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| Hbold600pxw | Hennepin County Environment and Energy **News**612-348-3777 • environment@hennepin.us [www.hennepin.us/environmentaleducation](http://www.hennepin.us/environmentaleducation) 701 Fourth Ave. S., Suite 700, Minneapolis, MN 55415 |

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Last updated: January 2016

Subject: Frequently asked recycling questions

**Sample Newsletter Article**

**Can I recycle this? Frequently asked recycling questions**

Most people know the basic rules of recycling, including that you can recycle plastic bottles, metal cans, glass bottles, office paper and cardboard. But some of the specifics about recycling can be confusing. The following are answers to frequently asked questions about recycling.

1. **Can I recycle bottle caps and lids?**

Yes! To prevent lids from falling through gaps in the sorting facility, keep caps and lids on plastic bottles. Because they are made of different materials than the bottle being recycled, remove caps and lids on glass bottles and jars before recycling. Collect metal caps in a metal can and squeeze the can shut to prevent caps from falling out at the recycling facility.

1. **Can I recycling plastic bags? What about pizza boxes?**Plastic bags are also not recyclable in household recycling programs. This is because plastic bags cause problems at facilities that sort recycling once it leaves your home. Plastic bags become tangled in the machinery at the recycling facilities, obstructing or completely shutting down the sorting process. Plastic bags can be recycled at drop-off locations - many retail and grocery stores accept plastic bags as well as the Hennepin County drop-off facilities.

Pizza boxes from delivery are not recyclable because they are usually contaminated with oil and grease, which can ruin entire batches of recycled paper. The recycling industry spends nearly $700 million per year due to contamination of oil and grease on recycled paper. Pizza boxes from delivery are accepted in organics recycling programs.

1. **Do I need to clean my items before recycling?**

It is recommended that you clean all items before recycling. The cleaner your recyclables are, the easier it is to recycle them. Rinse bottles, jars and cans to remove food residue.

1. **What do the numbers on plastics tell me?**

The recycling numbers on plastic materials are called Resin Identification Codes, and they tell you what type of plastic your item is made from. They do not tell you if an item is recyclable or not. Plastic bottles, jugs, cups, containers and packaging from toys and electronics are accepted in household recycling programs. There are drop-off options for certain plastic items that are not accepted in household recycling programs, such as plastic bags and wrap.

1. **Are there items I could be recycling that I may not be now?**

Some items have been added to the accepted list in recycling programs in recent years. This includes milk, juice and broth cartons and additional plastics, such as yogurt cups, cottage cheese containers, and produce, deli and take out containers.

Additionally, we generally do well at recycling items from the kitchen, but it’s important to remember that our bathrooms, laundry rooms and home offices also have lots of recyclables.

Recycle items like shampoo bottles, plastics containers from wipes, toothpaste boxes and toilet paper rolls from the bathroom; detergent and fabric softener bottles, cat litter jugs and dryer sheet boxes from the laundry room; and mail, catalogs, magazines, office supply boxes and paper file folders from the office.

Learn more at [www.hennepin.us/recycling](http://www.hennepin.us/recycling).

**Sample Web Story**

**Recycling: Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **Can I recycle bottle caps and lids?**

Yes! Leaves caps on plastic bottles to prevent caps from falling through gaps during recycling. Collect metal caps from glass bottles in a metal can, and squeeze the can shut before recycling.

1. **Can I recycle plastic bags? What about pizza boxes?**Plastic bags are also not recyclable in household recycling programs because they get tangled in the equipment at facilities where your recycling is sorted after it leaves your home. Plastic bags can be recycled at drop-off locations - many retail and grocery stores accept plastic bags as well as the Hennepin County drop-off facilities.

Pizza boxes from delivery are not recyclable because they are usually contaminated with oil and grease, which can ruin entire batches of recycled paper. Pizza boxes from delivery are accepted in organics recycling programs.
2. **Do I need to clean my items before recycling?**

Yes, recyclable items should be rinsed before recycling.

1. **What do the recycling numbers on plastics tell me?**The numbers on plastic materials are called Resin Identification Codes, and they tell you what type of plastic your item is made from. They do not tell you if an item is recyclable or not.
2. **Are there items I could be recycling that I may not be now?**

Some items have been added to the accepted list in recycling programs in recent years, such as milk, juice and broth cartons and plastic yogurt cups, cottage cheese containers and produce, deli and take out containers. Additionally, we generally do well at recycling items from the kitchen, but it’s important to remember that our bathrooms, laundry rooms and home offices also have lots of recyclables. Recycle items like shampoo bottles, toothpaste boxes, detergent and fabric softener bottles, dryer sheet boxes, and mail, catalogs and magazines.

Learn more at [www.hennepin.us/recycling](http://www.hennepin.us/recycling).

**Sample Social Media Posts**

*Interact with Hennepin Environment on Facebook at* [*www.facebook.com/hennepinenvironment*](http://www.facebook.com/hennepinenvironment) *and Twitter at* [*www.twitter.com/hennepinenviro*](http://www.twitter.com/hennepinenviro) *(@hennepinenviro).*

**Facebook:**

Pizza boxes are not recyclable because they are usually contaminated with oil and grease. The recycling industry spends nearly $700 million per year due to contamination of oil and grease on recycled paper.

Have a dirty container? Give it a quick rinse before you toss it in the recycling!

Plastic shopping bags can become tangled in the equipment at facilities where your recycling is sorted after it leaves your home. Keep them out of your household recycling cart and drop them off at a local retailer for recycling instead.

Are you recycling everything you can? Remember to recycle milk, juice and broth cartons and plastic yogurt cups, cottage cheese containers and produce, deli and takeout containers. Also recycle items from your bathroom, laundry room and home office, including shampoo bottles, toothpaste boxes, detergent and fabric softener bottles, dryer sheet boxes, and mail, catalogs and magazines.

**Twitter:**
Have a dirty container? Give it a quick rinse before you toss it in the recycling!

Plastic shopping bags can become tangled in the equipment at facilities where your recycling is sorted after it leaves your home. Recycle them at a local retailer instead.

Are you recycling everything you can? Remember to recycle cartons, plastic cups and containers, and items from your bathroom, laundry room and office.

**Additional Promotional Materials**

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[Residential recycling guide (PDF)](http://www.hennepin.us/~/media/hennepinus/residents/recycling/documents/recycling-guide-flyer-english.pdf)