

# Recycle smart: know what goes in your recycling cart media kit

## About recycle smart

### With shifting markets and policy changes, many people have wondered what happens to their recycling and what they can do to best support recycling. The best thing you can do to support recycling is to avoid “wish-cycling” and recycle the right things.

## Resources to promote recycling the right things

Ways to educate the public about recycling:

* Use the sample newsletter article to share on your organization’s website or in your newsletters. These are editable so you can customize the length or message.
* Use the sample social media posts to share through your social media channels. These are editable so you can customize the message and website.
* Share the [recycling guide (PDF)](https://www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/residents/recycling/documents/recycling-guide-flyer-english.pdf). Printed copies can be ordered from <https://environmentalresources.hennepin.us/items>
* Encourage residents to order resources to improve recycling at home <https://environmentalresources.hennepin.us/residents>
* Follow and reshare messages posted on the Hennepin County Environment and Energy social media channels: [Hennepin Environment on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HennepinEnvironment/), [Hennepin Environment on Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/hennepinenvironment/), and [@hennepinenviro on Twitter](https://twitter.com/HennepinEnviro)
* Share the information and resources available at [www.hennepin.us/recycling](http://www.hennepin.us/recycling)

## Contact

For more information about this topic, contact:

* Kaitlin Steinberg, residential recycling coordinator, [kaitlin.steinberg@hennepin.us](mailto:kaitlin.steinberg@hennepin.us)
* Alisa Reckinger, communications and outreach specialist, [alisa.reckinger@hennein.us](mailto:alisa.reckinger@hennein.us)

# Sample newsletter article – short

## Recycle smart: know what goes in your recycling cart

At some point, we’ve all probably put something in our recycling cart that we weren’t sure was actually recyclable. This is sometimes called “wish-cycling.”

Although you may want to recycle everything, the best thing you can do to support recycling is to only recycle the items accepted in your program. These items can be sorted properly at recycling facilities and made into new products.

### Know what goes in your recycling cart

A picture containing application

Description automatically generatedStart with the basics of what can be recycled. This includes:

* Paper: mail, office papers, magazine, newspapers
* Boxes: cardboard boxes, cereal and cracker boxes, shoe boxes, toiletry boxes
* Cartons: milk cartons, juice boxes, broth cartons
* Glass: food and beverage bottles and jars
* Plastic bottles and jugs: soda bottles, milk jugs, shampoo bottles
* Plastic cups and containers: yogurt cups, clear cups, cottage cheese containers, produce containers
* Metal: food and beverage cans

### Keep these items out of your recycling cart

The following items can damage equipment at recycling facilities, harm employees at recycling facilities, or do not have strong markets to be turned into new products.

You can still recycle some of these items at drop-off locations. And for all of these items, think about ways you could avoid them – purchase high-quality items, buy used items, and find durable, reusable, or compostable alternatives.

Items that are important to leave out of your recycling cart include:

* Plastic bags
* Large plastic items
* Random metal items
* Single-use plastic utensils and straws
* Paper plates, cups, and takeout containers
* Propane tanks
* Cords and string lights
* Electronics and batteries
* Needles and sharps

Visit [hennepin.us/recycling](http://www.hennepin.us/recycling) for the recycling guide of items that are accepted throughout Hennepin County and more information on the most important items to keep out of your recycling cart.

# Sample newsletter article – long

## Recycle smart: know what goes in your recycling cart

At some point, we’ve all probably put something in our recycling cart that we weren’t sure was actually recyclable. This is sometimes called “wish-cycling.”

Although you may want to recycle everything, the best thing you can do to support recycling is to only recycle the items accepted in your program. These items can be sorted properly at recycling facilities and made into new products.

### Know what goes in your recycling cart

Start with the basics of what can be recycled. This includes:

* A picture containing application

  Description automatically generatedPaper: mail, office papers, magazine, newspapers
* Boxes: cardboard boxes, cereal and cracker boxes, shoe boxes, toiletry boxes
* Cartons: milk cartons, juice boxes, broth cartons
* Glass: food and beverage bottles and jars
* Plastic bottles and jugs: soda bottles, milk jugs, shampoo bottles
* Plastic cups and containers: yogurt cups, clear cups, cottage cheese containers, produce containers
* Metal: food and beverage cans

### Keep these items out of your recycling cart

These items can damage equipment at recycling facilities, harm employees at recycling facilities, or do not have strong markets to be turned into new products.

You can still recycle some of these items at drop-off locations. And for all of these items, think about ways you could avoid them – purchase high-quality items, buy used items, and find durable, reusable, or compostable alternatives.

