

REDUCE YOUR SINGLE USE



You can refuse single-use packaging. These are the top five alternatives to reduce using wasteful products!

Plastic and paper bags



**TRY REUSABLE BAGS
AND TOTES**



Bottled water



**TRY REUSABLE
WATER BOTTLES**



Paper coffee cups



**TRY REUSABLE
COFFEE MUGS**



Plastic utensils and paper napkins



**TRY DURABLE
UTENSILS AND
CLOTH NAPKINS**



Styrofoam to-go containers



**TRY STURDY
FOOD CONTAINERS**



When you find yourself with a plastic bottle or bag, please recycle! Bottles are easily recycled curbside, and plastic bags should be brought back to retail/grocery stores that accept them. Remember that plastic bags should not be placed in the curbside cart, and do not bag your recyclables — keep them loose and free!



The N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) is a non-regulatory division of N.C. DEQ offering technical and financial assistance to businesses, manufacturers, local governments, institutions, economic developers and citizens in environmental management. For questions, call 1-877-623-6748.





GET CART SMART

Everyone knows bottles and cans go in the recycling bin, but the following items are often mistaken as curbside recyclables.

When in doubt, throw it out!

STRAIGHT TO THE LANDFILL

Refuse, reduce, reuse, or re-purpose these items — otherwise put them in the trash.



Aerosol cans

Aerosol cans are a fire hazard. Take them to a hazardous waste drop-off center. If empty, send to the landfill.



Ceramic items

Ceramic is a hard material to sort and can't be remanufactured.



Pumps or tubes

They are made of multiple materials that can't be separated for recycling.



Receipts

This type of thin "paper" can contain non-recyclable layers and chemicals.



Styrofoam

Styrofoam breaks down into tiny pieces in the recycling machinery.



Tanglers

Cords, hoses, wires, plastic gloves, etc. get caught in the recycling machinery.

NON-CURBSIDE RECYCLABLES

While these items are **NOT** accepted in your curbside recycling, there are other ways to keep them out of the landfill. Call your local recycling convenience center to find out if they accept these items and more!



Appliances

Take appliances to a convenience center.



Electronics

Take computers, televisions and other electronics to a convenience center.



Clothing and textiles

Donate clothing and textiles to a convenience center or thrift store.



Hazardous waste

Take to a convenience center or call 877-623-6748 for other drop-off locations.



Medical waste

Call your local public health department for medical disposal information.



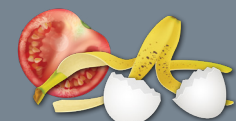
Plastic bags and wrap

Return clean, dry plastic bags, wraps and packaging to the grocery store.



Paper towels and napkins

Compost paper towels and napkins; this paper is too thin to recycle and often, too dirty.











Food waste

Place food waste in your compost.

IT'S ALL ABOUT SHAPE AND SIZE




Recycling sorting machines recognize the **shape** of containers and “see” bottles, tubs, jugs, jars, cans, cartons and paper. If it isn't one of these shapes, it doesn't belong in the recycling bin. **Size** matters, too. If the material is tiny, the machines have to filter it out. If it is too big, it hurts the machinery.

PLASTIC	METAL	GLASS	PAPER
<p>Bottles, tubs, jugs and jars</p>  <p>No pumps Empty and rinse</p>	<p>All cans</p>  <p>Empty and rinse</p>	<p>Bottles and jars</p>  <p>Empty and rinse</p>	<p>Paper, cartons and cardboard</p>  <p>Flatten cardboard</p>
<p>No lids, straws, single-use cups, six-pack rings, to-go containers or pouches</p> 	<p>No scrap/mixed metals such as ladders, pots or hangers</p> 	<p>No mirrors, windows or glassware</p> 	<p>No small paper pieces and packaging, or shredded paper</p> 

YES, PLEASE

NO, THANKS

Do you know **NOT** to bag your recyclables when placing them in the cart? Here are other actions you can take to prepare your recyclables for the recycling facility. Keep recycling right! Get Cart Smart!

 <p>Please screw on caps.</p>	<p>No lids. Place in trash.</p> 
 <p>Please recycle only <i>clean</i> pizza boxes.</p>	<p>No greasy pizza boxes. Place in compost.</p> 
 <p>Please recycle <i>paper</i> egg cartons.</p>	<p>No Styrofoam or plastic egg cartons. Place in trash.</p> 
 <p>Please recycle <i>clean</i> aluminum foil.</p>	<p>No dirty aluminum foil. Rinse and reuse, or place in trash.</p> 



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KNOW YOUR NO'S

Don't tangle or contaminate. Recycle right for our state!



