

Dear Recycle Lady



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Dear Recycle Lady,

I was given a box of delicious candy for my birthday and all the small pieces of candy were wrapped in aluminum foil. Are small pieces of foil recyclable? Do they cause problems for the equipment? Candy Wrapper

Dear Candy Wrapper,

Good question. Locally we are not able to accept small pieces of aluminum foil, but cities with high-end recycling equipment may be able to do so. Small pieces of any recyclables tend to fall out during baling, potentially causing problems or even stopping the entire process. One solution would be to place the small pieces inside a larger piece so they were contained and would withstand processing.

Dear Recycle Lady,

A couple weeks ago you said that dog food bags stuffed with cardboard could not be recycled. However, when the bag is opened, one can see cardboard between the two outside layers. Why can't this bag be recycled with cardboard along with the cardboard inside? Dog Lover & Recycler

Dear Dog Lover & Recycler,

Dog food bags do have cardboard fillers inside the two outside layers, but in order to recycle that cardboard, you would need to remove the outside layers first. Bags that contain food are made of plastic for strength and are waxed so that food doesn't leak out. In regard to the cardboard stuffed inside the dogfood bag, it is recyclable, but it must be removed from the bag and put in the cardboard bin. When the entire bag full of cardboard is put in the bin, the bag and contents go in the trash. The Recycle Center doesn't have the staff to remove the cardboard, or any recyclables from a bag, nor can they recycle any bags. Please put all recyclables in the correct bins and take the single-use, plastic grocery bags to Kroger, Walmart or Lowes for recycling. Bags, such a dogfood bags, go in the trash.

Dear Recycle Lady,

Why should we recycle? Recently, I read a news article stating that some places are either discontinuing recycling or taking items put in recycle bins to the landfill. Hope This is Not True

Dear Hope This is Not True,

Absolutely, this is not true. Recycling is on the increase and prices paid for recyclables are increasing. For example, in January 2021, the Recycle Center shipped out 78 tons of recyclables. In January 2022 they shipped out 111 tons of recyclables, which is nearly 50% more than last year!

Recycling protects our environment. It reduces waste and reuses valuable resources. It helps to provide a cleaner, greener tomorrow for ourselves and for future generations. For example, recycled aluminum saves 95% of the energy that would be required to make new aluminum from ore. Every day, new items are being created from recycled materials. Recycling five two-liter plastic bottles can produce enough fiberfill to make a small ski jacket, and recycling 36 bottles can fill a sleeping bag. More than 50% of the carpet fiber manufactured in the USA has two-liter bottle content. Recycling also conserves landfill space. As a state we dispose of nearly 2 million tons of municipal solid waste annually. This means that each of us generates an average of 4 pounds of waste per day. About 90% of this waste is buried in landfills across the state. Yet, nearly half of our household trash is

recyclable. Greenbrier Solid Waste is now opening a new cell at the landfill that covers four acres and, when full, will be over 100 feet deep. That's a lot of trash!

“There is no such thing as ‘away.’ When we throw anything away, it must go somewhere.”
Annie Leonard, The Story of Stuff

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.