



# Ware 4 Bins & Recycling

Bins, Trolleys, Recycling and Waste Containers

## Frequently Asked Questions about Recycling

### Which plastics can be recycled?

There are about 50 different types of plastic and all are recyclable. The American Society of Plastics Industry have developed a standard marking code to help consumers identify and sort the main types of plastic: (Waste Online, 2008)



PET

**Polyethylene terephthalate** - Fizzy drink bottles and oven-ready meal trays.



HDPE

**High-density polyethylene** - Bottles for milk and washing-up liquids.



PVC

**Polyvinyl chloride** - Food trays, cling film, bottles for squash, mineral water and shampoo.



LDPE

**Low density polyethylene** - Carrier bags and bin liners.



PP

**Polypropylene** - Margarine tubs, microwaveable meal trays.



PS

**Polystyrene** - Yoghurt pots, foam meat or fish trays, hamburger boxes and egg cartons, vending cups, plastic cutlery, protective packaging for electronic goods and toys.



OTHER

**Any other plastics** that do not fall into any of the above categories. - An example is melamine, which is often used in plastic plates and cups.

Recycling all types of plastics can be a costly process as it requires hand sorting by trained staff. For this reason, some materials reclamation facilities will not be able to recycle all types of plastic. You should contact your local recycling facilities or waste carrier to find out which types of plastic they are currently recycling and whether this is likely to change in the future.

### Can tetra packs (drinks cartons) be recycled?

Tetra packs can be recycled, but again you will need to check with your waste carrier and local recycling plant to see whether they have the facilities to do so.

### Does my recycled waste end up in a landfill site?

Once your recyclable waste has been collected and brought to a materials reclamation facility it is then sorted using both automated and manual sorting processes. Any waste that cannot be recycled or waste that is too contaminated to be recycled will be sent to landfill. You can reduce the risk of waste being sent to landfill by ensuring it is clean (see below) and recyclable by your local facility.

## **We spend time sorting all our recyclable waste into different bins and our waste carrier tips it all into the same container, does this mean it is not being recycled?**

Many materials reclamation facilities will sort the recyclable waste upon arrival to the plant using a variety of manual and automated processes. For this reason, some waste carriers transport all the recyclable waste streams together.

Separating waste at the source (i.e. in the workplace) is good practice and can make people think more about what waste they are producing and where it ends up. However, in some instances it may be an easier option to have a 'mixed recyclables container' where all recyclable waste is collected. There is a greater risk of cross-contamination and confusion when collecting all 'mixed recyclables' in one bin so you will need to be sure there is clear signage and labelling of what can and can't be placed in the bin.

## **Why should I wash my recyclable waste?**

Washing your recyclable waste will reduce the chances of contamination and ensure your waste is recycled. In many materials reclamation facilities the waste is partly hand sorted and consequently any contaminated materials or materials that cannot be recycled will be sent to landfill.

Ensuring your recyclable waste is clean will also make storage prior to recycling easier by reducing odours. Crushing cans, plastic bottles and cardboard boxes will also increase storage capacity and therefore increase the amount of waste you can recycle at any one time.

## **Is recycling economically viable?**

Recycling waste saves money if the waste is diverted from landfill. This is because there is an ever increasing **Landfill Tax** in place to help meet EU targets and discourage businesses from sending waste to landfill. Some waste streams also have a very high value and recycling them will contribute to significant savings. For example, aluminium makes up 1-2% of the domestic waste stream but accounts for around 50% of the value. Take a look at our case study for the University of Leicester to see how recycling on a large scale can result in dramatic cost savings. Remember that recycling is not the only solution. You should also look for opportunities where waste can be **minimised**. For example, an office vending machine produces waste plastic cups. Recycling the plastic cups will save money and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. A better option, however, would be to provide re-usable mugs which would prevent the plastic cup waste altogether and save even more money. Most vending machines have a sensor that allows mugs to be used when placed underneath the nozzle where the cup is dispensed.

## **What about the economics of recycling on a national scale?**

Recycling depends upon a complex number of factors including a secure and stable supply of materials, suitable collection and transportation to the materials reclamation facility, reliable separation and clean-up of the waste and a secure market for the recycled product. Recycling your waste will help provide the materials to produce recycled products but it is also important to support the market for recycled products, for example, through purchasing recycled paper.

## **Further information...**

If you would like know more about the environmental and economic benefits of recycling and discover ways you can improve your business's waste management scheme you can order our brand new electronic guide '**Are You Rubbish With Waste**' for just **£9.99**. Please contact us on 0113 250 8688 or email [info@ware4.co.uk](mailto:info@ware4.co.uk) for more information.