* Plastic bags and film: These items get tangled in the equipment at recycling sorting facilities and interfere with the recycling process. Bring to a retail drop-off to be recycled.
* Large plastic items: Plastic lawn furniture, laundry baskets, storage tubs, and plastic toys are difficult to sort at recycling facilities and there aren’t good markets for recycling them.
* Random metal items: Pots, pans, pipes, hangers, tools, and other random metal items can damage equipment and harm workers at recycling sorting facilities. All metal can be recycled, just not in your recycling cart at home – bring these items to a scrap metal recycler.
* Batteries: These are too small to be sorted at recycling facilities, and certain batteries can cause fires. Batteries should be recycled at places like the county drop-off facilities.
* Bags of recyclables: Don’t put your recycling in bags in your recycling cart. Recyclers can’t tell what’s in the bag, so your items might not get recycled. Place recycling loose in your cart.
* Paper cups and plates and plastic utensils and straws: These items are often contaminated with food, are difficult to sort at recycling facilities, and don’t have good recycling markets. Avoid them by using reusable options.

Visit [hennepin.us/recycling](http://www.hennepin.us/recycling) for the recycling guide of items that are accepted throughout Hennepin County and more information on the most important items to keep out of your recycling cart.

# Social media posts

Suggested hashtags: #recyclesmart #recycling #hennepinrecycles #hennepinzerowaste

To use images and graphics: right click on image and select save picture as

### Recycle Smart – Keep these items out of your recycling cart

Facebook: The best thing you can do to support recycling is to recycle the right stuff:

* Know what’s ok to put in your recycling cart.
* Keep out stuff that’s not accepted or that you’re not sure about.

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

Twitter: The best thing you can do to support recycling is to recycle the right stuff. Learn more at [www.hennepin.us/recycling](http://www.hennepin.us/recycling) #recyclesmart

### Recycle Smart – Keep plastic bags out of your recycling cart

Facebook: Plastic bags and wrap get tangled in the equipment at recycling sorting facilities. Bring plastic bags to a retail drop-off to be recycled or avoid plastic bags altogether by choosing reusable bags. Find options at [www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide/items/plastic-bags-wrap](http://www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide/items/plastic-bags-wrap)

Instagram: Plastic bags and wrap get tangled in the equipment at recycling sorting facilities. Bring plastic bags to a retail drop-off to be recycled or avoid plastic bags altogether by choosing reusable bags. #recyclesmart #recycling

Twitter: Plastic bags and wrap don’t belong in your recycling cart! Find drop-off recycling options at [www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide/items/plastic-bags-wrap](https://www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide/items/plastic-bags-wrap) #recyclesmart

### Recycle Smart – Don’t put your recycling in bags in your recycling cart

Facebook: Don't put your recycling in bags in your recycling cart. Recyclers can't tell what's in the bag, so your items might not get recycled. Place recycling loose in your cart. Use an unlined bin or reusable bag to collect recycling in your home. Learn more at [www.hennepin.us/recycling](http://www.hennepin.us/recycling)

A picture containing text, outdoor, container, red

Description automatically generatedInstagram: Don't put your recycling in bags in your recycling cart. Recyclers can't tell what's in the bag, so your items might not get recycled. Place recycling loose in your cart. Use an unlined bin or reusable bag to collect recycling in your home. #recyclesmart #recycling

Twitter: Don't put your recycling in bags in your recycling cart. Recyclers can't tell what's in the bag, so your items might not get recycled. Learn more at [www.hennepin/recycling](http://www.hennepin/recycling) #recyclesmart

### Recycle Smart – Keep random metal items out of your recycling cart

Diagram

Description automatically generated with medium confidenceFacebook: Pots, pans, pipes, hangers, tools, and other random metal items can damage equipment and harm workers at recycling sorting facilities. All metal can be recycled, just not in your recycling cart at home – bring these items to a scrap metal recycler. Find options at <https://www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide/items/scrap-metal>

Diagram

Description automatically generatedInstagram: Pots, pans, pipes, hangers, tools, and other random metal items can damage equipment and harm workers at recycling sorting facilities. All metal can be recycled, just not in your recycling cart at home – bring these items to a scrap metal recycler. #recyclesmart #recycling

Twitter: Pots, pans, pipes, hangers, tools, and other random metal items can damage equipment and harm workers at recycling sorting facilities. All metal can be recycled, just not in your recycling cart at home. Find options at <https://www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide/items/scrap-metal> #recyclesmart

### Recycle Smart – Keep large plastic items out of your recycling cart (laundry baskets, buckets, tubs)

A picture containing text, kitchen appliance

Description automatically generatedFacebook: Plastic laundry baskets, buckets, storage tubs and other large plastic items are difficult to sort at recycling facilities, and there aren’t good markets for recycling them. Purchase high-quality items, use them for as long as possible, and look for donation opportunities if they're still in good shape when you're ready to get rid of them. Learn more at [www.hennepin.us/recycling](http://www.hennepin.us/recycling)

