

Common Contamination at the Curb:

It can't go in the commingled recycling cart, so where should it go?

Provided by your Recycling Block Captain, Winter 2023

Recycling works best when done properly! When in doubt, throw it out! A properly discarded item is better for the environment than a contaminant in the recycling stream. Whenever you can, **REDUCE** your waste by decreasing consumption or reusing an item, since even recycling has an environmental cost. Visit our online Corvallis-Area ReUse Directory at tiny.cc/reusedirectory.

Contaminant	Why not at the curb?	Where should it go?
 <p>Napkins & paper towels</p>	Paper can be recycled only so many times. Paper fiber gets shorter each time it's recycled; by the time it becomes towel or tissue, the fiber is short, making this the end of life phase in the recycling process.	Put in your home compost system or mixed organics (a.k.a. yard debris) cart. Obtain a yard debris cart or backyard bin from Republic Services at no additional charge. <i>Exception: please no bathroom paper towels in your cart!</i>
 <p>Pet food bags</p>	These are lined with plastic. It's nearly impossible to separate the plastic from paper fiber for recycling.	Place in your trash cart.
 <p>Plastic bags</p>	Plastic bags clog machinery at sorting facility. Therefore they need to be collected separately.	The following stores have bins at the entrance for recycling plastic bags: Fred Meyer & Winco on NW Kings, Safeway stores on NE Circle & SW 3rd. <i>NEVER put plastic bags in your recycle cart!</i>
 <p>Plastic clamshells</p>	There is no market for this low grade plastic – all clamshells regardless of the number on the bottom! This is the end of life phase.	Place in your trash cart. Consider buying a reusable <i>Benton To Go</i> take-out container at participating restaurants. Visit bentontogo.org for details.
 <p>Styrofoam</p>	Styrofoam breaks into tiny pieces when compacted in recycle truck. There is no local recycling facility; uneconomical to transport.	Styrofoam that has touched food (cups, plates, egg cartons, etc.) goes in the trash. Recycle "packaging styrofoam" for a small fee at First Alternative Co-op's Recycling Center, 541-753-3115. (firstalt.coop/community/recycling-center/)
 <p>Prescription bottles</p>	No markets currently exist for amber-colored plastic.	Either place in your trash cart or mail them to Matthew 25: Ministries (m25m.org/pillbottles/). See their complete guidelines before mailing.
 <p>Clothing</p>	Clothing and fabric are not part of the curbside recycling program.	Consider reusing your old clothing as rags or check out the Corvallis-Area ReUse Directory for clothing donation sites (tiny.cc/reusedirectory).
 <p>Containers with food residue</p>	Food residue inside containers contaminates commingled recycling (e.g. yogurt spilling onto paper) and leads to mold and germs. Always clean or wipe out containers so no food spills onto other recyclable materials in the cart.	REMEMBER: Empty, Clean & Dry! Clean to remove food residue, then recycle. If cleaning is not possible, hold onto the container until it can be cleaned, and then recycle.