



# What Can I Recycle?

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A handy reference guide



# What Can I Recycle?

## Paper and Cardboard

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**Letters and Brochures / Cardboard Boxes (Flat) / Egg Boxes / Toilet and Kitchen Roll / Newspapers / Tetra Pak / Juice or Milk Cartons**

### Why is it so important to recycle paper products?

- Paper and cardboard products make up 23.7% of material in the household recycling bin.
- Manufacturing recycled paper instead of new paper from virgin wood pulp uses 54% less energy and 58% less water.
- Each tonne of recycled paper can save 17 trees, 1,400 litres of oil, 2.2 cubic metres of landfill space, 4,000 kilowatts of energy and 26,000 litres of water.
- Paper products use up to 35% of the world's annual commercial wood harvest.
- One tree can filter up to 27kg of pollutants from the air each year.
- For an office with 1,000 employees, each person uses approximately 10,000 sheets of paper per year, enough to stretch nearly 3,000km and to create a pile 500 metres high, or five times the height of the Dublin Spire!
- One piece of office grade paper can be recycled seven times.

# What Can I Recycle?

## Plastics

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**Plastic Drink Bottles / Plastic Cleaning Bottles / Butter, Yoghurt & Salad Tubs / Fruit & Veg Trays / Plastic Milk Cartons / Soap or Shampoo Bottles**

### **Why is it so important to recycle plastic products?**

- Plastic accounts for 12.0% of material in the household recycling bin.
- Plastic is made from crude oil – a valuable and limited non-renewable resource.
- Recycling plastic saves 2/3 of the energy required to produce plastic from raw materials.
- 27 recycled soft drink bottles can be recycled into one fleece jacket.
- 150 recycled plastic bottles can be made into one mat.
- It takes 5 PET (soft drink) bottles to make 1 square foot of polyester carpet, an extra large t-shirt or filling for a ski jacket.
- One tonne of plastic is equivalent to 20,000 two litre drink bottles or 120,000 plastic carrier bags. Plastic consumption is growing at about 4% every year in Western Europe.
- Manufacturers who once packaged their goods in glass have changed to plastics packaging for a variety of reasons, including:
  - Lower Cost
  - Safety – plastic packaging is less hazardous if dropped.

# What Can I Recycle?

## WEEE

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WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment – anything containing a battery or a plug) should **never** be placed in the recycling bin.

- WEEE can contain hazardous components, such as mercury and cadmium, so should always be handled with care and disposed of appropriately, not in household bins.
- The cords from WEEE items can cause serious problems at MRF's (Material Recovery Facilities) designed to recover dry recyclable materials such as paper, plastic containers, steel and aluminium cans etc.
- Recycle any old or broken electrical items at your local recycling centre or by returning them to an electrical shop.
- Under law all shops selling electrical items are required to take back old used electrical items on a one for one or a like for like basis (e.g. old kettle for new kettle).

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# What Can I Recycle?

## Glass

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### Glass bottles and jars

- Glass accounts for approximately 8% of the material recycled from households.
- Glass can cause serious contamination issues if placed into Mixed Recyclables bins
- Glass can be recycled repeatedly as glass does not wear out.
- Recycling 1 glass jar saves enough energy to power a light bulb for almost 1 hour or run a TV for 15 minutes.
- Glass can be recycled into new glass jars and bottles; as well as concrete, fibreglass, ceramic tiles, picture frames and it can also be used on roads.
- Using recycled glass requires 40% less energy than making glass from new raw materials.
- In Ireland, almost 70% of all glass packaging is recycled.
- Most recyclers ask you to sort glass containers by colour; clear, green or brown. Once glass has been coloured the colour cannot be removed.
- Manufacturers package their food and beverages in green or amber coloured glass to protect sensitive food and beverages from degrading in sun light.
- Unfortunately, you cannot recycle all glass products together. Light bulbs, ceramics, glass mirrors, window glass, and glass pyrex dishes are different types of glass and should not be mixed in with traditional glass packaging in normal glass recycling banks.
- Fluorescent Tube light bulbs must be placed into fluorescent tube “coffins” to ensure appropriate recycling of components. Such containers are available at Civic Amenity sites and Bring Centres.