Instagram: Plastic laundry baskets, buckets, storage tubs and other large plastic items are difficult to sort at recycling facilities, and there aren’t good markets for recycling them. Purchase high-quality items, use them for as long as possible, and look for donation opportunities if they're still in good shape when you're ready to get rid of them. #recyclesmart #recycling

Twitter: Large plastic items are difficult to sort at recycling facilities and don’t have good recycling markets. Keep them out of your recycling cart. Learn more at [www.hennepin.us/recycling](http://www.hennepin.us/recycling) #recyclesmart

### Recycle Smart – Keep large plastic items out of your recycling cart (lawn furniture and toys)

A picture containing text, grass, outdoor, lawn

Description automatically generatedFacebook: Plastic lawn furniture, toys, and other large plastic items are difficult to sort at recycling facilities, and there aren’t good markets for recycling them. Purchase high-quality items, use them for as long as possible, and look for donation opportunities if they're still in good shape when you're ready to get rid of them. Learn more at [www.hennepin.us/recycling](http://www.hennepin.us/recycling)

A picture containing text, colorful

Description automatically generatedInstagram: Plastic lawn furniture, toys, and other large plastic items are difficult to sort at recycling facilities, and there aren’t good markets for recycling them. Purchase high-quality items, use them for as long as possible, and look for donation opportunities if they're still in good shape when you're ready to get rid of them. #recyclesmart #recycling #donate

Twitter: Large plastic items are difficult to sort at recycling facilities and don’t have good recycling markets. Keep them out of your recycling cart. Learn more at [www.hennepin.us/recycling](http://www.hennepin.us/recycling) #recyclesmart

### Recycle Smart – Keep batteries out of your recycling cart

Facebook: Batteries are too small to be sorted at recycling facilities, and certain batteries can cause fires. Batteries should be recycled at places like the Hennepin County Drop-off Facilities. Remove and recycle the batteries from electronics and toys or bring in the entire device if you cannot remove the batteries. Find options at [www.hennepin.us/batteryrecycling](http://www.hennepin.us/batteryrecycling)

Diagram

Description automatically generated*Optional additional message: Single-use alkaline batteries such as AA, AAA, C, D etc. can be put in the trash. To make it simple, we accept all types of household batteries at Hennepin County drop-off facilities.*

Instagram: Batteries are too small to be sorted at recycling facilities, and certain batteries can cause fires. Batteries should be recycled at places like the Hennepin County Drop-off Facilities. Remove and recycle the batteries from electronics and toys or bring in the entire device if you cannot remove the batteries. #recyclesmart #recycling

Twitter: Batteries are too small to be sorted at recycling facilities, and certain batteries can cause fires. Batteries and electronics that contain batteries should be recycled at places like the county drop-off facilities. Find options at [www.hennepin.us/batteryrecycling](http://www.hennepin.us/batteryrecycling) #recyclesmart

Diagram

Description automatically generatedA picture containing text, tool, power saw

Description automatically generated

### Recycle Smart – Keep paper cups and plates and plastic utensils and straws out of your recycling cart

A picture containing diagram

Description automatically generatedFacebook: Paper cups and plates and plastic utensils and straws are often contaminated with food, are difficult to sort at recycling facilities, and don’t have good recycling markets. Avoid them by using reusable options.

A picture containing text, table, plastic

Description automatically generatedInstagram: Paper cups and plates and plastic utensils and straws are often contaminated with food, are difficult to sort at recycling facilities, and don’t have good recycling markets. Avoid them by using reusable options. #recyclesmart #choosetoreuse

Twitter: Paper cups and plates and plastic utensils and straws are often contaminated with food, are difficult to sort at recycling facilities, and don’t have good recycling markets. Avoid them by using reusable options. #recyclesmart #choosetoreuse

### Recycle Smart – Keep single-use plastic utensils and straws out of your recycling cart

A picture containing shape

Description automatically generatedFacebook: Plastic utensils and straws are too small and difficult to sort at recycling facilities, and there aren’t good recycling markets for them. Avoid them by choosing reusable options or refusing them when you can.

Chart

Description automatically generated with medium confidenceInstagram: Paper cups and plates and plastic utensils and straws are often contaminated with food, are difficult to sort at recycling facilities, and don’t have good recycling markets. Avoid them by using reusable options. #recyclesmart #choosetoreuse

Twitter: Paper cups and plates and plastic utensils and straws are often contaminated with food, are difficult to sort at recycling facilities, and don’t have good recycling markets. Avoid them by using reusable options. #recyclesmart #choosetoreuse

### Recycle Smart – Keep paper plates and cups out of your recycling cart

A picture containing text

Description automatically generatedFacebook: Paper cups and plates can’t be recycled because they are often lined with plastic or contaminated with food. Avoid them by choosing reusable cups, mugs and plates.

