic Center (Department of Administration) <https://mn.gov/admin/demography/data-by-topic/immigration-language/>

*Service: Spoken Language Interpreting and Related Services Statewide*, [www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/S-885\(5\).Pdf](http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/S-885(5).Pdf) (list of vendors on state contract)

*Service: Written Translation Statewide*, [www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/S-888\(5\).Pdf](http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/pdf/S-888(5).Pdf) (list of vendors on state contract)

**Highest and Best Use**

*Integrated Solid Waste Hierarchy*, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.  
[www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/managing-waste-planning-and-research](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/managing-waste-planning-and-research)



## **Images**

MPCA Flickr Account:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/mpcaphotos/albums/72157659312397352>

Recycling Partnership:

[https://recyclingpartnership.org/downloads/?utm\\_source=Website+Signups&utm\\_campaign=162dbfd2e0-&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_386d83077a-162dbfd2e0-430129913](https://recyclingpartnership.org/downloads/?utm_source=Website+Signups&utm_campaign=162dbfd2e0-&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_386d83077a-162dbfd2e0-430129913)

[REC DropBox hosted by Minnesota Waste Wise:](#)

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/s1p011eqh2wsmfq/AAArj1ax9nySV8C9frkEX8Wda?e=1&dl=0>

## **Organics**

Minnesota Composting Council's Organics Recycling Outreach Guide:

[http://www.mncompostingcouncil.org/uploads/1/5/6/0/15602762/organics\\_recycling\\_outreach\\_guide\\_-\\_7.19.22.pdf](http://www.mncompostingcouncil.org/uploads/1/5/6/0/15602762/organics_recycling_outreach_guide_-_7.19.22.pdf)

## **Reuse**

Better Futures, donate building materials and household items:

<http://betterfuturesminnesota.com/reuse-warehouse/>

Bridging's guide to reuse or donate: <https://www.bridging.org/give-stuff/>

*Choose to Reuse*, Hennepin County searchable online tool to find 500 retail locations that offer reuse options in our community. You can search for businesses and organizations that reuse, repair, rent, resell or accept donations in and around Hennepin County at [www.hennepin.us/choosetoreuse](http://www.hennepin.us/choosetoreuse)

Craigslist: [www.craigslist.org/](http://www.craigslist.org/)

Facebook Marketplace: [www.facebook.com/marketplace/](http://www.facebook.com/marketplace/)

Habitat for Humanity, donate building materials and household items. Webpage also includes list of accepted/not accepted items:

<https://restore.tchabitat.org/donate?hsCtaTracking=d79bc32a-8d43-4594-899b-cdc856a53ab3%7C8d1c32c8-c8af-40c4-90ed-b156a874ab85>

Nextdoor: <http://nextdoor.com>

Reuse Minnesota Support sustainable living and reduce waste. The Reuse Minnesota business community connects you to local, thrifty and eco-friendly goods and services. [www.reusemn.org/](http://www.reusemn.org/)

Salvation Army, donate household items. Can drop off or schedule a pickup: <https://satruck.org/donate/choose>

## **Specialty Recycling and Disposal**

### *Appliance Recycler*

Xcel Energy, refrigerator or freezer recycling, may be eligible for a rebate.

[www.xcelenergy.com/programs\\_and\\_rebates/residential\\_programs\\_and\\_rebates/equipment\\_and\\_appliances/refrigerator\\_recycling](http://www.xcelenergy.com/programs_and_rebates/residential_programs_and_rebates/equipment_and_appliances/refrigerator_recycling)

### *Battery Recycling*

Batteries Plus Bulbs: All Batteries plus bulbs stores accept lithium ion (Li-ion), nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cd), nickel metal hydride (NiMH), and small sealed lead acid (SSLA) rechargeable batteries for recycling. [www.batteriesplusbulbs.com](http://www.batteriesplusbulbs.com)

Call2recycle: This list is maintained on a national level and may not include all locations that accept rechargeable batteries: [www.call2recycle.org/](http://www.call2recycle.org/)

Harbor Freight locations collect rechargeable batteries, with a focus on batteries sold with or for Harbor Freight tools.

