

Dear Recycle Lady



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Dear Recycle Lady,

What do I do with the plastic red caps that come off some cans? Can they be recycled? What about other tops of cans and bottles? Are any of them recyclable? A Reader

Dear Reader

Unfortunately, bottle and can tops, red or any other color, are not recyclable locally. Before putting a plastic bottle or a can in recycling be sure to remove the top. Not only are the tops not recyclable, they are a potential danger to Recycling Center staff. During the process of crushing the bottles and bundling them in tight bundles a remaining top could be like a missile shooting out into the room.

Dear Recycle Lady,

Today, I washed a container and its top to prepare it for recycling. The bottom of the container had a "1" inside the recycle triangle, so I knew it would recycle. However, I could not find any number or recycle symbol for the top part. If the bottom is recyclable, does that mean that the top is also recyclable? Puzzled

Dear Puzzled,

First of all, thanks for washing out your container. Unclean items put in recycling can contaminate an entire load of recycle items. Recycling workers try to remove all dirty items before they are crushed. If a dirty one escapes notice, it becomes a contaminant. To answer your question, any plastic without a recycle triangle with a "1" or a "2" inside is not recyclable locally. All parts of a container must be checked before adding it to recycling. Both tops and bottoms of some containers are recyclable, but some are not.

Dear Recycle Lady,

Why should we recycle? News articles state that some places are discontinuing recycling. Questioning

Dear Questioning,

Recycling protects our environment! It helps to provide a cleaner, greener tomorrow for ourselves and for future generations. Sometimes the demand for recycled material is low, however, every day, new items are being created from recycled materials. For example, recycled aluminum saves 95% of the energy that would be required to make new aluminum from ore. 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. Did you know that 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.

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.