

Dear Recycle Lady



Dear Recycle Lady

Dear Recycle Lady,
What is plastic film? Curious

Dear Curious,

Good question. Plastic film, also known as plastic film packaging, is soft flexible polyethylene (PE) packaging such as grocery bags, zip-top bags and dry-cleaning bags. It can be the wrap around many products such as paper plates, napkins and bathroom tissue. Also, it can be the plastic wrap that is wrapped around items shipped to you in a large box. According to americanchemistry.com/understanding-plastic-film/, plastic film can be clear or colored, printed or plain, single- or multi-layered and combined with other materials such as aluminum and paper. Thus, the only thing that all plastic film really has in common is that it is flexible in nature.

Dear Recycle Lady,

Thanks for the information on the new labels. The plastic label said “Bags, Wraps, and Film” recycle? Please give us a list of recyclable items in each of the three categories. Reader

Dear Reader,

Plastic is one of the hardest recyclable products to define. Hopefully, the examples of each of the categories below will be helpful. Most of the information has come from the American Chemistry site mentioned above.

- 1. Examples of bags that recycle include grocery bags, newspaper bags (sleeves), carryout bags, product bags, zip-top food storage bags, and bags from retail purchases. Carton liners (for such products as cereals) may be plastic or it may be paper. Check the bottom of the box to see if the recycle symbol is there. If no recycle symbol is there, see if the liner tears like paper. If it tears, it is paper and doesn't recyclable with plastic.**
- 2. Examples of wraps are the wraps on paper towels, napkins, disposable cups, bathroom tissue, and diapers. Wraps on cases of water/soda bottles are recyclable, but the six-pack rings are not. Some meat, poultry and seafood packages have plastic wraps (such as hot dogs and bacon film).**
- 3. Examples of food packaging film include in-store bags for produce (such as apples and potatoes), nonfrozen baked goods (such as rolls and breads), candy and confection bags and wrappers, and carton liners (for such products as cake mixes).**
- 4. Examples of nonfood packaging film refers to such things as industrial liners (plastic film used to line boxes or as packaging for shipping applications, which often have a recycle symbol with the number 4), overwrap and counter bags. Bubble wrap and air pillows will also recycle but be sure to deflate them first.**

As with all recycling, recycle only clean, dry plastic bags and film. Be sure to remove receipts or any other items from the bags.

I realize this is a lot of information for one column, so I will save shrink wrap and stretch wrap for next week. Kroger personnel have been very helpful in my understanding of what they do and do not accept as recyclable. Please send your questions and I will try to find an answer for you. My research has shown me that plastics are definitely difficult to define.

To All My Readers: Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and Best wishes one and all. I greatly appreciate all your questions, encouragement and comments. Please keep them coming.

Have questions about recycling, or interesting information about recycling? Send questions or requests to recyclelady@greenbrier-swa.com. Dear Recycle Lady is sponsored jointly by the Greenbrier Recycling Center and Greenworks Recycling.