

It is Time to Get Back to the Basics of Good Recycling

Some recycling actions make a bigger impact than others. Please remember these three basic rules the next time you recycle:

1. **Recycle all empty plastic bottles, cans, paper cartons, clean paper and cardboard boxes.** See the list below for acceptable items.
2. **Remove food debris, liquid, plastic film and greasy or hazardous items from your recycling.**
3. **Place recyclables directly in your cart. Do not bag them. Return plastic bags to a local grocer or retailer. Go to AnokaCounty.us/recycle for options.**

You'd be amazed by how big of an impact just following these simple rules can have! There are increasing amounts of non-recyclables being sent to recycling sorting facilities, and every single one of them must be removed by hand or mechanically sorted, or they end up contaminating valuable recyclables. Non-recyclable items placed in recycling containers end up in the garbage, which increases the cost of the recycling process. The right thing to do is put the correct recyclables in the containers and don't hope or wish that the haulers can magically recycle them. When in doubt, throw it out or contact Anoka County Recycling & Resource Solutions at AnokaCounty.us/recycle or 763-324-3400.

Place these items loose in your recycling cart - No plastic bags



Paper (clean, staples OK): mail, office and school papers, magazines and catalogs, newspapers and inserts, phone books

Boxes (flatten): cardboard, cereal, cracker and pasta boxes, shoe, gift and electronic boxes, toothpaste and other toiletry boxes, tissue boxes



Plastic bottles and jugs (empty, rinse, caps on): water, soda and juice bottles, milk and juice jugs, ketchup and salad dressing bottles, dish soap bottles and detergent jugs, shampoo, soap and lotion bottles



Plastic cups and containers (empty, rinse, lids on): yogurt, pudding and fruit cups, clear disposable cups (no straws), margarine, cottage cheese and similar containers, clear produce, deli and take out containers



Cartons (empty, rinse): milk and juice cartons, juice boxes, soup, broth and wine cartons



Metal (empty, labels OK): food cans, beverage cans

Glass (empty, labels OK): food and beverage bottles and jars



Leave these out, since they...

Get tangled in or damage sorting equipment: plastic bags, ropes, hoses, shredded paper, chains, scrap metal, and other bulky items.

Harm workers: medical sharps, diapers, batteries, hazardous products.

Are not recyclable: foil drink pouches, chip bags, candy wrappers, dishes, vases, mirrors, plastic straws and utensils, refrigerator and freezer boxes, Styrofoam™, pizza boxes, black food trays and egg cartons.

Anoka County Launches New Recycling App



Aluminum cans and newspapers are easy to recycle but what should you do with those plastic bags or shredded paper?

Now, finding how to recycle, compost or dispose of hundreds of items is right in the palm of your hand! Download our free recycling app on your device today. Simply search "Anoka County Recycles" in the Apple App Store or Google Play.

Why can't I put plastic bags, Styrofoam™ and shredded paper in my recycling cart?

Everything in your recycling cart must be separated so that it can be sold to a company that makes new products. All recyclables should be placed loose in your cart since it makes sorting the recyclables so much easier. In addition, recycling sorting facilities use machines and belts that spin, tangling anything extremely flexible or long and stringy, such as plastic bags, string lights and shredded paper, in sorting equipment. Facilities often must shut down several times during an 8-hour shift to remove tangled materials from their equipment which causes delays and raises costs.

Very small items placed in your recycling cart can fall through the sorting equipment and not get recycled, loose plastic caps, pop tabs from cans or small pieces of paper; such as cross-cut shredded paper are some examples.

Items that can be recycled at separate locations, but NOT curbside

Plastic Bags, Film and Wrap



Why not accepted curbside – plastic bags and film get tangled on recycling equipment.

Reduce and Reuse: Avoid taking plastic bags at stores or use reusable bags.

Recycle at a drop-off: Take plastic bags and film (including toilet paper, napkin and paper towel wrappers) to local retailers. Containers are usually located by the front entrance. Go to AnokaCounty.us/recycle for options.

Styrofoam™



Why not accepted curbside – this material is of low value and difficult to recycle.

Recycle at a drop-off: The Coon Rapids Recycling Drop-off Center is the only outlet for the following materials:

- Block or rigid Styrofoam™ packaging used to cushion electronics or appliances for shipping
- White cups, white or pastel egg cartons, meat trays and to-go containers

They can accept them because they carefully separate all materials and have a special piece of equipment that takes block/rigid Styrofoam™ and compresses it into a dense block of material they can sell.

Shredded Paper – It is best to not put any shredded paper in your recycling cart.



Why not accepted curbside – strip cut shredded paper gets tangled on recycling equipment and cross-cut paper falls through the sorting lines, causes a mess and gets thrown away.

Reduce: Don't shred everything. Focus on items that have your name, address or other personal and sensitive information. Tear or black out your name on magazines and catalogs and place them in your regular recycling, share them with family/friends/colleagues or take to a waiting area near you.

To make sure your shredded paper gets recycled, take the following steps:

Recycle at a drop-off: Utilize opportunities for shredding that use high-volume strip shredders. Attend one of the many shredding events that are held throughout the county. Most municipal recycling days provide free paper shredding. Companies that specialize in document destruction make sure the paper is recycled. Go to AnokaCounty.us/recycle and search the disposal directory for options.

At the Coon Rapids and Linwood drop-off centers, you can shred your own paper and they recycle it separately.

