



# Wishful recycling can do more harm than good

Sometimes recyclers get a little too enthusiastic and put the wrong things into recycling bins. For some, these are careless mistakes. But for others, this is “wishful recycling” — filling your bin with items you believe should be recycled or hope will be. Unfortunately, wishful recycling can do more harm than good.

Recycling is a group project that depends on all of us making good decisions and following a common set of instructions. We understand that this can be challenging. What is accepted for recycling in one community differs from others. What you can recycle at work may be different than what is accepted at home. However, some common dos and don'ts apply almost everywhere.

## DO

- Stick to the basics: plastic bottles, jugs, and tubs, glass bottles and jars, metal food and drink cans, clean aluminum foil and pans, cartons, paper, and boxes.
- Empty all food and beverage containers completely. If needed, wipe or rinse them out and allow them to dry.
- Break down and flatten boxes.
- Keep recycling loose.

## DON'T

- Don't put yard waste into the recycle carts.
- Don't put items smaller than a credit card (coffee pods, loose bottle caps, shredded paper) into the recycling bin.
- Don't bag your recycling.
- Don't put smelly items, like dirty diapers, into recycling bins. (Dirty diapers aren't recyclable! Please put them in the trash.)
- Don't put “tangles,” such as garden hoses, mini-blinds, power cords, or Christmas lights, into recycling bins.
- Don't put plastic bags, bubble wrap, packaging air pillows, or other film, like wrappers from paper towels or cases of water bottles, in the recycling bin.

Don't be a wishful recycler. Combine your good intentions with good information. Learn what is accepted and how to prepare it properly. Remember, when in doubt, go find out! Check our website, [www.RecycleFortWayne.org](http://www.RecycleFortWayne.org), or give us a call at 427-8311.



Credit: dbrimages | E+ | Getty Images

**“When in doubt, go find out.”**

Beth Porter, *Reduce, Reuse, Reimagine*



CITY OF FORT WAYNE **recycling**

[www.RecycleFortWayne.org](http://www.RecycleFortWayne.org)

# No bags, please!

Please keep ALL plastic bags out of recycle carts. Recyclables should be placed loose and unbagged directly into your cart. If you choose to contain your recycling in plastic bags inside your house, please empty the recyclables into your cart and reuse the bag or throw it into the trash. When plastic bags and wrap are mixed with other recyclables, they get tangled in equipment at the sorting facility, causing frequent stops to remove them and sometimes damaging the equipment. Plus, they do NOT get recycled.

Clean, dry plastic bags and plastic wrap can be gathered together and delivered to plastic bag recycling bins at local stores. For the location nearest you, visit [www.plasticfilmrecycling.org](http://www.plasticfilmrecycling.org).

Thank you for your help!



**RECYCLE** empty, clean & dry plastic bags & wraps at store drop-offs

## NOT in Curbside Recycling

 Produce Bags	 Plastic Shipping Envelopes	 Bread Bags	 Dry Cleaning Bags	 Case Wrap	<p>Also look for any packaging with this How2Recycle label</p>  <p>how2recycle.info</p>
 Air Pillows	 Bubble Wrap	 Newspaper Bags	 Food Storage Bags	 Product Overwrap	

**NO candy bar wrappers • chip bags • six-pack rings • degradable bags • prewashed salad bags**

 Carryout bags too!

Find drop-off locations at [PlasticFilmRecycling.org/drop-off](http://PlasticFilmRecycling.org/drop-off)



# Yes, recycling still matters!

You've probably seen recycling in the news lately — and not all of what you have heard or read or watched has been good news. It's true that recycling is facing some challenges. **But, rest assured, your materials are still being recycled.** We are still accepting materials, sorting them, and delivering them to market where manufacturers are turning them into new products.

Even though commodity prices for recyclables are currently low, your recycling continues to conserve natural resources, reduce water and air pollution in manufacturing, save energy, and create many jobs. According to the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, the U.S. scrap industry supports more than 534,000 American jobs. Energy savings achieved by using recycled instead of virgin materials in manufacturing range from 34% for glass to 96% for aluminum.

Changes in global commodity markets, and particularly in what types of materials China is importing, have led to disruption in the marketplace, especially for plastics and mixed paper. Based on what you have heard, you might think that nearly all U.S. recyclables were going to China. However, that was never the case. More than 70% of recyclables nationwide are used in U.S. factories.

The changes to export markets have created opportunities in the U.S., leading to new investments in paper mills and plastic processing facilities. At the same time, many domestic manufacturers are looking for new ways to use the abundant and low-priced materials that had previously been shipped overseas.

So keep recycling! Recycling is still a great way to care for our environment and support our economy.

Over 40 million Americans move every year. Whether you are moving across town or across the country, here are some tips to make your next move more eco-friendly. Choose the tips that fit your needs and budget. Making one or two changes can make a big difference!

### **Plan ahead — Sell, donate, or recycle items you don't want**

If possible, start planning for your move weeks or months ahead of time. This extra time will allow you to get rid of things you really don't need. Clean out that garage and attic first. Don't forget to dispose of household hazardous waste carefully (see below). Have a yard sale or donate extra belongings to a charity. You'll use less gas if you transport only the things you actually use. Plus, you'll have less clutter in your new home!

### **Start packing in containers you already have**

You will likely have to buy or borrow some boxes, but you can save money and time by using the containers you already have. Suitcases, plastic totes, coolers, reusable shopping bags, and toy boxes are all great for moving. Use pillows, towels, blankets, clothing, and other soft items to cushion fragile items.

