

ARE THINGS REALLY BEING RECYCLED?

This question often comes up. People are concerned that not all of the materials they put in their recycle bin are recycled. Their concern is that some end up in landfills. This leads some to minimize their recycling efforts. According to several major waste management firms in Montgomery County, all of the acceptable recycled materials listed above are being recycled.

You should continue to recycle all of the items listed above.

THINGS YOU SHOULD NOT PUT INTO YOUR RECYCLE BIN

Here is a list of things that cannot be recycled and should not be put into your recycle bin:

- Foam containers and cups, even if they have a recycle symbol on them,
- Cups coated with wax or plastic such as soda cups,
- Plastic bags such as grocery store bags (You can often take these bags back to the grocery store.),
- Flexible packaging such as chip bags or juice pouches,
- Plastic wrap,
- Container caps,
- Diapers, yes, some people throw soiled diapers into their recycle bins.

Avoid Contamination of Recycling Materials with Food or Liquids

Materials contaminated with food or liquid cannot be recycled. Here is what you should do:

- Check that the material is recyclable. Look for the recycle symbol on items.
- Rinse jars, bottles, and cans that have visible residue in them. A quick rinse is usually adequate.
- Throw away heavily soiled items.

CONTAMINATED RECYCLE MATERIALS

Contaminated recycling materials cannot be recycled and usually end up going to a landfill. Here is a list of contaminants that make recycle material non-recyclable:

1. **Plastic Bags:** Do not place your recycle materials in a plastic bag. Plastic bags cannot be recycled. The recycler will either waste time removing the plastic bag or worst, discard the bag and its contents and send it to a landfill.
2. **Food Wastes:** Uncleaned containers with leftover food wastes cannot be recycled. Containers contaminated with food wastes will be sent to a landfill. You need to wash food containers and remove all of the food before placing the containers into your recycle bin.
3. **Bright Colored Paper:** In general, bright colored paper should not be recycled.

4. Frozen Food Containers: The coating on frozen food containers make them non-recyclable.
5. Shredded Paper: Shredded paper should not be placed into your recycle bin.
6. Caps and Tops to Bottles, Jars and Containers: Caps and tops are not recyclable; throw these in the trash, not the recycle bin.

We all want to maximize our recycling efforts, but we need to recycle the correct materials in the correct manner. Otherwise, we mess up the recycling facility and much of our “recycled waste” ends up in a landfill. You should check with your hauler if you have any questions about what materials can be recycled.