

# Recycling

## The Full Circle

Trash & Recycling Edition

Current news and helpful tips from Carmel Utilities

### PLASTIC

While hard plastic containers like water bottles, milk jugs and detergent containers can be put in your recycling container, flexible plastics like grocery bags, bubble wrap and Styrofoam require special handling and can't be recycled curbside.

- Lids are too small to recycle by themselves so put them on the containers or throw them away.
- If you can poke your finger through the plastic, it doesn't belong in your recycling container.
- Many local grocery and merchandise stores have plastic bag recycling deposit stations. These bags go to specialized facilities equipped to recycle plastic bags. It is suggested that you utilize these stations.

### PAPER & CARDBOARD

Flattened cardboard, newspaper, magazines, office paper and common mail can be recycled as long as they are not contaminated by food, liquid or waste.

- Break down cardboard boxes, it makes them easier to process and leaves more room for other recyclables.

Recycling is good for the environment and our local economy.

### Rule of Thumb

Put items smaller than a credit card – like coffee pods and loose lids, in the trash.

### Never recycle anything smaller than a credit card

When it comes to recycling, size matters. If the item is too small to go through the sorting equipment, it can get jammed in the machinery and shut down operations for extensive periods of time.

# The world of recycling is changing – and it’s hard to keep up

Sue Maki, Carmel Utilities

In my roles with the City of Carmel and Hamilton County, I get asked all the time about recycling. People really care about the environment and want to do the right thing. Unfortunately, there is a lot of incorrect information floating around. I hear from people who move here from other parts of the country, where the recycling processes are different, confused about what we do. I also know that the recycling industry itself has changed and what was once true is no longer.

China, for example, used to take a large percentage of our recycling. Large barges used to go west over the Pacific Ocean, filled with our recyclables and then come back east with goods that

Americans buy. It was a system that worked for decades, but that changed recently. Not to get into the commerce and political details, but China has become extremely restrictive in accepting our recycling; frankly, they have enough of their own. We now have to look to American markets to process our recyclable waste.

Not to anyone’s surprise, American commodity processors have high standards for their incoming material. They require low contamination rates for the commodities they accept. While China used to take our recyclables with virtually no standard, American commodity

processors are different. Residents of Carmel care about our environment and want to recycle. Unfortunately, old habits that used to be okay are no longer viable in today’s market.

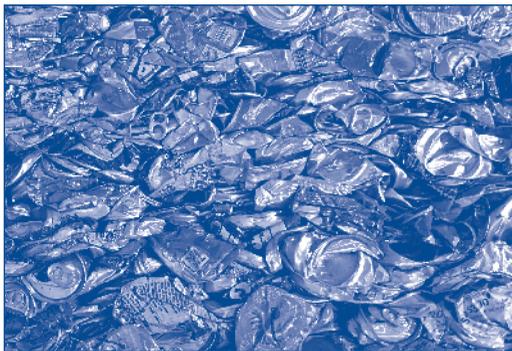
The American recycling commodity system will continue to advance and be able to better process and re-purpose our waste.

A few tweaks to your recycling habits will ensure that as much as possible is properly recycled. But better yet, try to reduce the amount of your personal waste.

Going back to our Great-Grandparents times of reusing items and wasting as little as possible makes good financial sense. First we should all “Reduce” and “Reuse.” Recycling is the last step.



## Here is the bottom line: “When in doubt, throw it out!”



*Sue Maki serves as Manager of the City of Carmel’s trash & recycling program and President of the Hamilton County Solid Waste Board which oversees the community recycling compactors in Noblesville.*



# Things That Most Recycling Companies Request

## Empty Clean Dry

### 1. No Plastic Bags

This is a recent change as the industry has been battling clogged sorting equipment caused by these loose plastic bags (the kind you get at the grocery store).

What can you do instead? Return those plastic bags to your local grocer or big-box retailer. Most of them have plastic bag recycling receptacles that go to specialized facilities. Better yet, when you shop, get into the habit of bringing your own reusable bags instead. That is a convenient and practical way to deal with this issue.



### 3. Don't use plastic bags

Another common issue is how to toss out your recyclables. As much as it makes sense to bag them for neatness, that is the wrong thing to do. Do not put recycling in a plastic bag because these filled bags are not opened during the recycling process. Instead, they are tossed in the trash pile, headed to the landfill ... unopened. You may think you are being kind to the recycling process by keeping things neat, but your efforts are for naught. Please keep recyclables loose.

