



**NORTHERN TIER SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY**

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Recycling Volunteers,

**TO BE SHARED WITH ALL DROP-OFF RECYCLING VOLUNTEERS**

Please be sure to keep an eye on residents bringing materials into the recycling drop-off. This is where all our contamination in the recycling stream comes from. We are seeing a very large increase in the amount of non-recyclables mixed in with the recycling, especially plastic clamshells and black plastic.

As drop-off volunteers you are responsible for overseeing the materials and making sure they are sorted according to our guidelines. All drop-offs are to be manned and only accessible during the advertised collection times. I realize not all drop-offs are fortunate enough to have a fenced in area, get a lockable container, or have abundant volunteers or staff to be there all the time, but lack of oversight is only contributing to the problem.

I suggest drop-off's make patrons aware of the accessibility through word of mouth, the group or township social media pages, and by posting signs. I do have some drop-offs that have gone as far as to post "under surveillance" signs and littering prosecutions signs for materials left outside the container, because that is what it is – littering.

When working to load materials into the container a good rule of thumb to use is "**when in doubt, throw it out**". The plethora of materials and packaging materials out there can cloud the simple guidelines. Try to keep it basic and not overthink.

Here are guidelines to hopefully help.

**\*\*NOTHING IN THE CONTAINERS SHOULD BE BAGGED OR BUNDLED. IT SHOULD ALL BE LOOSE IN THE CONTAINER!**

**\*\* ALL RECYCLING SHOULD BE CLEAN AND FREE OF FOOD RESIDUE.**

**ALUMINUM** – should be beverage cans only. They should not be mixed with tin or any other material. Definitely NO SCRAP metal. CLEAN aluminum foil is acceptable. Zero food residue policy! When it comes to pet food cans – tin is magnetic, aluminum is not! Do not accept the cans that have metal tops and bottoms and plastic walls. There are 2 types of materials mixed and therefore it is not recyclable.

**COLORED GLASS** - is brown and green glass mixed. CLEAR SHOULD ALWAYS BE SEPARATE! Should be food and beverage glass only, NOT ALL GLASS IS SAFE TO RECYCLE. Remove the lids and put them in with the tin. Remove the rings if safely possible. Labels can remain. NO CERAMICS EVER – they ruin recycled glass.

**CLEAR GLASS** - must be clear glass only. NO colored glass. Should be food and beverage glass only, NOT ALL GLASS IS SAFE TO RECYCLE. Remove the lids and put them in with the tin. Remove the rings if safely possible. Labels can remain. NO CERAMICS EVER – they ruin recycled glass.

**CARDBOARD**- should be corrugated cardboard only. Corrugated refers to the wavy layer in the middle. Boxes should be broken down. Tape and staples are acceptable. If you happen to get paperboard, such as cereal boxes, you can put them in with the cardboard at the end of the collection. However, we can only accept a limited amount of this material and thus do not advertise we accept it. **\*\* ALL PACKING MATERIAL MUST BE REMOVED!**

**MIXED PAPER** – for most of our drop-off's this category now includes magazines and newspapers. Some drop-offs that have extra bins are still collecting newspaper separate but mix their mixed paper and magazines. This category basically includes any type of paper that does not have a wax type coating or a vapor barrier in it. Paper back books would go in this category, but not hard cover books – they are trash, or the pages must be ripped off the binding.

**NEWSPAPER** – should your drop-off still have a separate bin for this it should be newspaper and the inserts only. If you cannot keep it separate put it in with the mixed paper.

**PLASTIC BOTTLES & JUGS** – This is the most confusing category. The easiest way to recycle plastics is by shape – not by the #. Tell residents to ignore the # or the “recycling symbol” because it does not mean that something is recyclable.

**BOTTLES, JUGS, JARS, AND TUBS** are the only container shape you should accept. Do not over think it. Simply ask yourself if it is one of those shapes. If it is – recycle it! If it is not - trash it, or better yet, send it back with the resident so they'll no longer bring them to you! Thinking about the plastic guidelines by shape cuts out a lot of the questioning. It eliminates the bags, the clamshells, the plastic toys, plastic hangers, buckets, Styrofoam, etc...

**\*\***Also, do not accept black plastic – it has already been recycled and end use mills do not want it. The main culprit we see are the deli style trays that premade foods, cakes, and cookies come on.

**\*\*** Clamshells are the style of container that berries and baked good typically come in. They are called clamshells because they open like a clamshell. These are poor quality plastics and do not recycle easily and end use mills do not want them.

**TIN** – should be tin cans only. No food residue and no scrap metal. When it comes to pet food cans – tin is magnetic, aluminum is not! Do not accept the cans that have metal tops and bottoms and plastic walls. There are 2 types of materials mixed and therefore it is not recyclable.

New packaging to be aware of. The insulation type package that comes in shipping boxes for meal services such as such as Blue Apron and Hello Fresh, as well as frozen meats, medication, etc. This packaging will likely say it is recyclable to some degree – **IGNORE IT**. Just because it may be recyclable in one town out in California does not mean it is recyclable everywhere. All end users our materials go to do not want them in their stream. Their systems are not set up to handle that type of material. Same goes for the paper and plastic Amazon envelopes.

Many drop-offs ask me what to tell the residents when they say “well, what do I do with this since I can't recycle it”. It is not your job to deal with that. They can try to reuse it, repurpose it, or simply stop buying the products that come in the non-recyclable packaging.

If you ever have any questions, please feel free to give me a call or send me an email. Many drop-offs take pictures of questionable materials and email them to me for a quick “yes or no”. Remember, don't overthink it!

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