No tangles
(cords, hoses, wires, etc.
tangle in the machinery)



**No small/shredded paper
and packaging**
(small things are hard to sort)



No cups, no lids, no straws
(can't be sorted by the machines)



No Styrofoam
(crumbles in the
machinery)



No paper towels or napkins
(often soiled and too
thin to recycle)



**No household
or car batteries**
(contain hazardous materials)



No scrap metal
(harms the machinery)



No pumps or tubes
(made of multiple materials that
can't be separated for recycling)



**No plastic wraps,
pillows or bags**
(tangles in the machinery)



No textiles
(take to the thrift store)



**No household glass,
mirrors or ceramics**
(can't be remanufactured)



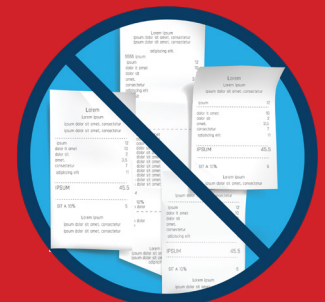
No aerosol cans
(fire hazard)



No food waste
(contaminates the clean
recyclables)



**No hazardous or
medical waste**



No receipts
(can contain non-recyclable
layers and chemicals)



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DON'T TANGLE OR CONTAMINATE RECYCLE MORE FOR A GREENER STATE



DEFENDING RECYCLING

Quick training guide for those defending recycling to elected officials, other governing bodies and the media.

WHAT THE ELECTED OFFICIAL MAY SAY:

“We don’t have to provide recycling for our citizens.”

WHAT THE PUBLIC MAY HEAR

“Recycling isn’t mandatory.”



THE FACTS/A BETTER MESSAGE: Beginning with Senate Bill 111 in 1989 and in subsequent legislation, the North Carolina General Assembly established disposal bans on a wide range of materials, including plastic bottles and aluminum cans, which make up a large segment of the household recycling mix. As recycling of these items is mandatory, each community should provide a non-landfill option for easy to recycle items such as plastics (bottles, tubs, jugs and jars), metal (all cans), glass (bottles and jars) and paper (paper, cartons and cardboard). The state of NC has grant programs available to every community in North Carolina to help fund recycling programs. The state of NC also provides common recycling guidelines and educational materials for each community to help educate their citizens.

WHAT THE ELECTED OFFICIAL MAY SAY:

- “We can’t charge residents more for this service.”
- “No one cares about recycling; people don’t want to do it.”

WHAT THE PUBLIC MAY HEAR

“I thought I wanted to recycle, but now I am not so sure. Maybe recycling is a waste of time, energy and money.”



THE FACTS/A BETTER MESSAGE: Americans love to recycle and love the convenience of single stream. Your residents demand this service. However, this is more than a service that the public demands. It is our responsibility to reduce waste in the landfill, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, care for our environment, protect public health, support industry, develop domestic markets and in-state jobs, and reclaim resources that would otherwise go to waste.

WHAT THE ELECTED OFFICIAL MAY SAY:

“There’s no market for recyclables since China isn’t an option anymore.”

WHAT THE PUBLIC MAY HEAR

- “Why were we shipping to China in the first place? That doesn’t sound sustainable or environmentally responsible!”
- “Recycling in America is over.”



THE FACTS/A BETTER MESSAGE: **We do have markets for recycling in America.** American markets traditionally require increased sorting for a higher quality material. That’s a good standard to support! We need to do two things: reduce contamination and develop more domestic markets. We can rebuild recycling the right way. We can enhance local markets that North Carolina has been developing for decades and send even less recycling overseas. When markets recover and commodity prices increase, we will keep more money in our state and waste fewer resources with transport.

WHAT THE ELECTED OFFICIAL MAY SAY:

- “Contamination is inevitable. You can’t decrease it.”
- “Education and outreach doesn’t work.”

WHAT THE PUBLIC MAY HEAR

- “The public doesn’t know how to recycle.”
- “Why am I doing this if others are messing it up?”
- “We will never learn how to do this right!”



THE FACTS/A BETTER MESSAGE: Education works. Education helps reduce recycling contamination. Data shows that contamination can drop significantly with just an eight week curbside outreach campaign. **Domestic markets + educating the public + single stream + enforcement = awesome results!** Using only one outreach technique just once is not an education strategy and will likely fail. Instead, be consistent, comprehensive and constant with your recycling education and outreach efforts. Investing in ongoing anti-contamination education programs will reduce the cost of contamination.

WHAT THE ELECTED OFFICIAL MAY SAY:

- “Landfilling is cheaper than recycling; let’s just send it there.”
- “We shouldn’t have to pay to get rid of recyclables.”
- “Recycling isn’t profitable.”

WHAT THE PUBLIC MAY HEAR

- “Recycling is really trash, and that’s where it will all end up.”
- “It doesn’t matter where I put recyclables.”



