

Recycling

The 'WHY' behind the recycling rules... for those who like the detail!

Plastic



✓ Accepted items

Only rigid plastic containers with plastic recycling symbols ♻️ ♻️ and ♻️ may go in the recycling bin.

Plastic containers must be empty, rinsed clean and the lids placed in the rubbish.

Some examples include:

- Condiment and spread jars (mayonnaise, peanut butter, jam)
- Milk bottles
- Juice, soft drink and water bottles
- Personal care bottles (shampoo, shower gel)
- Clear meat trays
- Tubs (margarine, ice cream, large yogurt containers)
- Fruit and vegetable punnets

✗ Not accepted

- Plastic types ♻️ ♻️ ♻️ and ♻️
- All soft plastic, plastic film or plastic wrap (frozen and fresh vegetable bags, courier bags, chip packets, bread bags, pet food bags, cracker and sushi trays)
- Plastic strapping
- Hose, tubing, PVC pipe
- Polystyrene
- Toothpaste tubes and toothbrushes
- Laminated pouches (cat food, sauce, coffee pouches)
- Hazardous chemical containers (antifreeze, pesticides) – these empty containers must go in your rubbish bin
- Plastic items that aren't containers (buckets, washing baskets, toys)

Why?

Soft plastics like bags and wrappers make their way into the paper and cardboard bales as contamination.

Plastic bags, strapping and hose gets wrapped around the recycling machinery causing damage and breakdowns.

These grades of plastics are low value and low in tonnage, making them unviable to recycle.

Toys and Laminated pouches contain multiple different materials including metals and different plastics combined into one product.

Chemicals from hazardous chemical containers leach into the plastic and can be unsafe to recycle.

Common non-recyclable items

✗ No lids



This includes any type of lid from small plastic caps off milk bottles, to large flat lids from ice cream containers, to metal lids from glass jars.

Some issues with lids include:

- They get stuck in the recycling sorting machinery
- They fall off bales and blow away in the wind – ending up in waterways
- They are often made of a different type of material (or a different grade of plastic) to the container they are on
- They are too small and/or too flat and slip through the sorting machinery and contaminate the glass or paper streams

✗ No triggers or pumps



Issues with triggers and pumps include:

- They are often made of a number of different types of materials
- They can contain a metal spring

✗ No squashed flat containers (partly squeezed is ok)



The optical sorters need 3D shapes or it will perceive the squashed object as paper and contaminate the paper stream.

✗ No small items



No items less than 55mm in diameter. This includes items like bread tags, straws and small yogurt containers.

Some issues with small items include:

- They get stuck in the recycling sorting machinery
- They fall off bales and blow away in the wind – ending up in waterways
- They slip through the sorting machinery and contaminate the glass stream
- They have no commercial value and are difficult to bale

Glass



✓ Accepted items

Glass food and beverage packaging. Items need to be empty, rinsed clean and the lids placed in the rubbish.

- Bottles (wine, spirits, beer, olive oil)
- Jars (sauces, baby food, jam)

✗ Not accepted

- Non-food or beverage bottles (perfume, face cream)
- Ceramics
- Drinking glasses and crockery
- Window glass or mirrors

Why?

These grades of glass have different properties and melting points. If they get through with 'bottle glass,' they cause imperfections and wastage.

Metal



✓ Accepted items

Items must be empty and rinsed clean.

- Drink cans
- Food tins (soup, fruit, sauces)

✗ Not accepted

- Loose tabs and lids
- Biscuit tins
- Foil
- LPG cylinders
- Pots and pans
- Aerosols
- Metal lids (such as those on glass jars)
- Aluminium tubes (tomato paste, toothpaste)

Why?

The recycling machinery is setup to sort household metal containers. It can't sort pots, foil and other metal objects

Paper and cardboard (fibre)



✓ Accepted items

Items need to be empty and clean. Cardboard should be flattened.

- Newspapers, magazines, brochures, leaflets, flyers
- Wrapping paper (non-foil)
- Cardboard boxes and egg cartons
- Printer paper, letters, envelopes (including ones with windows)
- Clean, empty pizza boxes. Grease residue is OK — but no food or sauce

✗ Not accepted

- Juice or milk cartons
- Shredded paper
- Disposable coffee cups
- Non-paper gift wrap (foil based gift wrap) or gift bags
- Paper towel, tissues
- Fish and chip/butcher paper that has been contaminated with food
- Hygiene/sanitary items (nappies, wet wipes, sanitary towels)

Why?

Tetra Pak® type milk and juice cartons contain multiple types of materials such as plastic, paper and foil. This renders them non-recyclable.

Paper towels and tissues are usually contaminated and have a 'wet strength' so they don't fall apart when you use them. This also stops them being able to break down quickly for recycling into new paper.

Unsure about an item?
Email solid.waste@selwyn.govt.nz