

Generic Recycle Right For All Community Members:

Objective: Help community understand what they can recycle in blue bins and why

Secondary objective: Raise awareness of 2/4/5 collection

Recycle Right in 2023

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Recycling is a significant component in our efforts to address climate change and protect our planet, but recycling can be confusing! To help you recycle right in 2023, let's explore more about plastic recycling, clarify what can go into your co-mingled bins, and identify additional ways you can prevent plastic from entering the landfill.

New Law Improving Plastic Recycling Accuracy: Oregon has a high recycling ethic but a very low population density. Our low population density is a popular reason to live here; however, it does not provide efficient, economical transportation logistics for the lowest-value raw material, namely unprocessed, used packaging. Implementation of Senate Bill 582, **The Plastic Pollution and Recycling Modernization Act (RMA)** in 2025 will require producers of packaging to financially subsidize recycle hauler and mixed recycling processor costs for distance traveled and market volatility. Producers and manufacturers of packaged items, paper products, and food serviceware will pay for many of these necessary improvements and help ensure recycling is successful in Oregon. This system-wide update will **make recycling easier** for the public, **expand access** to recycling services, **upgrade the facilities** that sort recyclables, and **create environmental benefits** while reducing social and environmental harms, such as plastic pollution.

Mixed Recycling: What goes in my bins? Starting June 1, 2022, most Lane County residents with curbside recycling carts and customers at ALL Lane County transfer stations can add #1 and #2 bottles, jars, and jugs to their recycling. Items must be clean, dry, and larger than a tennis ball. Be sure to check the shape and number.

Why does the shape matter? Not all plastics are the same, even if they have the same number on the bottom. Take #2 plastic as an example; why can we recycle jugs and bottles but not tubs? Our friends at RE3.org in North Carolina had a great analogy to explain why:



Think about
a pancake

and a biscuit - although they are made of the same ingredients
(water, eggs, flour, and milk), each item has different quantities.



NO plastics 3-7, plastic bags or wrap, lids, caps, pumps, glass or garbage.



Pancake batter is runnier than biscuit batter, making it easier to pour, whereas biscuit batter is more easily molded. Also, once you make the batter for each item, you cook them at similar temperatures but for different lengths of time. Pancakes cook relatively quickly at high direct heat, while biscuits must be put in an oven and given time to bake.

Plastics are the same way. They all have the same initial components which constitute plastic and relate to the number they are given (i.e., 1-7). However, the individual makeup within each product dictates our ability to recycle it. Injection-grade plastics like water bottles are similar to pancakes, and mold-grade plastics such as fast food containers are similar to biscuits. So even though a plastic item may have #2 on the bottom, not all #2's are the same.



If in doubt, find out, or leave it out: Placing an item that is not recyclable in the recycling can cause contamination, which leads to significant problems for the recycling system. Common contaminants in Oregon's recycling programs include plastic bags, film plastics, liquids, food, soiled packaging, plastic clamshells, garden hoses, wire hangers, textiles, diapers, electronics, and batteries. Some of these materials can be recycled separately but cause problems when mixed with other recyclables in

An advertisement for the WasteWise app. It features a smiling woman on the left holding a smartphone in the center. The phone screen displays the WasteWise app interface with a green recycling symbol. Above the phone, the text reads "Reuse? Recycle? Or trash it? Find out with WasteWise!". Below the phone, there are logos for the App Store and Google Play, and a QR code. At the bottom, a blue banner says "Download the app, or visit lanecountyor.gov/wastewise".

commingled collection systems. **Lane County's FREE "WasteWise Lane County" app** allows users to easily and quickly determine whether materials can be reused, repaired, or recycled—or if they should be thrown away. The app is free in the Android and Apple stores and available in English and Spanish. Residents can also use the tool to schedule household hazardous waste appointments and report illegal dumping. **Visit lanecountyor.gov/wastewise for more information.**

So what do I do with all of my other plastic? Lane County Waste Management offers plastic collection for #2, #4, and #5 plastics to "registered" community collectors. Only #2, #4, and #5 tubs, bottles, and jugs are accepted and must be clean, dry and have all adhesive labels and plastic film removed. To find a volunteer community collector near you or to register to become a community collector, please email plasticscollection@lanecountyor.gov with your name and complete address, including your zip code.