[https://shop.harborfreight.com/battery\\_recycling.html](https://shop.harborfreight.com/battery_recycling.html)

Interstate Batteries: All Interstate Batteries locations in Minnesota accept the lithium ion (Li-ion), nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cd), nickel metal hydride (NiMH), and small sealed lead acid (SSLA) rechargeable batteries for recycling.

Go to <https://www.interstatebatteries.com/> then click on 'find a location' or click on 'recycling' then 'find a location.' Search for an 'all battery center.'

Distributor locations may also accept batteries, check with specific locations.

### *Carpet Pad Recycler*

Hank's Specialties, recycles padding only, not carpet: [www.hanksspec.com](http://www.hanksspec.com)

### *Electronics Recycler*

Amazon trade-in: [www.amazon.com/Trade-In/b?ie=UTF8&node=9187220011](http://www.amazon.com/Trade-In/b?ie=UTF8&node=9187220011)

Apple Give Back Program: [www.apple.com/shop/trade-in](http://www.apple.com/shop/trade-in)

Best Buy Electronic and Appliances Recycling:

[www.bestbuy.com/site/services/recycling/pcmcat149900050025.c?id=pcmcat149900050025&DCMP=rdr0001422](http://www.bestbuy.com/site/services/recycling/pcmcat149900050025.c?id=pcmcat149900050025&DCMP=rdr0001422)

Repowered (fka Tech Dump) electronic recyclers and refurbisher:

<https://getrepowered.org/>

### *Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)*

Locate a HHW location near you <https://www.epa.gov/hw/household-hazardous-waste-hhw>

Needles and Sharps for Disposal, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/w-hhw4-67.pdf>

Unwanted Medical Waste for Disposal, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

[www.pca.state.mn.us/living-green/managing-unwanted-medications](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/living-green/managing-unwanted-medications)

### *Holiday Lights and Cord Recycling*

Holiday lights and cord recycling: <http://recycleminnesota.org/recycle-your-holidays/>

### *Other Materials*

Mattresses: Second Chance Recycling: [www.secondchancerecyclingmn.com/](http://www.secondchancerecyclingmn.com/)

Agricultural film and Boat Wrap:

Revolution Plastics for agriculture plastic film recycling. To join the program, visit:

[www.revolutionplastics.com](http://www.revolutionplastics.com) or <https://recycleminnesota.org/work/agricultural-plasticboat-wrap-recycling/>

### **Standardizing Recycling Education**

*Always/Never Acceptability List.* Recycling Education Committee (REC)

<https://recycleminnesota.org/rec-toolbox/>

How to Recycle Logo, [www.how2recycle.info/about](http://www.how2recycle.info/about).

The Recycling Partnership Open Source Documents:

[https://recyclingpartnership.org/downloads/?utm\\_source=Website+Signups&utm\\_campaign](https://recyclingpartnership.org/downloads/?utm_source=Website+Signups&utm_campaign)

[aign=162dbfd2e0-&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_386d83077a-162dbfd2e0-430129913](https://www.mnchamber.com/your-opportunity/waste-wise/recycling-resources)

The Recycling Partnership Minnesota-Specific Recycling Education Toolkit hosted through Minnesota Waste Wise:

<https://www.mnchamber.com/your-opportunity/waste-wise/recycling-resources>

Scroll to mid-page and the resources listed under RECYCLING EDUCATION TOOLKIT

*Recycling Outreach Guide.* Recycling Education Committee (REC)

<https://recycleminnesota.org/resources/education-outreach/recycling-education-committee/>

Eureka Recycling Customer Service: 612-669-2783

To talk to a customer service representative, call our hotline: Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. After-hours voicemails will be returned by noon the following business day.