

## Resources

[Hennepin County Recycling Guide](https://www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/business/recycling-hazardous-waste/documents/recycling-work-guide.pdf?la=en&hash=56B3C4AE24FF5FA59D7B4A1E805AA1B39A823356) (English)

### Website

hennepin.us/businessrecycling

## Sample e-mail:

Subject: [Organization] cares about recycling

Hello,

Please remember to recycle at work. At [Organization] we know recycling is an action you can take to reduce your environmental impact and.

Learn more about recycling including a recycling guide and information on why to recycle at: [link to internal site]

Please contact [main contact] from the “Green team” to answer your questions on recycling. Available at [E-mail] or [Phone].

These are exciting times for [Organization] on our journey to corporate AND community sustainability! Whatever your position is at [Organization], it is ALL of our responsibility to participate in living and working in a manner that is respectful and responsible to our environment.

Thanks for your help!!

[Name of Director]

## Sample newsletter article

# What can I recycle?

There are various types of paper, plastic, glass, metal and cartons that you can recycle in Hennepin County. Here is a basic list of materials that are accepted for recycling:

### Paper

* Mail, office, and school papers
* Catalogs and magazines
* Newspapers and inserts
* Phone books
* Cardboard
* Boxes like a cracker, pasta, or cereal box

### Plastic

* Water, soda and juice bottles
* Juice and milk jugs
* Ketchup and salad dressing bottles
* Dishwashing liquid bottles and detergent jugs
* Shampoo, soap and lotion bottles

### Cartons

* Water, soda and juice bottles
* Juice boxes
* Soup, broth and wine cartons

### Glass

* Food and beverage bottles and jars

### Metal

* Food and beverage cans

These materials are recyclable because there is a way to sort them at recycling facilities and sell them to be made into something new. Some materails that are recyclable in other communities across the United States or are sometimes considered recyclable, but are not accepted in Hennepin County are listed below.

### There are also items that are not recyclable, including:

* Styrofoam cups, plates or packaging
* Microwavable food trays
* Plastic wrap
* Paper soiled with food (such as pizza boxes)
* Paper plates and towels
* Gift wrap
* Drinking glasses, dishes and vases
* Window glass and mirrors
* Cans or bottles that held hazardous products (such as paint thinner or motor oil)

### Can I recycle this? Frequently asked recycling questions

Most people know the basic rules of recycling, including that you can recycle plastic bottles, metal cans, glass bottles, office paper and cardboard. But some of the specifics about recycling can be confusing. The following are answers to frequently asked questions about recycling.

### How clean should my items be before I recycle them?

It is recommended that you clean all items before recycling. The cleaner your recyclables are, the easier it is to recycle them. Rinse bottles, jars and cans to remove food residue.

### Can I recycling plastic bags?

Keep plastic bags out of the recycling. Plastic bags are not recyclable when collected with other recyclables. This is because plastic bags cause problems at facilities that sort recycling once it leaves your workplace or home. Plastic bags become tangled in the machinery at the recycling facilities, obstructing or completely shutting down the sorting process.

### What is the “recycling symbol” on plastics about?

The numbers inside the arrows on plastic materials are called Resin Identification Codes, and they tell you what type of plastic your item is made from. They do not tell you if an item is recyclable or not. Plastic bottles, jugs, yogurt and pudding cups, plastic clamshells, and clean deli and take-out containers are accepted in recycling.

### Can I recycle bottle caps and lids?

To prevent lids from falling through gaps in the sorting facility, keep caps and lids on plastic bottles. Because they are made of different materials than the bottle being recycled, remove caps and lids on glass bottles and jars before recycling. Collect metal caps in a metal can and squeeze the can shut to prevent caps from falling out at the recycling facility.

### What about pizza boxes?

Pizza boxes from delivery are not recyclable because they are usually contaminated with oil and grease, which can ruin entire batches of recycled paper. The recycling industry spends nearly $700 million per year due to contamination of oil and grease on recycled paper.

### Are there items I could be recycling that I may not be now?

Some items have been added to the accepted list in recycling programs in recent years. This includes milk, juice and broth cartons and additional plastics, such as yogurt cups, cottage cheese containers, and produce, deli and take out containers.

## Sample newsletter article

# Recycle right

Recycling has been in the news a lot lately with shifts in markets and policy changes in China. 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.

Minnesota state law prohibits materials separated and collected for recycling from being trashed. Your recyclables are getting recycled!

“Most people are familiar with the benefits of recycling, which include conserving natural resources, saving energy, and supporting our local economy, which has a history of strong recycling markets,” said Ben Knudson, a recycling expert with Hennepin County. “However, people are less familiar with the importance, now more than ever, of reducing contamination – or keeping materials that don’t belong in the recycling out.”

See our [[Recycling Guide](https://www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/business/recycling-hazardous-waste/documents/recycling-work-guide.pdf?la=en&hash=56B3C4AE24FF5FA59D7B4A1E805AA1B39A823356)](https://www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/business/recycling-hazardous-waste/documents/recycling-work-guide.pdf?la=en&hash=56B3C4AE24FF5FA59D7B4A1E805AA1B39A823356)for a list of materials that are accepted and not accepted for recycling throughout Hennepin County.

### Keep these out of your recycling bin

Some of the most important materials to keep out of the bin are:

**Plastic bags and wrap:** Do not put loose plastic bags or wrap into recycling bins as they get tangled in equipment at recycling centers.

**Cords**: Do not put these materials in recycling bins as they get tangled in the equipment at recycling centers.

**Paper cups and plates:** Do not put paper cups and plates in recycling bins as these materials are often lined with plastic or contaminated with food. Avoid by carrying reusable water bottles and mugs and by choosing reusable or compostable alternatives. Put paper cups and plates in the trash.

**Plastic utensils and straws:** do not put plastic forks, knives, spoons or straws in recycling bins as there aren’t good recycling markets for these materials and they are too small to sort at recycling facilities. Avoid by carrying reusable utensils and straws with you, refuse straws when you can, use compostable alternatives, or put them in the trash.

**Plastic foam:** Do not put plastic foam containers, cups or packing materials in recycling bins as there aren’t good recycling markets for this material and transporting and sorting the material is difficult. Avoid by finding reusable, recyclable or compostable alternatives, and put these materials in the trash.

### Keep recycling, but when in doubt, throw it out

Recyclables are still in demand from manufacturers who want high quality materials to make new products and from consumers who want to buy products with recycled content. Because of the market changes, recyclers nationally and internationally are seeking recycling streams that are high quality and don’t contain a lot of contamination.

Minnesotans overall do a good job of recycling and have low contamination rates compared to other places in the country. But still about 10 percent of our recycling stream is materials that shouldn’t be recycled.

“The best thing you can do now to support recycling is to recycle right by making sure you know what does and does not go in your recycling bin,” explained Knudson. “There’s a lot of confusing packaging and other materials out there, and we know this isn’t a message everyone wants to hear, but you can actually support the recycling market by following the ‘when in doubt, throw it out’ rule.”