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The
Recycling
Handbook

**YOUR COMMON SENSE GUIDE ON
HOW & WHERE TO RECYCLE**

The title 'RECYCLING HANDBOOK' is centered within a graphic consisting of overlapping teal and orange organic shapes. A horizontal teal bar passes behind the graphic.

RECYCLING HANDBOOK

If you're looking for help on how to get started on your recycling journey, you can always reach out to your Birmingham City Councilor. They're here to help and will make sure you can get a recycling bin for your house!

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Hello Citizen,

Earth needs your help! You see, this planet that we call home is the only one we have and we need to start taking better care of it. Did you know that Americans only recycle about 67.2 million tons of waste out of a possible 267.8 million tons every year? All that extra trash has to go somewhere and it often ends up in our rivers, lakes, and oceans. Each one of us creates roughly 4.5 pounds of trash every single day. So if you want to make a big difference, you have to start small. So get your trash grabbers ready and let's get started on this recycling journey together!

You may be asking, "What can I really do to make a difference?" For one, recycling can help slow the effects of climate change. Recycling helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions (which are not great for Earth) by reducing the energy consumption needed to make more materials. Also, it helps reduce the amount of waste that goes into our landfills, which then decompose and emit methane gas.

Methane is a greenhouse gas that is over 30 times as potent as carbon dioxide, meaning it has 30 times the warming potential. Again, this is not great for Earth. But there is hope! We have plenty of young people like you who want to get involved and help keep Earth beautiful and healthy by being mindful about where our trash goes and recycling whenever possible.



Of course, it may seem a little overwhelming trying to figure out what you can and can't recycle. The following pages are a simple, visual guide to help you along on your journey.

ACCEPTED RECYCLING ITEMS

PAPER

Junk mail, magazines, office paper, newspaper, cardboard



PLASTIC

Soft drink bottles, water bottles, mouthwash bottles, plastic jars



PLASTIC 2

Laundry detergent, milk jugs, shampoo bottles, cleaning supply bottles



METAL

Aluminum cans, steel cans, tin cans



RECYCLING LOCATIONS

UAB Recycling Center

620 11th Street S. Birmingham AL 35233
Monday & Thursday 7 a.m.-9 a.m. ; 4 p.m.-5:30 p.m.











Birmingham Recycling and Recovery

9 41st Street S Birmingham AL 35222
Open Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

CODE

WHAT IT MEANS

TIPS

 PETE	<p>PET or PETE. Water and soda bottles; peanut butter jars; salad dressing and ketchup bottles. Can be recycled and are generally accepted at curbside recycling. Susceptible to chemical leaching, especially if exposed to heat, via a microwave, dishwasher or even the sun.</p>	<p>TIP: Reduce your use of #1 by drinking from reusable bottles.</p>
 HDPE	<p>HDPE. Milk jugs, juice bottles, yogurt tubs, bleach, detergent, shampoo bottles. These can be recycled and made into a range of products, including new detergent and shampoo bottles. Generally accepted at curbside recycling.</p>	<p>TIP: Reduce your use of #2 plastics by using cloth shopping bags.</p> 
 PVC	<p>PVC. Some shampoo bottles, cooking oil bottles, blister packaging, siding and PVC piping. This is rarely recycled. Don't put into your recycling bin, as this type of plastic is very toxic and can contaminate larger batches of recycled materials.</p>	<p>TIP: Avoid.</p>
 LDPE	<p>LDPE. Includes squeezable bottles, plastic bags, dry cleaning bags, frozen food packaging. If recycled, can be made into trash can liners, compost bins, etc. Check with your local recycler. #4 products are safe to reuse.</p>	<p>TIP: Use cloth grocery bags and instead of sandwich bags, try environmentally-friendly alternatives, like silicone or bags or cloth wrappers.</p> 
 PP	<p>PP. Includes some yogurt containers, medicine bottles, caps and straws. These can be recycled into a range of items, including brooms, brushes, rakes, etc. Generally accepted by curbside recycling. #5 plastics are safe to reuse.</p>	<p>TIP: Skip plastic straws and choose reusable bottles.</p>
 PS	<p>Polystyrene. Includes disposable plates and cups/coffee lids, some egg cartons, some take out containers. Rarely recycled but when it is, into egg cartons, insulation, and foam packing. Recycling for polystyrene is not widely available. Damaging to human health and the environment.</p>	<p>TIP: Try a reusable coffee cup.</p> 
 OTHER	<p>Miscellaneous and Polycarbonate. A catch-all for all plastics that don't fit into the categories above, including plastics that contain Bisphenols (like BPA). Includes items like sunglasses and DVDs. Generally not recycled and not recommended for reuse. Some compostable plastics are also included in #7 (they have the initials "PLA" on the bottom).</p>	<p>TIP: Avoid as much as possible, since it's not always clear what plastics are included and what their dangers might be.</p>

FACT OR FICTION

When it comes to recycling, separating facts from fiction might be just as important as separating papers and plastics. It doesn't matter who you are, when you first get started on your recycling journey, there is going to be a learning period. But just like with everything else, practice makes perfect!

