

THE FOUR RULES OF SINGLE STREAM RECYCLING



In order for an item placed in a curbside cart or public recycling bin to actually be recycled, it needs to follow **four rules**:

- Rule #1: It must be made primarily of only one of the following materials: paper, glass, metal or plastic (with a few noted exceptions)**
- Rule #2: It must be reasonably clean**
- Rule #3: It must be machine-sortable without clogging or jamming equipment**
- Rule #4: It must be valuable for making new products**



occurs when people put items that break one or more of the four rules into curbside or public recycling bins. It is wishful thinking that these items might be recycled, but sadly, they are not. Check out examples of common rule breakers below & on the reverse side!

Items that break Rule 1:

Not made of paper, glass, metal or plastic:

- Food and liquids
- Yard waste
- Upholstered or wooden furniture
- Clothing and other textiles



Made of multiple materials:

- Paper cups and take-out containers
- Frozen food boxes
- Electronics
- Batteries and light bulbs
- Snack pouches, bags and wrappers
- Toothpaste tubes
- Spray nozzles and pumps
- Glittery or foil wrapping paper



Rule-Benders that are Okay

- Paper items with plastic windows (e.g., envelopes, pasta boxes, tissue boxes)
- Office paper with small fasteners (e.g., staples, paperclips, spiral binding, etc.)
- Corrugated cardboard with tape or staples
- Metal cans and lids with paper labels and/or plastic coating
- Food and beverage cartons (e.g., soup, milk, soy milk cartons)

Items that break Rule 2:

- Napkins, tissues, paper towels (ew!)
- Dirty diapers (double ewww!)
- Used paper plates
- Hazardous materials in any type of container
- Medical waste of any kind
- Greasy pizza boxes and fast food containers
- Full or partially full food containers (a little bit of residue is okay - give things a quick scrape or rinse, but they don't need to be pristine)



Items that break Rule 3:

- Big things (larger than a big laundry detergent jug)
- Small things (smaller than a credit card)
- Plastic bags and other tangles - don't bag your recycling!
- Flat things that aren't made of paper or steel
 - Scrunch aluminum foil into a ball
 - Don't crush bottles and cans



Items that break Rule 4:

- Polystyrene foam (Styrofoam)
- Low density plastic used for take out containers & single use cups
- Black plastic
- Mystery plastic (#7)