### **Search for used boxes**

Buying boxes is expensive, but you can likely get them free around your community. Ask local businesses or neighbors if they have free boxes or look for used moving boxes on Nextdoor or Craigslist. UsedCardboardBoxes.com collects used boxes from businesses around the country and ships them to you. U-Haul also sells used moving boxes.

### **Consider eco-friendly packing materials**

Use newspaper instead of buying paper. Avoid the use of polystyrene foam packing peanuts, which are not easily recyclable and tend to get blown around as litter. If you need loose fill material, opt for cornstarch-based biodegradable packing peanuts or use shredded paper. You can make your own shredded paper by going through old files that you don't need to move along with you. If you must purchase plastic bubble wrap, look for recycled-content products.

### **Reuse or recycle your packing materials**

Make sure you reuse or recycle cardboard boxes and paper packing material once you're done with them. Bubble wrap can be dropped off for recycling at grocery and home improvement stores where you take your plastic bags and film for recycling (visit [www.plasticfilmrecycling.org](http://www.plasticfilmrecycling.org) for locations). Before recycling items, consider offering them at a low cost or for free on an online local marketplace like Nextdoor, Craigslist, or Freecycle. Reuse is always better than recycling.

## **What to do with household hazardous waste**

Household hazardous waste (HHW for short) is any sort of product in a home that could be poisonous or dangerous if thrown in the trash. HHW includes cleaning supplies, car and lawn care products, some paints, propane tanks, and more.

Never throw HHW into the trash. It may cause fires or contaminate our groundwater and soil. Many moving companies will not transport hazardous materials, so be sure to ask your mover. You might consider giving away usable items that you won't need or don't want to move. You may choose to move some items in your personal vehicle. Check product labels to see if items need special handling to transport over long distances. Be sure all items are sealed tightly and packed safely.

If you are moving or simply cleaning out your home, dispose of HHW at the Allen County Household Hazardous Waste Facility, which is open every Tuesday, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., as well as select Saturdays. Learn more at [www.acwastewatcher.org](http://www.acwastewatcher.org) or [www.facebook.com/acwastewatcher](http://www.facebook.com/acwastewatcher).



# Fort Wayne

GREAT AMERICAN CLEANUP™

KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL

INDIANA



Volunteers were out in force for the Great American Cleanup on Saturday, May 4! This year, nearly 5,000 volunteers representing 250 groups helped clean up our City during this one-day event. Here is what you accomplished:

**75+** tons of litter and debris were collected.

**600** illegally dumped tires were recycled.

**165** televisions were collected for recycling.

**143** vehicles delivered household hazardous materials to Tox-Away Day for safe disposal.

*Thank you to everyone who participated, and a special thanks to all of our wonderful sponsors!*



# Eating well while wasting and spending less

In the United States, about 40% of all food goes to waste. That waste costs a family of four about \$1,500 each year and results in nearly 3 pounds of trash every day. At home, you can reduce your food waste by using the 3 Rs – Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle:

- Reduce your food waste at home. Make a list before you shop. Purchase only the amount of food that you need for the meals you will be eating at home. Avoid exotic ingredients that are needed for a single recipe. Adjust recipes to make the amount your family needs. Store leftovers in the refrigerator or freezer.
- Shop your own fridge and pantry. Look for items you need to use up and then search online for recipes that require them. You might discover a new family favorite.
- Reduce food waste at restaurants. If portions are large, share a full order with your companion. When you are full, put leftovers into a carry-out container. Better yet, bring your own reusable container from home and put leftovers into it. Remember to eat the leftovers soon!
- Mark one refrigerator shelf as the “eat first” section and put leftovers and items nearing their “best-by” dates there.
- Freeze food for future use. If you bought too many carrots, you can chop them up and freeze them. They’ll be ready to toss into a nice soup next winter. Green peppers and onions can be chopped, frozen, and pulled out to add to meatloaf or omelets.
- Create your own vegetable stock. Toss wilting vegetables and aging spices into a pot of water and let it simmer. Cool and freeze the stock for later use.
- Share unwanted food with friends and coworkers. Do you have leftover birthday cake? Invite a neighbor over for a slice or take the extra to work.
- Donate unneeded food products to local food banks and other charitable organizations. Go through your non-perishable boxed and canned goods regularly. If an item has been sitting in your pantry for six or more months, you probably aren’t going to use it. Give it to someone who will use it.
- Give away unwanted produce. If you have a garden, share nature’s bounty with friends, neighbors, and coworkers. If you purchased too much produce or your family just didn’t like the plums, give the items away before they rot.
- Compost your food scraps. You can compost fruit and vegetable scraps, as well as bread, pasta, grains, coffee grounds, and tea bags, in your backyard compost bin or pile. Bury the food about 10" below the surface to discourage unwanted visitors. You can also compost food scraps in a vermicompost (worm composting) bin indoors or an in-ground food composter outdoors.



Credit: iStock | Getty Images Plus

## For More Tips to Reduce Waste and Save Money

[www.acwastewatcher.org/reduce/food-waste-resources](http://www.acwastewatcher.org/reduce/food-waste-resources)

[www.savethefood.com](http://www.savethefood.com)

[www.choosemyplate.gov/lets-talk-trash](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/lets-talk-trash)

[www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food](http://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food)



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