

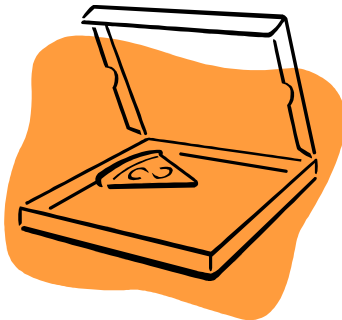


Recycling 101: A Guide to Curbside Recycling in Chelmsford



Chelmsford residents have done a great job in recent years reducing their trash output and increasing their recycling. The vast majority of households recycle, as do the public schools and municipal offices. This has greatly benefitted the Town, saved hundreds of thousands of dollars in disposal fees,¹ and insured compliance with state law. But we still have much to do and much to learn!

In early 2009, the Town received notice that the hauler will impose "strict quality control" measures to insure that the loads delivered to the material recovery facilities (MRFs) for processing are clean and uncontaminated by non-recyclables.



In addition, the hauler advised us that one of the MRFs would no longer accept pizza boxes. Previously, we were able to recycle those parts of pizza boxes that were uncontaminated by food or grease. Unfortunately, too many contaminated pizza boxes showed up at the MRFs. The contaminated cardboard is unusable by - and therefore unmarketable to - paper mills. Therefore, until further notice, pizza boxes will not be accepted with recyclables.

Similarly, if you put plastic bags or Styrofoam® (meat trays, packing material, coffee cups, etc.) in your bin, or if your paper and containers are mixed, the hauler will most likely not empty the bin - even if they did in the past. The hauler pays a surcharge if it delivers a load of contaminated or improperly mixed recyclables to the MRF, so the hauler must be very careful about what its employees pick up.

¹ In the 3 years since Chelmsford started enforcing the state's waste bans with our mandatory recycling bylaw, we've saved over \$450,000 in disposal costs at the incinerator.

While these changes will cause some aggravation, they also present an opportunity to revisit recycling basics. Ever since the hauler began its "strict quality control," we've learned about issues that are causing confusion among Chelmsford residents and we've created this guide to help residents during this time.



Why now? When the economy is booming, consumers consume, manufacturers manufacture, and there is great demand for the materials we put in our recycling bins. Mistakes are tolerated because the cost of correcting them can be easily absorbed. When the economy slumps, however, neither the hauler nor the MRFs can afford the labor and disposal costs that come with fixing our mistakes.

While most of us recycle because of the environmental benefits and the savings on trash disposal, the recycling businesses on which we rely to make recycling possible are just that: businesses. They are not environmental organizations, tax supported entities, or philanthropists doing it out of the goodness of their hearts. They can only do what they do if they make money, and without them, Chelmsford can't recycle. When we do our part right, there's a better chance that the MRFs and haulers on whom we depend will survive this downturn.





First, KEEP RECYCLING - even if it is occasionally inconvenient. We don't want to get out of the good habits we've developed over the years of trying to keep out trash down and working hard to recycle as much as possible. But do not expect our hauler to continue to empty your bins just because you are doing the same thing you've always done, since it looks like not everyone was doing it quite right.

Recycling is more important now than ever before and we cannot afford for anyone to stop recycling. Moreover, most of the materials we recycle (paper and cardboard, most plastic bottles, aluminum cans, etc.) are banned from incinerators by state waste bans. It is essential for the health of the planet, the health of the Town's coffers, and our continued compliance with state law that we keep recycling. We just need to recycle smartly!



Recycling smartly saves money!



Finally, there is no doubt that more change is in the wind. New materials may be added to the list of recyclables, others may be removed, and the way MRFs process and haulers collect recyclables may change in coming years. For example, we'll be hearing a lot about "single stream" recycling. That's where you put all of your recyclables - paper and containers - together in a large, single bin, and they are collected all together in a truck similar to a trash truck. The mixed recyclables are then delivered to a single stream MRF where the materials are separated, baled and sold. For now, however, we are a "dual stream" community. Please stay tuned to the local media, and check out www.townofchelmsford.us or www.chelmsfordrecycles.org to stay abreast of what is coming down the pike. This guide presents information that is current as of early 2009.

