

# Recycle smart: know what goes in your recycling cart

Recycling has been in the news a lot lately due to shifts in markets and international policy changes. This has left many Minnesotans wondering what is happening to the recycling placed in their bins, and what they can do now to support recycling.

The best thing you can do to support recycling is to recycle the right stuff.

## Know what goes in your recycling cart

Start with the basics of what can be recycled. This includes:

- Paper: mail, office papers, magazine, newspapers
- Boxes: cardboard boxes, cereal and cracker boxes, shoe boxes, toiletry boxes
- Cartons: milk cartons, juice boxes, broth cartons
- Glass: food and beverage bottles and jars
- Plastic bottles and jugs: soda bottles, milk jugs, shampoo bottles
- Cups and containers: yogurt cups, clear cups, cottage cheese containers, produce containers
- Metal: food and beverage cans

## Keep these items out of your recycling cart

Items that are important to leave out of your recycling cart include:

- Plastic bags
- Large plastic items
- Random metal items
- Single-use plastic utensils and straws
- Paper plates, cups, and takeout containers
- Propane tanks
- Cords and string lights
- Electronics and batteries
- Needles and sharps

These items cause problems at recycling facilities and lower the quality of our recycling.

## The current state of recycling

First of all, know that your recyclables are getting recycled! Unlike on the coasts where they rely heavily on international markets, recyclers in Minnesota send most of the material they collect to local and regional markets to be processed into new materials.

Overall, Minnesotans are good recyclers. We have significantly lower contamination rates, or the amount of stuff placed in the recycling that can't actually be recycled, than elsewhere in the country. And Minnesota state law prohibits materials separated and collected for recycling from being trashed.

So recycle smart by continuing to recycle the items that can go in your recycling cart and keeping problem items out of your recycling cart.

Visit [www.hennepin.us/recycling](http://www.hennepin.us/recycling) for the recycling guide of items that are accepted throughout Hennepin County and more information on the most important items to keep out of your recycling cart.