A picture containing text, several

Description automatically generatedInstagram: Paper cups and plates can’t be recycled because they are often lined with plastic or contaminated with food. Avoid them by choosing reusable cups, mugs and plates. #recyclesmart #choosetoreuse

Twitter: Paper cups and plates can’t be recycled because they are often lined with plastic or contaminated with food. Avoid them by choosing reusable cups, mugs and plates. #recyclesmart #choosetoreuse

### Recycle Smart – Keep paper takeout containers out of your recycling cart

A picture containing text, grass

Description automatically generatedFacebook: Paper takeout containers can’t be recycled because they are often contaminated with food and many are lined with plastic. Check to see if they are BPI-certified compostable and accepted in the organics recycling. Avoid them by bring reusable cups and containers, opting to dine in, or choosing businesses that offer reusable takeout containers.

A picture containing text, grass, outdoor

Description automatically generatedInstagram: Paper takeout containers can’t be recycled because they are often contaminated with food and some are lined with plastic. Check to see if they are BPI-certified compostable and accepted in the organics recycling. Avoid them by bring reusable cups and containers, opting to dine in, or choosing businesses that offer reusable takeout containers. #recyclesmart #choosetoreuse

Twitter: Paper takeout containers can’t be recycled because they are often contaminated with food and some are lined with plastic. Avoid them by bring reusable cups and containers, opting to dine in, or choosing businesses that offer reusable takeout containers. #recyclesmart

### Recycle Smart – Keep cords, hoses, and string lights out of your recycling cart

Diagram

Description automatically generatedFacebook: Keep “tanglers” like cords, hoses and string lights out of your recycling bin. As the name suggests, these items get tangled in the equipment at recycling facilities. You can recycle cords and string lights at Hennepin County drop-off facilities. Old hoses can go in the trash. Learn more on the Green Disposal Guide [www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide](http://www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide).

Diagram

Description automatically generatedInstagram: Keep “tanglers” like cords, hoses and string lights out of your recycling bin. As the name suggests, these items get tangled in the equipment at recycling facilities. You can recycle cords and string lights at Hennepin County drop-off facilities. Old hoses can go in the trash. #recyclesmart #recycling

Twitter: Keep “tanglers” like cords, hoses and string lights out of your recycling bin - these items get tangled in the equipment at recycling facilities. Recycle cords and string lights at Hennepin County drop-off facilities. Put old hoses in the trash. Learn more [www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide](http://www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide)

### Recycle Smart – Keep cylinders and tanks out of your recycling cart

Diagram

Description automatically generatedFacebook: Tanks and cylinders contain a compressed gas that makes them explosive and potential fire hazards. It is illegal to put propane tanks, helium tanks, and other pressurized cylinders in your household recycling or trash. Properly dispose of all pressurized cylinders; find options on the Green Disposal Guide <https://www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide/search#term=tanks&page=0>

Instagram: Cylinders and tanks contain a compressed gas that makes them explosive and potential fire hazards. It is illegal to put propane tanks, helium tanks, and other pressurized cylinders in your household recycling or trash. Properly dispose of all pressurized cylinders. #recyclesmart

Twitter: Cylinders and tanks contain a compressed gas that makes them explosive and potential fire hazards. It is illegal to put pressurized cylinders and tanks in your household recycling or trash. Properly dispose of all pressurized cylinders; find options <https://www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide/search#term=tanks&page=0>

### Recycle Smart – Keep needles and sharps out of your recycling cart

A picture containing diagram

Description automatically generatedFacebook: Needles and sharps should be managed and disposed of safely to prevent injury and disease transmission from needle-sticks. They should never be placed in your recycling cart. Learn about disposal options on the Green Disposal Guide <https://www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide/items/needles-sharps>

A picture containing text, device

Description automatically generatedInstagram: Needles and sharps should be managed and disposed of safely to prevent injury and disease transmission from needle-sticks. They should never be placed in your recycling cart. Options include checking with your healthcare provider, destroying at home, using a mail-in program, or bringing to a Hennepin County drop-off facility. #recyclesmart

Twitter: Needles and sharps should be managed and disposed of safely to prevent injury and disease transmission from needle-sticks. They should never be placed in your recycling cart. Learn about disposal options on the Green Disposal Guide [www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide/items/needles-sharps](http://www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide/items/needles-sharps) #recyclesmart