THE FACTS/A BETTER MESSAGE: There’s always a cost to managing waste, regardless of where you put it. When we don’t reclaim a resource through recycling, we are losing the value of that resource while paying to bury it in a landfill. Recycling reduces the need for harvesting virgin materials and keeps toxic materials out of the landfill. Recycling is a commodity, not garbage. Commodities fluctuate in value. Relying on recycling revenues to cover the program’s full cost is risky and unsustainable. Historically, markets recover. We shouldn’t abandon the infrastructure we have spent decades developing just because markets are down. That would be a tremendous loss of time, energy and money.

WHAT THE ELECTED OFFICIAL MAY SAY:

“I don’t have the budget to keep this program.”

WHAT THE PUBLIC MAY HEAR

“My fees are going up.”



THE FACTS/A BETTER MESSAGE: The only utility we don’t expect to pay for is recycling. It’s time to restructure the way we fund recycling programs. Budgets should cover the full cost of collection and processing. When markets are good, rebates can be passed back to the local government to further enhance the program.

WHAT THE ELECTED OFFICIAL MAY SAY:

- “Recycling is broken.”
- “Single stream recycling doesn’t work.”

WHAT THE PUBLIC MAY HEAR

“Recycling never worked to begin with and can’t be fixed.”



THE FACTS/A BETTER MESSAGE: **Recycling participation and recycling tons skyrocketed when we switched to single stream.** We may have had a cleaner stream before, but only a few dedicated citizens were recycling. Single stream without education leads to contamination and wishful recycling. To recycle right, we have to educate and enforce.



DON'T TANGLE OR CONTAMINATE RECYCLE MORE FOR A GREENER STATE



TALKING POINTS

Quick training guide for recycling experts and educators from Material Recovery Facilities, local governments, haulers, schools and other recycling entities to replace common negative recycling messaging with positive alternatives.

1

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

"Education doesn't help.
You can't reduce contamination."

WHAT THEY HEAR:

Recycling is hopeless.



SAY THIS INSTEAD:

Contamination is a reality but data and experience prove that we **CAN** reduce it through consistent, sustained education and improvements in sorting technology. The recycling industry didn't develop with standardization in mind; it was a local grassroots effort in individual communities with unique and varied collection and sorting systems, facilities, technology and support. Education is the way we help encourage best practices and refine the public's sorting skills. **Recycling education works!**

2

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

"Don't worry about if you put that item in the recycling. We will sort it out for you. We don't have a hard answer on that item. It constantly changes and is up for debate."

WHAT THEY HEAR:

What I do doesn't matter.



SAY THIS INSTEAD:

"When in doubt, throw it out **OR** give us a shout!" If you know your no's and your yes's, you really help Joey on the line and make their job easier. You are the first sorters — we **NEED** you to make the right choice.

3

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

"No one wants these jobs."

WHAT THEY HEAR:

Then why am I doing this?



SAY THIS INSTEAD:

This is a hard job, so let's take care of our people. North Carolina hosts 16,200 recycling related jobs. We must update our sorting technology and decrease contamination so that the quality of these jobs is improved. So, help the workers by knowing what goes into the recycling bin and what to throw out!

4

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

“Recycling isn’t that important.”

WHAT THEY HEAR:

Recycling isn’t that important.



SAY THIS INSTEAD:

Recycling is very important! There are soon to be nine billion people in the world. Our landfills are filling up! We have the opportunity to enhance domestic recycling markets and keep waste out of landfills and out of international waters. It is our responsibility to create jobs in the United States and reclaim resources like paper, plastic, metal and glass rather than making products and packaging out of virgin materials and burying those discarded resources in a hole in the ground.

5

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

“Look for the recycling symbol or the numbers 1-7.”

WHAT THEY HEAR:

If it has a number on it or the recycling symbol, it is recyclable.



SAY THIS INSTEAD:

Numbers don’t matter; what we can process does. When it comes to plastic, recycle by shape: bottles, tubs, jugs and jars are recyclable.

Remember: Can we process it? Do we have a buyer? Technology and markets determine if something is recyclable. Is the item made out of a material that our machines and people can easily process? If it is small, dirty or atypical, it isn’t recyclable.

6

WHAT NOT TO SAY:

“We aren’t making money on our materials.”

WHAT THEY HEAR:

This is a waste of time, energy and money.



SAY THIS INSTEAD:

Markets might be down right now and some materials may not be returning the profits we would like, but recycling is the right thing to do and Americans **LOVE** to recycle! We have spent decades and dollars supporting recycling infrastructure and educating the public. Now, we must stop shipping our recycling overseas and instead help support and grow our domestic markets and local jobs by supplying the clean recyclables they need.

