



News Release

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Charleston County asks residents and business owners to reduce recycling contamination

[Charleston County's Environmental Management Department](#) is asking residents and business owners to do their part to reduce recycling contamination by understanding which items are accepted and not accepted in Charleston County's recycling program.

"Charleston County residents and businesses continue to embrace and participate in our recycling program. However, it is important to emphasize the need to make every effort to not place contaminants in your recycling cart. The presence of unaccepted items in our recycling stream slows down processing and degrades the value of the recyclables," said Environmental Management Director Andrew Quigley. "When in doubt, keep it out."

Contaminants are items that are not accepted and should not be placed in a curbside recycling cart or a recycling dumpster.



A pile of plastic hoses retrieved by staff from collected recyclables within the past six weeks. Hoses not only contaminate loads of recyclable material, but also threaten the health and safety of workers.

- **No Plastic Bags:** Plastic bags can become tangled in processing equipment causing shut downs. Return clean, dry plastic bags to participating retail stores for recycling. Additionally, please do not bag recyclables. Place items loose in recycling carts, not inside plastic bags or boxes.
- **No Plastic Wrap:** Plastic wrap, also known as soft plastics or plastic film, should not be placed in recycling carts. This type of plastic can be bunched up in your hand and includes plastic packaging used for paper towels and toilet paper, plastic wrap to cover and store food, and other products such as Zip-Loc bags and dry cleaning bags.
- **No Styrofoam Packaging or Containers:** Styrofoam is not accepted in Charleston County's recycling program. Styrofoam cups, to-go containers, meat trays, and foam used for packaging and shipping must be placed in the garbage.
- **No Shredded Paper:** Shredded paper is no longer accepted in the County's recycling program. Options for shredded paper include: placing in the garbage, adding to a backyard composting system, or recycling paper instead of shredding. Businesses that are required to shred their paper are encouraged to contact a private shredding company.
- **No Electronics:** Electronic waste, such as old TV's, computers, and printers, should be dropped off at a staffed Charleston County Convenience Center.
- **No Food Waste or Garbage:** Food containers, such as pizza boxes and to-go containers, that have been soiled with food are not recyclable and should be placed in the garbage. Please empty and rinse plastic food containers, such as plastic clam shells and yogurt containers, prior to recycling.
- **No Scrap Metal:** Scrap metal of any size can cause excessive damage to recycling equipment and should not be placed in recycling carts. Drop off scrap metal at a staffed Charleston County Convenience Center.
- **No Rope-Like Items:** Water hoses, holiday lights, leather belts, and other similar items can wrap around equipment causing shut downs. These items must be placed in the garbage.
- **No Household Hazardous Waste:** Paint, automotive fluids, CFL bulbs, household cleaners, pesticides and other similar materials must be disposed of properly. Drop off household hazardous waste at a staffed Charleston County Convenience Center.
- **No Diapers or Biohazardous Waste:** Syringes, sharps, diapers, and sanitary products are not recyclable and pose a risk to workers. For safe disposal of sharps, use a thick plastic container, such as a laundry detergent container, and label the container so that anyone handling the container knows it contains sharps and should not be recycled. For disposal, cap the container and place in the garbage.

Charleston County's recycling program accepts plastic bottles and containers; aluminum and steel cans; glass bottles and jars; paper and cardboard. For more information, contact the Charleston County Environmental Management Department at (843) 720-7111, or visit www.recycle.charlestoncounty.org.

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- Visit our website: www.charlestoncounty.org
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- Prepared by the Public Information Office -