Understanding "Dual Stream" Recycling

Understanding what it means that Chelmsford does "dual stream" recycling will make recycling easier. In dual stream recycling, the **two streams must be kept separate from each other**. They get emptied into separate sections of the recycling truck, and then dumped at different sections of the recycling facilities.

The two streams are:

1. Paper/fiber
- and
2. Commingled Containers



This photo depicts one way to properly set out materials for dual stream recycling. Remember to keep paper/cardboard/chipboard (i.e., "fiber") separate from bottles, cans, milk and juice cartons and other recyclable containers, which should be loose in your recycling bin or well marked recycling barrel. Paper may be in paper bags or tied in bundles.

If the recycling truck delivers a mixed stream load to a dual stream MRF, the MRF must pay to separate the material. They are now passing this cost on to the haulers, who will avoid the cost by not picking up mixed bins. Read on for more information on what makes up the two streams.

Recyclable Paper

Recyclable paper - also known as recyclable fiber - includes just about any kind of paper and cardboard you can think of (exceptions: do NOT recycle photo paper, carbon or tissue paper, paper towel, paper cups or plates, or any paper that is contaminated with food or grease). Also, pizza boxes and hardcover books are not currently accepted with curbside recycling.

Paper: Recycle all of your clean newspaper and glossy inserts; magazines and catalogs; junk mail, greeting cards and envelopes (window envelopes are okay); office, school paper and computer paper; construction and craft paper; manila envelopes and file folders; telephone books, etc.

Chipboard refers to the kind of cardboard used to make cereal boxes. Recycle all of your chipboard, including cereal boxes, tissue boxes, and other similar boxes, as well as the tubes inside toilet paper and paper towel rolls. Flatten all of your chipboard and recycle it with your other paper.

Corrugated cardboard: this refers to the heavy duty ridged cardboard used to make packing cartons. Corrugated boxes must be flattened, cut down to no larger than 3 ft. x 3 ft. and tied or taped in bundles no larger than 3 ft. by 3 ft. by 1 ft.



Paper must be kept separate from containers, but you can recycle all of your paper, chipboard and cardboard together. Just put it in a paper grocery bag or tie in bundles.



Chipboard includes cracker boxes, cereal boxes, cookie boxes and tissue boxes, etc. Remove plastic liners and flatten before recycling. Flatten cardboard egg cartons (below) and recycle with your paper.



Cut cardboard down and tie or tape in bundles no larger than 3 feet by 3 feet and no taller than 1 foot and place out with your curbside recycling.



For a complete list of the kinds of paper accepted at Massachusetts MRFs, go to: www.massrecyclespaper.org/paperlist.html



Why so picky on the size of cardboard recycled at the curb?

On your next recycling day, take a good look at the rectangular troughs on the side of the recycling truck. Cardboard over 3x3x1 will not fit and will get stuck when they try to tip it into the truck's center compartment.



Photo courtesy of the Cambridge, MA Recycling Office.

Cardboard dumpster: There is a cardboard dumpster behind the Town Offices. The dumpster is for resident's (no commercial use, please!) **flattened corrugated cardboard** only, on those occasions when a resident has so much cardboard that curbside recycling would present a hardship. The dumpster is NOT for chip board or other paper (while mixing these materials in your paper grocery bags or tied bundles for curbside recycling is fine, the cardboard dumpster is for **corrugated cardboard ONLY!**). No Styrofoam® or other packaging in the dumpster.

How do you keep paper recyclables separate from bottles/cans and other recyclable containers? Put paper, chipboard and cardboard in paper grocery bags or tie in bundles. You can put your bagged or bundled paper

- In a recycling bin, or
- On top of your recycling bins/well marked recycling barrels holding your loose bottles/cans and other recyclable containers, or
- On the ground next to the bins or barrels.



Use a paper grocery bag to hold all of your paper, chipboard and cardboard, or tie your paper in bundles.



