



Recycling 101

There are three main forms of household recycling: single-stream, dual-stream, and sorted. For “single-stream” (also called “co-mingled”) recycling, all recyclables are placed in one bin to be sorted later at a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). For “dual-stream” recycling, the household separates recyclables into two categories. Usually dual-stream recycling is sorted by paper and cardboard in one bin, and plastic, glass, and metal in the other. For “sorted” recycling, the household separates each type of recyclable material into its own bin. For example, you might have a separate bin for each paper, plastic, metal, glass, and cardboard.

Whichever way you recycle, here are some helpful tips to make sure your materials are able to be recycled.

1. Recyclables should be rinsed clean, dried, and free of foods or liquids.
2. Keep materials loose or unbagged. Never put plastic bags in your bin.
3. Cardboard should always be flattened to save space.
4. Do not include anything smaller than a child’s fist in your bin. Keep caps on bottles unless otherwise directed.
5. Always follow your drop-off center or recycling hauler’s accepted materials list. If you don’t have the list handy, check out the *Resources* page on www.barrycountyrecycles.org.

Following your hauler’s or drop-off center’s recycling guide is very important to avoid contamination. Contamination is when the wrong items, or items prepared in the wrong way, are put in the bin. When recycling loads are heavily contaminated, they are no longer suitable for recycling and may instead go to the landfill. If you are not confident an item is able to be recycled, it is best to throw it away so that you don’t risk spoiling the rest of your recycling efforts. Just remember, “*when in doubt, throw it out!*” You can also contact your hauler or drop-off center directly with questionable items.