

Dear Recycle Lady



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Last week you said that labels on steel cans did not need to be removed, but labels on aluminum cat food cans must be removed. You also said that steel cans should be clean and cat food cans must be clean. Why are the requirements different for these two kinds of cans? Serious Recycler

Dear Serious Recycler,

Good question. The simplest answer is that steel cans and aluminum cans are processed differently. For example, steel cans are processed with high heat and aluminum cans are processed with low heat. Each type of recyclable has requirements, or guidelines, for recycling that must be followed. These guidelines are based on what needs to be done to have recyclables acceptable to buyers. The one guideline that applies to all recyclables is cleanliness. Dirty recyclables contaminate an entire batch and to the landfill it goes.

Dear Recycle Lady,

Klondike bars are wrapped in what appears to be aluminum foil with white paper on the other side. This wrapping even crumples like aluminum foil, despite the white paper. Can this wrapping be recycled? Lover of Ice Cream Bars

Dear Lover of Ice Cream Bars,

Unfortunately, as good as Klondike bars are, their wrappings are not recyclable. Plain aluminum foil would be, but the white paper side of the foil prevents the wrapping from being recycled.

Dear Readers,

Good news in the future for our oceans. According to a report by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, at least 8 million tons of plastic waste ends up in the world's oceans every year. The report warns that by 2050, there will be more plastic trash in our oceans than marine life. In an effort to stop such a trend, steps are now being taken to eliminate small, single-use plastics bottles that add to the plastic trash in our oceans. Last year, Walt Disney Co. said it would get rid of all small plastic shampoo bottles at its resorts and cruise ships. Marriott International, the world's largest hotel chain, will eliminate about 500 million small plastic bottles of shampoo, conditioners and bath gel from its hotel rooms worldwide, effective December 2020. Holiday Inn has said it will eliminate about 200 million tiny bottles each year by 2021. In 2023, it will be illegal for hotels in California to use small plastic bottles for any single-use applications. These small plastic, single-use bottles in hotels will be replaced with larger bottles or pump dispensers hooked to the shower walls. This is a big step forward towards reducing single-use plastics and great news for our oceans and waterways.

Happy Thanksgiving To all My Readers. Have a wonderful Turkey Day.

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.