

Curbside Recycling

At-Home Sort



There may be materials that look recyclable but are not, or others that you did not know were recyclable.

In this activity, you will learn about recycling materials & contamination (items that are not accepted but end up in the recycling bin) by sorting out your recycling with this easy, guided, at-home recycling sort.

Let's get started!

1. Have your local curbside recycling guide for reference. If you need a copy, visit icgov.org/recycle.
2. Collect one week's worth of recycling material from your recycling bin.
3. Place on a sheet, tarp, or, since recyclables should be clean & dry, an open area on the floor.
4. Now it is time to sort! Start sorting materials into these categories:



Cardboard



Plastic
(#1-5 & 7)



Metal
(Cans, Foil)



Paper



Cartons



Contamination

5. Once you have sorted materials, ask yourself...

Are cardboard boxes flattened & fitting in bin?

Flatten cardboard, & make sure it fits easily in the bin. Over-sized cardboard can become stuck in the bin, preventing items from emptying during collection.

In plastics, are there plastic bags or wrap?

These are not accepted at the curb (even with a #4 on them) because they get stuck in sorting facility equipment. Recycle bags at participating stores.

Do plastics have a #1-5 or #7 on them?

Styrofoam (#6) or no number are trash.

Any food spots left on metal or plastic items?

Rinse & dry recyclables before placing them in the bin.

Any hardcover books, shredded paper, or metallic/glitter paper?

These are not recyclable at the curb. Recycle paperback at curbside; recycle hardcover at a drop-off location. Shredded paper is recyclable but difficult to capture at the sorting facility because of its size. Compost it or recycle it at a drop-off location. Metallic- or glitter-coated paper is trash.

Got glass?

Glass bottles & jars are not accepted curbside. Recycle at drop-off locations.

6. Let's take a look at Contamination...

Some "contamination" items at the curb are recyclable elsewhere. Plastic bags, glass, TVs, batteries, & more, cannot be sorted effectively or safely at the sorting facility, so there are separate programs for these at drop-offs. Other materials are not recyclable right now & are trash, such as Styrofoam.

Did you have any items in recycling that did not belong? Learning about contamination is part of the journey to becoming a stellar recycler! Find more information on the next page.

Thank you for participating in our at-home sort. Contact us to learn more!

319-887-6110

icgov.org/recycle

City of

IOWA CITY

Curbside Recycling

"Naughty List" Materials

Materials not accepted in curbside recycling are called "contamination" because they negatively affect the recycling process for accepted materials or create safety hazards.

It is important to keep contamination low. Too many of the wrong items can lead to the entire load being landfilled. We all have a part to play to ensure recycling actually gets recycled. Only put accepted, clean (no food residue) items in your recycling bin. Leave these out of curbside:



Plastic Bags

Recycle at participating stores.



Hardcover Books

Recycle at City drop-off location.



Shredded Paper

Recycle at City drop-off location, or compost.



Glass

Recycle at City drop-off location.



Styrofoam (#6)

Place in trash.



Dirty Pizza Boxes

Compost or place in trash.



Hazardous Material

Take to Hazardous Material Collection Facility.



Batteries

Take to Hazardous Material Collection Facility.



Metallic or Glitter-Coated Paper

Reuse or place in trash.



No-Number Plastics

Place in trash.



Food-Contaminated Containers

Rinse clean of food & then recycle at curbside.



Personal Protective Equipment

Place in trash.

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