

# What can be recycled?

## Paper

Most types of paper can be recycled with the exception of a few items.

### Can recycle

- Newspaper,
- Junk mail, brochures
- Office paper
- Gift wrapping paper
- Glossy paper and magazines
- Envelopes (including window envelopes)
- Phone books
- Greeting cards
- Coloured paper
- Paper bags

### Can't recycle

- Padded envelopes
- Photographs
- Thermal fax paper
- Wax-coated paper
- Tissues
- Toilet paper
- Nappies
- Wax-coated cardboard boxes (e.g. fruit boxes)

### Why can't we recycle tissues or nappies?

Not only is it unhygienic for items containing bodily fluids to be processed alongside other recyclables, but the paper fibres in these items are too short to recycle, making it too difficult to recover any worthwhile material.

## Cardboard

Cardboard is one of the most common materials put in the waste bin by mistake. All cardboard should be recycled unless it is coated in wax.

### Can recycle

- Cardboard boxes
- Milk/juice cartons (e.g. long-life milk and fruit juice cartons/boxes)
- Toy boxes
- Pizza and cereal boxes
- detergent boxes
- Tissue boxes
- Cardboard coffee cups

### Why can't a wax-coated cardboard box be recycled?

The wax covering the box makes it too difficult to recover paper fibres from the cardboard.

# Plastic

Plastic items are sorted using an optical sorting machine, which groups similar plastic types together and detects and removes non-recyclables. All firm plastics (those which are not soft plastics or hard rigid plastics) can be recycled in your wheelie bin with the yellow lid.

## Can recycle

All firm plastic containers, such as:

- soft drink bottles
- takeaway containers
- margarine containers
- milk and juice bottles
- yoghurt tubs
- biscuit and sushi trays
- detergent and shampoo bottles
- disposable plates and cups.

## Can't recycle

Any soft plastics, such as:

- plastic bags
- plastic film or cling wrap
- chip packets
- toothpaste tubes
- bubble wrap
- styrofoam or polystyrene products
- straws
- disposable nappies.

Hard plastics that are not containers, such as toys or toothbrushes are also not recyclable.

## Why can't we recycle soft plastics?

While plastic bags and other soft plastic packaging is sometimes made from a recyclable content, their lightweight nature means that they get caught and tangled around moving machine parts at the recycling plant. That is why it is best to return them to the major supermarkets where they are collected and recycled using specialist technology or dispose of soft plastics in your general waste bin.

## Did you know?

Each time we recycle a plastic item, its quality can be affected. This means the 'recycling' of plastics is often 'down-cycling' instead. Where possible, avoid all single use plastics by keeping a 'zero waste kit' handy in your bag. Customise your kit to your own needs by including items like a spork, reusable container, napkin, water bottle and reusable cup.

## Metal (Aluminium and Steel)

All aluminium and steel packaging can be recycled including aerosol cans, paint tins (empty and dry), aluminium foil and pie trays.

### Can recycle

Vegetable and food cans, pet food cans, soft drink cans, pie trays, aerosol cans, aluminium foil and paint tins (empty and dry).

### Can't recycle

Batteries, gas bottles, wire, scrap iron or tin, cutlery and white goods.

### What should I do with other metal items that cannot be recycled through the yellow-lidded recycling bin?

Other household items including batteries, gas bottles, scrap metal or white goods are collected for recycling at Council resource recovery centres. Find out more on Brisbane City Council's website or download Council's free Brisbane bin and recycling app.

### Did you know?

Out all materials you can recycle, cans and other aluminium is possibly the most important if you wish to reduce your environmental impact and save resources. This is because aluminium is extracted from the bauxite ore which has a significant environmental impact. Unlike some other materials, cans and aluminium can be recycled over and over again and keeping this material in the cycle means less harmful extraction is needed.

# Glass

Only glass used for packaging, such as bottles and jars is collected for recycling through in the recycling bin. Other glass items are manufactured differently, which makes them more prone to shattering and less suitable for recycling.

## Can recycle

All clear, green and brown bottles and jars, including jam jars, food jars, sauce bottles, beverage bottles, perfume and medicine bottles can be recycled.

## Can't recycle

Drinking glasses, ceramics, window glass, light bulbs, mirror or window glass, heat-proof glass and cookware such as Pyrex can't be recycled in your wheelie bin with the yellow lid.

## Why can't I recycle these items?

The glass used for bottles and jars is heavy duty and durable, while other glass types are designed for specific uses that require them to be more fragile, transparent or heat resistant. When mixed with recyclable glass, other glass types weaken the new glass products and may cause them to fracture. For this reason, it is best to reuse these items where possible or dispose of all glass items which are not bottles and jars in your general waste.

# Contamination

There are items that often end up in the recycling bin when they should not. While a couple of non-recyclable items won't ruin the load, they do make the recycling process more difficult by causing contamination, preventing machines from operating efficiently or causing health and safety issues.

## Common contaminants

- Plastic bags can cause the material recovery facility (MRF) to shut down if bags get caught in the machinery. Items in plastic bags cannot be sorted at the MRF and instead end up being sent to landfill. Ensure your recyclables are placed loose in your recycling bin and your recyclables, not placed inside plastic bags in your recycle bin.
- Food scraps cannot be placed in your recycling bin. Compost your vegetable and garden scraps instead to save valuable organic nutrients from going to landfill.
- Drinking glasses, ceramics and heat proof glass, such as Pyrex, are not recyclable and should be reused or put in your general waste bin
- Disposable nappies and other soft plastics such as cling wrap, chip packets and styrofoam are not recyclable and should be placed in your general waste bin.

## Did you know?

Brisbane City Council has a free Brisbane Bin and Recycling app available for smartphones and tablets. Download this app for a quick guide to recycling, bin collection calendar, directions to resource recovery centres and more.

Brisbane residents are great at knowing what not to put in the yellow lided recycle bin with only 7% of contaminants entering the Material Recovery Facility in 2016-17. These contaminants are removed at the beginning of the process and do not spoil the whole truck load of recycling however they can slow down the process before they are removed and sent to landfill.