### 2. Keep recyclables clean and dry

Food soiled or wet recycling tends to contaminate the entire load, and therefore is not recycled and sent to the landfill. While you do not have to scour your container or put them through the dishwasher, you should rinse them out and make sure they are empty. And that peanut butter jar that has leftover peanut butter? Throw it out. The energy used to clean that jar is more than the energy savings of recycling it. And that pizza box with grease spots? Throw it out too.

### 4. Wishful recycling

This is a common issue that presents itself in almost every load. The garden hose, Styrofoam, window glass, cookware, landscape waste, etc. All these things and more are commonly put in recycling but they are not processed through the standard co-mingled recycling stream. Batteries are particularly problematic as they can cause fires.



**Never Place these contaminants in the recycling container**

**Plastic Bags & Wrappers**  
**Styrofoam**  
**Greasy Pizza Boxes**  
**Food**  
**Electronics & Batteries**  
**Yard Waste**  
**Diapers**  
**Soiled paper**  
**Clothing & Shoes**  
**Tools**  
**Construction Waste**  
**Medical Items**  
**Scrap Metal**



### Special Needs Service

#### Need help getting your cart to and from the curb?

For those individuals with special needs who are physically unable to wheel their trash carts to the curb, Republic Services has a free service where they will wheel your carts down and return them for you.

Please note that drivers will not enter garages or go behind houses. The carts must be placed outside the garage or in front of the house the evening before trash day.

To get additional information contact Republic Services at 317-917-7300.  
Ask to sign-up for the ADA service.



#### Want to learn more about recycling?

When it comes to recycling, everyone has a part to play. Working together, we can make sure recyclable materials don't end up in our lakes and landfills.

[www.recyclingsimplified.com](http://www.recyclingsimplified.com)

# Residential Trash & Recycling Helpful Tips

## Yard Waste

- Please place as much yard waste as possible into the cart. It is permissible for a small amount of yard waste to stick out of the cart.
- Consider adding a second trash cart for free or a third cart for \$5 per month for ongoing waste disposal needs.
- During the months of April and May as well as October 15 through December 15 each home is allowed up to 20 bags/bundles of yard waste per week free of charge.
- Large branches, shown in the picture to the right, must be cut into shorter sections and tied into bundles.
- Bulky landscape waste pick-up is available upon request. \$10 for up to 8 cubic yards. Debris needs to be at the curb and cut in lengths less than 8 feet and bundled or bagged. Call 317-917-7300 to schedule pick-up.



## What if I have a bag that won't fit inside with the lid down?

- Fill your trash cart completely before leaving bagged waste outside of the cart.
- Close the lid then place the bag on top of the tote.
- Do not place the bag beside the tote on the ground.

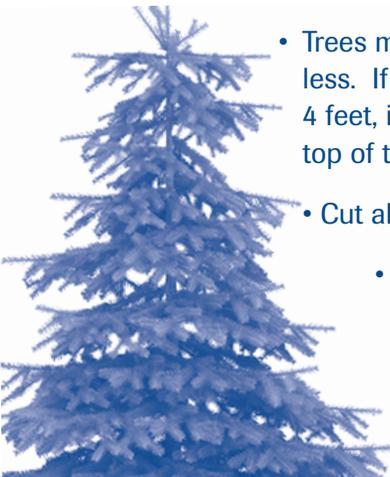


## Does the lid have to close all the way?

- As long as the top covers the bags inside and nothing is falling out, it is acceptable.
- Items of any type longer than four feet in length must be cut down in order to fit in the top of the CNG trucks.



The City trash program includes pick-up of one Christmas tree per home. We collect Christmas trees on your regularly scheduled collection days during the first two weeks of January.



- Trees must be cut in sections of 4 feet or less. If the tree section is longer than 4 feet, it will not fit into the cage at the top of the CNG trucks.
- Cut all trees taller than four feet in half.
- Remove all tree bags, ornaments, tinsel and stands.

## Holiday Reminder

Trash collection will not pick up on the following holidays. Service will be delayed one day for the remainder of the week following the holiday.

Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas Day  
New Years Day  
Memorial Day  
Fourth of July  
Labor Day



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City of **Carmel Utilities**