We'd love to see EVERYONE in Chelmsford using sturdy, reusable shopping bags every time you shop. But even folks using reusable bags should request that some of their groceries be bagged in paper every few shopping trips. The local grocery stores are very accommodating! This way you can build up a small supply of paper bags so you are always ready to recycle!

Recyclable bottles, cans and other containers

Over the years, this stream has gone by several different names, none of which has painted a complete or very descriptive picture. Most frequently, this stream is referred to as "commingled containers" or as "bottles and cans." Included in this stream should be glass bottle and jars; metal food and beverage containers plus clean aluminum foil; milk and juice cartons; and recyclable plastic containers (see below). These materials can be mixed together in a recycling bin or in a well marked recycling barrel.



All containers must be well rinsed! Do not worry about neck rings or labels – they can stay on (although you may remove the labels if you like and put them with your paper for recycling).

Finding a name for this stream that is sufficiently descriptive without being over- or under-inclusive has been a challenge! When we refer to this stream as "commingled containers," some folks included their chipboard boxes loose in the bin (instead of putting it with paper for recycling). When we just called this stream "bottles and cans," some residents thought they could no longer recycle their yogurt and deli containers, aluminum foil or their milk and juice cartons. If we try just calling it "glass, metal and plastic," we get stuff in the bins like plumbing parts, drinking glasses, and vinyl siding, all of which may be recyclable, but not by the MRFs that take our curbside recyclables.

Since it's not easy to come up with a good name for the stream, we'll focus on giving you the information about what to include in your bin, followed by an explanation of how to prepare and then recycle these materials.

A. **Glass:** recycle any unbroken glass bottle or jar. Any color glass is acceptable.

- Rinse well
- Recycle lids only if they have a recycling symbol
- Labels and neck rings may stay on (labels may be removed and recycled with paper if you like)
- Only unbroken glass bottles and jars can be recycled at the curb. No drinking glasses or window glass (they are a different kind of glass and cannot be recycled with bottles and jars). No broken glass (for the safety of the workers). Donate usable drinking glasses to the Lowell Wish Project (978-441-WISH). Broken glass should go in the trash in a manner that keeps the trash hauler safe and keeps the glass from spilling onto Chelmsford's streets.



No broken glass with recycling!

B. **Metal:** recycle metal food and beverage cans at the curb.

- Cans should be well rinsed - cans may be crushed (to make more room in your bins and more room in the truck!)
- You do not have to remove labels (but if you do, recycle labels with paper)
- You may also recycle CLEAN aluminum foil and clean pie pans and other disposable type aluminum cooking pans
- Do not recycle any other metal in the bin (no pots, plumbing parts, etc.)



Recycle clean aluminum foil with containers.



Recycle all food and beverage cans.



Recycle aluminum pans with containers.

C. Plastic: In Chelmsford, you can recycle any plastic container marked 1 through 7 **EXCEPT for STYROFOAM®**. How to recycle plastic containers at the curb:

- ❖ Check for one of the symbols (below). These symbols are usually found on the bottom of the container. If the container has such a symbol AND it is not Styrofoam® (see below) AND it is not a plastic bag, then:
- ❖ Rinse the container - neck rings and labels are okay
- ❖ Crush if possible to make more room in your bin and more room in the recycling truck
- ❖ Recycle lids only if they have one of the recycling symbols
- ❖ Put the containers in your recycling bin or well marked recycling barrel along with your glass and metal containers and milk and juice cartons