# What Can I Recycle?

## Steel

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**Steel such as food cans and biscuit tins, stainless steel, some alloy steel**

### **Why is it so important to recycle steel products?**

- Steel accounts for 1.5% of material in the household recycling bin.
- Using recycled metal in the manufacturing of new metal products, results in a 75% energy saving and lower carbon consumption.
- Steel can be recycled indefinitely without suffering any loss of quality.
- Tin cans can be recycled to make new tin cans, car parts and keys.
- Steel is the most energy efficient metal used in can production, requiring only 50% of the energy needed to make a comparable aluminium can.
- Steel is easy to extract from mixed dry recyclables placed in the recycling bin as it is magnetic.
- Every tonne of recycled steel saves 1.5 tonnes of iron ore, half a tonne of coal and requires 40% less water than primary steel production.

# What Can I Recycle?

## Tins & Cans

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### Soup Cans / Pet Food Cans / Drink Cans / Food Cans

#### Why is it so important to recycle aluminium products?

- Aluminium accounts for 1.3% of material in the household recycling bin.
- Aluminium is made from bauxite ore, a non-renewable resource.
- Recycling aluminium saves 95% of the energy required to produce aluminium from raw materials.
- Over 390 million aluminium beverage cans are sold in Ireland each year, all of which are fully recyclable.
- You can differentiate between steel and aluminium cans by using a magnet. Aluminium cans are not magnetic, they will not stick to the magnet whereas steel cans will stick to the magnet.
- Used aluminium cans are recycled and returned to a store shelf as a new can in as little as 60 days. That means a consumer could purchase the same recycled aluminium can every 9 weeks or 6 times a year!
- It takes 670 recycled aluminium cans to make one bicycle.
- Every minute of everyday, an average of 105,800 aluminium cans are recycled.
- Recycling one aluminium can conserves enough energy to run a TV for three hours.
- Every 3 seconds a baby is born. In that time, 140 cans were born.
- Aluminium never wears out, it can be recycled forever.

# What Can I Recycle?

## Green and Garden Waste

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**Waste contractors and Local Authorities across the Republic of Ireland are currently in the process of deploying compost / food waste bins to every household in the country. Please ensure you follow any special instructions issued.**

The only materials that should be placed in these bins is garden waste and food waste (cooked or raw food waste), including teabags. Soiled paper / cardboard (i.e. pizza boxes) and tissue paper can also be placed in this bin as they are biodegradable, however if the tissue paper is soiled with chemical substances i.e. paint, household cleaners, nail varnish remover etc., please place it into your general waste bin as such chemicals could kill the microbes that turn your garden / food waste into compost.

- Alternatively, you can recycle garden waste at your nearest recycling centre. But why take it out of your garden at all? Compost at home, and you can recycle it yourself.
- Home Composting Top Tips: to avoid odours and vermin compost only raw vegetable and fruit peelings, avoid dairy and meat products and don't forget to include you used teabags (before milk is added) and coffee beans. Egg shells are good but can take longer than the other materials to break down.
- Plant cuttings and trimmings also add to the quality of home-made compost while all other food and garden waste can be placed into your contracted compost / food waste bin.



# What Can I Recycle?

## Other

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### **Fluorescent Tubes, Paint, Printer Cartridges, Spectacles, Textiles, Used Gas Cylinders and Waste Oil**

#### **Fluorescent tubes**

Energy efficient light bulbs are a type of fluorescent lamp and can be recycled at a number of household recycling centres. This type of fluorescent lamp can contain a mercury powder so should be handled and disposed of with extreme care. Older style, small incandescent old type bulbs are NOT recyclable. Please place them in your general waste bin.

#### **Paint**

Your local recycling centre may have a donation point for paint – it is reused rather than recycled.

#### **Print Cartridges**

Increasingly print cartridges are being collected at local recycling centres but not by kerbside collections. Alternatively, you can refill cartridges at specialist shops, or your office supplier may also offer this service, which is much cheaper than buying new cartridges.

#### **Textiles / Clothing**

You can recycle all kinds of textiles at bring banks and recycling centres, including curtains, bedding, towels, handbags, cloths, rugs and mats. Please ensure all items are clean before recycling. Alternatively, you can bring them to charity shops if they are in good condition.

#### **Used Gas Cylinders**

These are accepted at most civic amenity centres and recycling centres. Check first with your local facility.

#### **Waste Oil**

You can recycle engine oil at your local recycling centre. Oil should be stored in a sealed container, and it should not be mixed with any other substance as this makes it difficult to recycle.

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