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Recycling in Albany

The recycling industry is constantly changing, so it's a good idea to take a look at what we can recycle from time to time. For example, when recycling began in the Albany area, newspaper was the only paper residents could recycle. Now there are very few paper products that cannot go in your commingled curbside bin.

If you are one of those super conscientious people who fret about what to put in the bin for fear of missing an item that might be recyclable, read on to refine your recycling knowledge. Besides newspaper, the following paper products can be included in your bin:

PAPER

- Paperboard, like cereal and shoeboxes.
- Wrapping paper except for that with a metallic finish.
- Junk mail, including paper and envelopes with or without windows.
- Paper bags
- Post It Notes
- Manila files and folders
- Cardboard
- Magazines
- NCR or carbonless copy forms
- Newspaper

The few papers that cannot be recycled are: tissue, paper towels, napkins, and construction paper. All these are paper that is at the end of its recycle life. Paper fiber gets shorter each time it is recycled. Generally, paper can be recycled five to seven times. During the paper-making process, very short fibers do not bond with the rest of the pulp and fall out.

Make sure to keep recyclable paper clean. If it is saturated with food, especially oily products, it can contaminate the paper fiber.

PLASTICS

The familiar chasing-arrows recycle symbol was developed years ago by the plastics industry to label products by the type of resin they contain. This symbol will tell you the general category of plastic in item, but there are many sub-categories of resins. Forget about numbers and follow these simple guidelines to recycle plastics by container shape.

- Bottles. All plastic bottles or containers with an opening that is smaller in diameter than the rest of the container.
- Jugs, like those that hold milk, orange, or other juices and some specialty products like syrup or sauces. These containers are a bottle with a handle.
- Jars. Many products that used to come in a glass jar, such as like mayonnaise and peanut butter, now come in a plastic jar.
- Tubs. Tubs are plastic containers like those that contain sour cream, whipped toppings, and margarine.

If you are unsure about the shape of a container, ask yourself if it is similar in shape and feel to other containers that you know can be included in the recycling. Use your common sense. Plastic containers like Tupperware and Rubbermaid products and plastic bags cannot be put in the bin. If you want to recycle grocery bags, save them and return them to the grocery store.

METALS

- Clean aluminum foil
- Disposable pie tins and other clean food containers.
- Tinned cans that foods come in.
- Aluminum cans, including beverage cans with a deposit. They will get recycled, but you won't get your nickel.

GLASS

Clear and colored glass containers are recyclable, but please do not include ceramic dishes, ovenware, window glass or decorative glass. Glass should be separated in your gray bin or placed in paper bags beside the bin. Include the following:

- Glass bottles
- Glass jars
- Glass soda and beer bottles with a deposit. The same rule applies on the nickel.

While other products can be recycled somewhere, it is important to keep our recycle source 'clean'. When you put items in the bin that we cannot recycle, they contaminate the other products and in some cases reduce the benefit of recycling. This simple process works best when we all work together. The idea is to save virgin resources by making clean recycled materials available to commercial markets.

For more information about recycling in our area, call Allied Waste of Albany-Lebanon at 928-2551.

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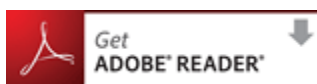
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