FICTION: All plastic bottles need to be completely cleaned out before you put them in the recycling bin

FACT: They don't have to be squeaky clean, just emptied. A quick rinse will do the trick!

FICTION: Any plastic container with a recycling logo can be recycled.

FACT: This is not true. Manufacturers can put this logo on any plastic even if they are not recyclable in your area. Please check with your local recycling program or refer to the previous visual guide to make sure something can be recycled here.

FICTION: You can recycle any plastic, regardless of size.

FACT: You should not recycle anything smaller than a credit card. Small objects, especially harder metals and plastics can easily jam the recycling equipment. This includes bottle caps, coffee pods, plastic cutlery, paperclips, and even straws.

FICTION: I should recycle plastic bags

FACT: Plastic bags, like you, might get at the grocery store, are the number one contaminant in recycling loads and frequently get tangled in the machinery. Please do not include plastic bags in curbside recycling loads.



WHERE CAN I RECYCLE?

CURBSIDE RECYCLING

On the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month, place your recycling bin on curb for pickup.

Acceptable items:

- household plastic containers #1 through #7,
- Aluminum cans
- Steel cans (canned food)
- Newspaper
- Cardboard (flattened)
- Mixed paper: junk mail, telephone directories, catalogs, magazines, office paper (shredded too), and textbooks.

For an official recycling bin: Please call 311 for recycling bins (allow 5 work days for delivery). We also accept recyclables placed in brown paper bags. (No plastic bags please).

BIRMINGHAM RECYCLING AND RECOVERY

9 41st Street S Birmingham AL 35222
Open Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Accepted Items:

Paper: Junk mail, magazines, office paper, newspaper, cardboard

Metal: Aluminum cans, steel cans, tin cans.

Plastic #1: Soft drink bottles, water bottles, mouthwash bottles, plastic jars

Plastic #2: Laundry detergent, milk jugs, shampoo bottles, cleaning supply bottles



UAB RECYCLING CENTER

620 11th Street S. Birmingham AL 35233

Monday and Thursday
7 a.m.-9 a.m.; 4 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

Accepted Items:

Aluminum Cans

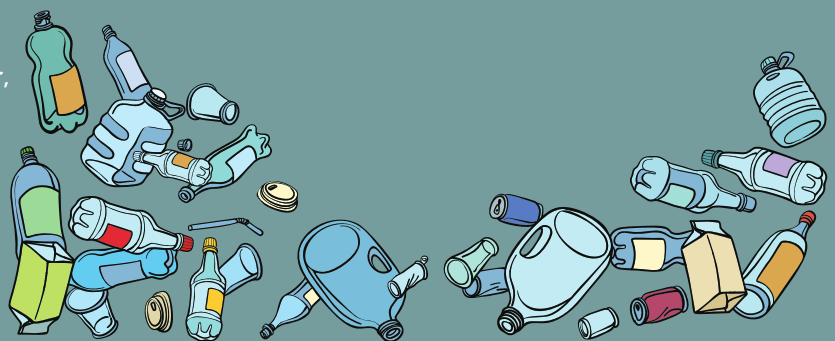
Paper Products

Cardboard boxes

Plastic Bottles: Empty and rinsed

#1 bottles and cups only

Used Cooking Oil/Grease



As you can imagine there are lots of household items that aren't able to be recycled and are simply too big for a trashcan. So what do you do with large items like a mattress that you're ready to get rid of?

Well, we're happy to let you know that the City of Birmingham offers bulk trash pick up for these big items you're ready to throw out. Please, under no circumstances, should you go and illegally dump these items on the side of the road somewhere.

Not only is this against the law and could result in a \$500 fine, but it's really just not cool. In fact, anyone who thinks it's ok to throw trash out their car window or dump trash in a public space should feel embarrassed. So if you want to be cool, don't do that.

Every month, the City's bulk trash and brush schedule can be found on this website:

<https://www.birminghamal.gov/bulktrash>

Or you can call the Public Works Department at (205) 254-6344.