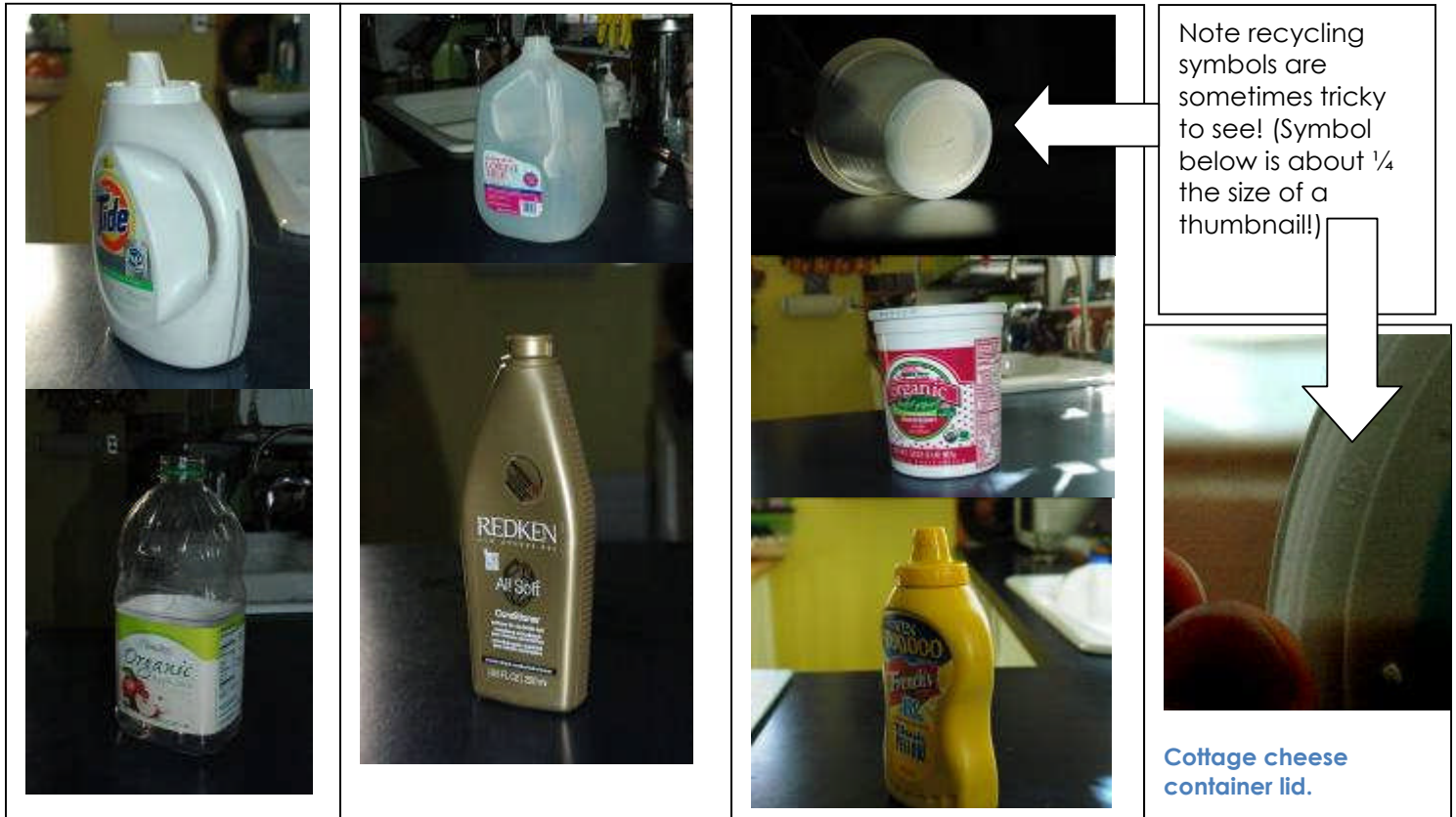


What are these symbols? These are "resin identification codes," commonly but somewhat misleadingly known as "recycling symbols." Many folks believe that if an item has this symbol, you can recycle it in your curbside bin. Unfortunately, it's not that simple. Recycling programs vary across the country and around the world - different materials are accepted in different places depending on the market conditions in that area. These symbols tell manufacturers what kind of plastic was used to make a particular item. Because there are many different kinds of plastic, each with different strengths, functions and characteristics, manufacturers must know the resin content of plastic in order to know whether they can use it.

