

Dear Recycle Lady



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Dear Recycle Lady,

I am receiving conflicting information about what paper can be recycled and what can't be. Some say only white paper can be recycled, while others say colored paper can also be recycled. Please tell me exactly what colors of paper can be recycled. Confused

Dear Confused,

Good question. The confusion probably is with colored paper since all clean white paper can be recycled and light colors can be recycled with white paper. This includes notebook paper, stationary, postcards and all mail and envelopes (including those with windows.) The dark colored papers are probably the cause of the confusion. Red, black, dark brown, and florescent colors are too dark to recycle with paper. However, all is not lost as these colors can be recycled with magazines. Be kind to our environment; send all junk mail to either paper or magazine recycling. Believe or not, the manufacturing of junk mail creates as much greenhouse gas emissions annually as 3.7 million cars, largely due to deforestation.

Hi Recycle Lady,

A friend told me this morning that the Recycling Center has a new machine that recycles bottle caps and tops. Is this possible? Non-believer

Dear Non-Believer,

Good for you to not believing everything you hear. Kindly tell your friend that the Recycling Center does not have such a machine. Caps and bottles are made of two different types are plastic, thus can't be recycled together, so be sure to remove all caps and tops from bottles and cans before recycling them. A special machine for recycling bottle caps is in the same category as the letter to the editor saying that the landfill is now accepting fracked gas wastes. Neither are true.

Dear Recycle Lady,

Should I take paper or plastic bags at the grocery store? Shopper

Dear Shopper,

Plastic bags are definitely a no-no. In fact, Kroger will no longer be using single-use plastic bags after 2025 and some stores in the U.S. and Australia have already instituted such a policy. Shoppers have become accustomed to bringing their own bags or carrying out purchased items without a bag. Some estimates suggest that 100 billion (100,000,000,000!) single-use plastic bags are thrown away in the U.S. every year and only 5% are recycled. Brown paper bags are highly preferable to plastic as they can be recycled with cardboard, however, bringing your own reusable bags is the best choice of all.

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.