



Mixed Curbside Residential Recycling Myths



MYTH:

Most Americans recycle all they can.

ANSWER: False.

Research shows convenience and commitment are needed for maximum recycling. For instance, do you have recycling containers in multiple rooms in your home? If not, recyclables in rooms other than the kitchen often get thrown away. Plus, the more members in a household who commit to recycle, the better the quality of the materials they recycle.



MYTH:

The recycling arrows symbol on a product means it is recyclable at a WM Recycling Facility.

ANSWER: Only in some cases.

Manufacturers often include recyclability information on product labels. However, the Mobius loop symbol is not a reliable indicator of whether an item is accepted in your mixed curbside recycling. There are thousands of plastic products and packaging, and each may have its own unique chemical composition that may require a different recycling solution. Instead, a better practice is to recycle plastics by shape in your curbside container: bottles, jars, jugs and tubs.

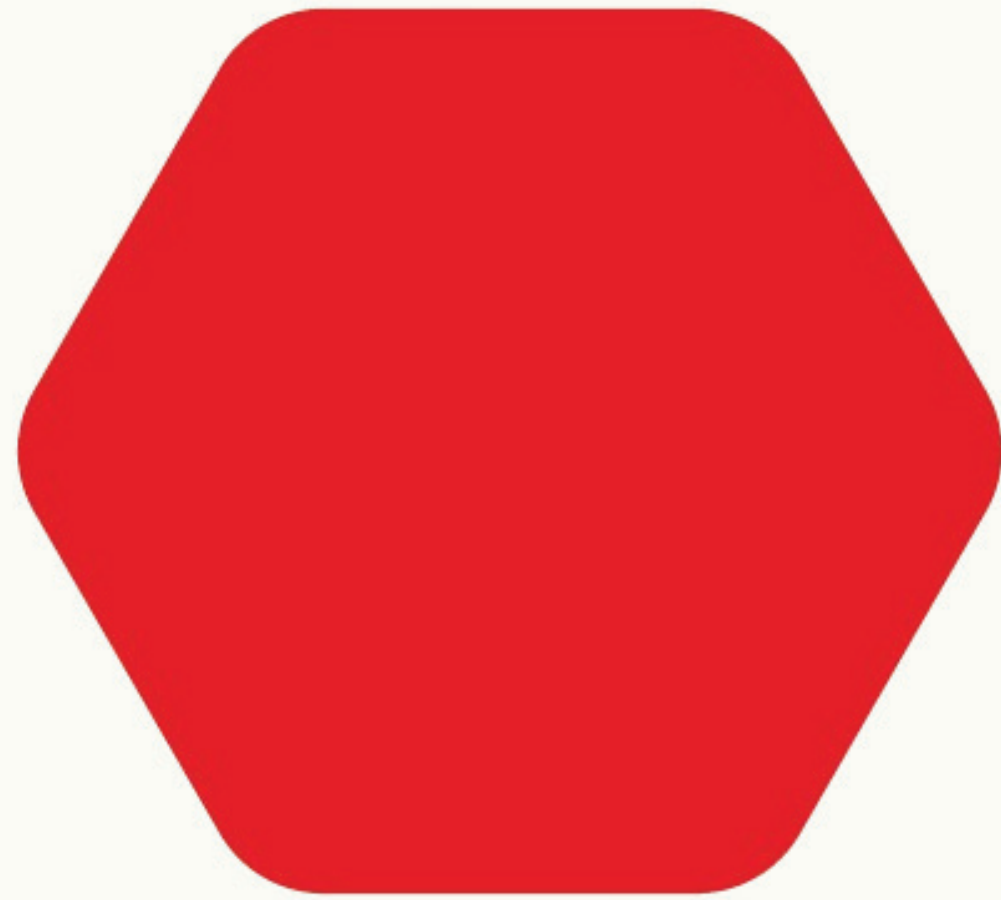


MYTH:

Containers must be squeaky clean to be recycled.

ANSWER: False.

While all bottles, cans and containers should be clean, dry and free of most food waste and liquids before you place them in your recycling container, they don't need to be spotless. The goal is to make sure they are clean enough to avoid contaminating other materials, like paper. Try using a spatula to scrape cans and jars, or using a small amount of water, and shake the container to remove most residue.



MYTH:

If it doesn't belong in the recycling cart, it will get sorted anyway.

ANSWER: False.

There are increasing amounts of non-recyclable items sent to WM Recycling Facilities. Non-recyclable items placed in your recycling containers can increase the cost of recycling, slow the process and pose safety risks to employees. Focus on only on putting clearly recyclable materials in your cart: Clean bottles, cans, paper and cardboard. If you're not sure whether something is recyclable, throw it in the garbage to protect the acceptable recyclable items in your container!



MYTH:

All types of plastic items including hoses, shower curtains, and swing sets are recyclable.

ANSWER: False.

If it's not bottles, cans, paper or cardboard it probably doesn't belong in your curbside mixed recycling cart and may even require special handling. Just because an item is made from plastic, or contains plastic parts, doesn't mean recycling facilities can handle it. There are other resources (e.g., Earth911.org) that can help answer questions about what to do with non-recyclables or household hazardous waste.



MYTH:

Aerosol cans are recyclable.

ANSWER: Varies by municipality.

Most recycling programs accept empty and dry aerosol cans without the caps. However, aerosol cans can pose a safety hazard if not completely empty. Check with your local municipality for more information.



MYTH:

All types of glass bottles and jars are recyclable.

ANSWER: Varies by municipality.

Glass recycling varies by municipality across the U.S. Some communities collect glass at drop-off locations only, some collect glass separately at the curb or with other containers and many include glass with all other recyclables.