❖ **Plastics you should NOT recycle at the curb:**

- unmarked plastic (i.e., anything that does not have one of the symbols below)- reuse or put in trash;
- foamed plastic such as Styrofoam® (meat trays, coffee cups, packing material, etc.) even if it HAS the symbol (clean foam packing peanuts will be reused by your local UPS store); and
- plastic bags even if they have a recycling symbol. (Most grocery stores have receptacles for recycling marked plastic bags.)

Examples of recyclable plastics:

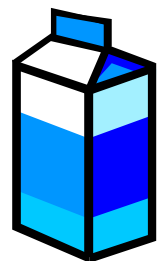


D. Milk and Juice Cartons: How should you recycle your “gable top” (milk and juice type) cartons? Although they are made out of paper, they should be well rinsed, flattened if possible (to make more room in your bin), and recycled with your bottles, cans and other recyclable containers. Plastic spouts do not have to be removed.

Cereal and other boxes and milk/juice cartons are all made out of paper - but cereal boxes and other chipboard should be flattened and recycled with paper, while the milk and juice cartons (containers that held liquid) should be rinsed and recycled with your bottles, cans and other recyclable containers.



Flatten and recycle with paper.



Recycle these with containers.



Deposit bottles and cans may be recycled at the curb.

What about deposit bottles and cans?

Deposit bottles and cans can be recycled in your curbside bin. As with all containers, rinse well and place loose in your bin or well marked recycling container. Do NOT put beer bottles or cans inside a cardboard carton in recycling bin - by doing so you are mixing paper and containers! Even better than recycling your deposit bottles and cans at the curb, consider taking them to one of the Chelmsford Friends of Music bottle and can drives to help raise funds for music programs in Chelmsford public schools. Go to www.cfom.org for more information.



How do you recycle your recyclable bottles, cans and other containers?

- Put them loose in a town recycling bin or similar container, or
- Put them loose in a trash type barrel with a recycling sticker (available for FREE from the Recycling Office)
- Do NOT mix paper and containers in your bin or barrel
- Do not put ANY of your recyclables in plastic bags - even if the bags have a "recycling" symbol on them.
- **All** of your bottles, cans, foil, and other containers must be well rinsed
- **Labels and "neck rings" on may be left on** (but if you remove paper labels you can recycle the labels with your paper)
- Recycle plastic lids and caps **ONLY** if they have one of the resin symbols on them



What NOT to put in your recycling bin:

Do not put any trash, broken glass, or "unmarked" plastic (i.e., plastic that does not have one of the "resin identification codes," above) in your bins. In addition:

STYROFOAM®:

Do NOT recycle ANY Styrofoam® in your curbside bin EVEN IF IT HAS a RECYCLING SYMBOL (it is foamed # 6 polystyrene). There is NO recycling market for it. Avoid it, but if you get it, put it in the trash. Clean packing peanuts can be taken for reuse to a UPS store.

NO

NO

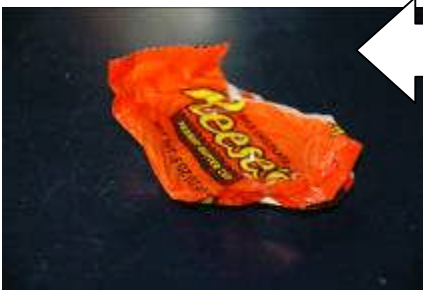
NO



NO

Do not recycle candy wrappers, pizza boxes or any paper or cardboard contaminated with food.

NO



Do NOT put plastic bags or any other "film" type plastic in the recycling bin—even if it has the recycling symbol. Recycle your plastic bags at the grocery store.

NO



Where to get more information?

- For help 24/7- go to www.chelmsfordrecycles.org or www.townofchelmsford.us/Recycling-Department.cfm.
- Call the Office of Recycling and Solid Waste at 978-250-5203 (hours generally M-F, 9-1). Call anytime and leave a message - we return call within 24 hours, Mon. through Fri.
- Email jalmeida@townofchelmsford.us.
- Consult your red, white and blue "Chelmsford Recycles" flyer - it is still valid EXCEPT on the question of pizza boxes and hardcover books.