



TOP 10 RESIDENTIAL RECYCLING QUESTIONS



1. Can all paper and cardboard that comes in the mailbox be recycled?

No, not paper coated with plastic. A good test is - can you tear it? If yes, it's OK to recycle. Window envelopes are OK. When a magazine comes in plastic wrap, recycle the magazine, but throw the plastic in the garbage.

2. What plastics can be recycled?

Look at the shape. Recycle plastic bottles, jars, jugs and tubs. No lids. The number inside the triangle indicates the type of plastic, not whether it's recyclable. Clear plastic containers like cake domes, clam shells, beverage cups, and trays are polystyrene, which splinters during the recycling process. Put polystyrene containers in the garbage.

3. Why can't I recycle plastic lids? Some look as if they are made out of the same material as the container, like margarine.

That's true, but it's would be too confusing to list plastic lids that are acceptable and those that are not. So, Allied just says no lids. Also, small lids often get caught in sorting machinery at the recycling plant and cause jams and expensive breakdowns. Aluminum and tin can lids can be recycled, however. Paper labels on cans are also OK.

4. Can I recycle plastic bags from the grocery store?

Yes. Put all plastic bags in a similar plastic bag and tie shut. This will prevent the bags from flying all over where recyclables are sorted. Please do not put recyclable materials in plastic bags for recycling. Put items loose in the blue recycling container. You can also recycle dry cleaning bags and bubble wrap. Put them in a plastic grocery bag and tie shut.

5. Is it all right to leave the plastic label on a plastic water bottle and also the plastic ring around the neck?

Yes.

6. You say to rinse containers before recycling. How clean do they have to be?

Just rinse or wipe container so there isn't food that is going to get on paper and other materials.

7. Why can't I put used fluorescent light bulbs in the garbage?

Because they contain mercury. Take them to the household hazardous waste section of Factoria Transfer Station at 13800 SE 32nd St., Bellevue Tuesday-Sunday, 9am - 5pm. Call the Household Hazardous Waste line with questions about fluorescent light bulbs or other hazardous waste. Fluorescent bulbs can also be taken to Puget Sound Energy at 355 110th Ave NE, Bellevue or IKEA stores.

8. Can aluminum foil be recycled?

Yes, if it's clean and not full of food. Aluminum pots and pans can also be put in the blue recycling container as long as they have no wood or plastic lids or handles.

9. Can I set cardboard out for recycling when it's raining?

A little bit of moisture is all right, but if it's raining hard, better to put the cardboard inside the blue recycling container or wait until a dry day. Mills don't want to purchase water drenched cardboard. Another concern is that it can get moldy in a shipping truck.

10. Is recycling really worth the effort?

Recycling is one of the best environmental success stories of the late 20th century. Today, the U.S. recycles 32.5% of its waste, a rate that has almost doubled in the last 15 years. Bellevue single-family residents recycle a whopping 67.5% of their waste (when you count yard debris and food scraps!) Recycling saves limited natural resources, such as timber, water, and minerals. Recycling also saves energy and prevents pollution caused by harvesting, extracting, and processing raw materials to manufacture new products. Plus, it's less expensive to recycle than to put materials in a landfill, and millions of tons of materials are being diverted from landfills. Recycling definitely makes sense! For more facts on recycling, see

<http://www.epa.gov/msw/faq.htm>

Do you have other recycling questions? Please call City of Bellevue Utilities at 425-452-6932. For items not taken in Bellevue's program, check King County's website What Do I Do With at www.metrokc.gov/dnrp/swd/wdidw/index.asp