



Recycling is great, but it's important to do it correctly. The top five items that cause the most frequent problems at recycling drop-off centers are listed below. **Please do not put these in the recycling:**

### STYROFOAM™

Examples: meat packing trays, restaurant takeout containers, coffee cups, packing materials

#### Why Not?

- Contaminates other plastics
  - Too expensive to collect separately and ship for recycling
- Instead:**
- Put in your trash



### PAPER TOWELS, NAPKINS, TISSUES

#### Why Not?

- Not sturdy enough to recycle; and break apart and contaminate the other paper
- When used, the germs, rotten food, and other contaminants can be a safety hazard for workers at the transfer station

#### Instead:

- Consider using washable cloth napkins, dish towels, and handkerchiefs instead of disposables
- Add to your compost pile if you compost at home
- Put in your trash



### COATED PAPER CONTAINERS

Examples: coffee cups, ice cream containers, milk and orange juice cartons, almond milk cartons, restaurant takeout containers

#### Why Not?

- Not made of all paper or all plastic and so cannot be recycled as either one
- Too expensive to collect separately and ship for recycling

#### Instead:

- Put in your trash



### PLANTING POTS & TRAYS

#### Why Not?

- Not compatible with other plastics, no matter what recycling code they have
- Too expensive to collect separately and ship for recycling

#### Instead:

- Consider organizing an annual community swap event
- Investigate if there is a local farm or garden center that accepts donations
- Put in your trash



### MEDICAL WASTE

Examples: catheter tubing, syringes, and needles

#### Why Not?

- Can create a safety hazard for workers at the transfer station
- Medical items are not recyclable

#### Instead:

- Return to your medical provider or pharmacy for safe medical waste management
- Put non-sharps in your trash
- For sharps: bring to the sharps container at your transfer station (if available) or make your own container out of an empty laundry detergent bottle, clearly label it "SHARPS", tape securely closed, and put in your trash



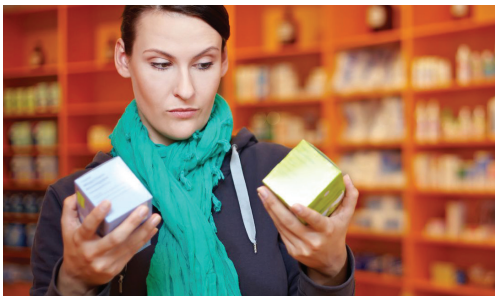
## WHEN RECYCLING IS DONE RIGHT, YOUR TOWN GENERATES PRODUCTS THAT OTHERS WANT TO BUY

Help your community generate as much money as possible from recycling by:

- Recycling only items the transfer station accepts
- Rinsing containers to remove dirt & food
- Removing metal lids from glass containers & keeping plastic lids on plastic containers
- Recycling only plastic labeled with a number that the transfer station accepts & putting each type in the correct bin
- Separating paper by type & putting in the correct bin

## CONSIDER RECYCLABILITY AT THE POINT OF PURCHASE

Unfortunately, many things that seem like they “should” be recyclable are not. For example, just because something is plastic, doesn’t mean it’s recyclable. Plastics labeled numbers 1 and 2 are accepted just about everywhere, but numbers 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 are not, so check what’s acceptable at your facility.



*This handout focuses on the importance of **Recycling Right**. It is one in a series developed for rural transfer stations to improve safety and promote waste reduction. For additional documents visit: [www.newmoa.org/solidwaste/projects/transferstations/publications.cfm](http://www.newmoa.org/solidwaste/projects/transferstations/publications.cfm).*

**NEWMOA**  
NORTHEAST WASTE MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION  
[www.newmoa.org](http://www.newmoa.org)

This material is based on work supported by the Rural Utilities Services, United States Department of Agriculture. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Rural Utilities Services. Mention of any organization or company name is not considered an endorsement by NEWMOA, NEWMOA-member states, or the USDA. The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect those of NEWMOA, USDA, the Project Partners, or the NEWMOA-member states.

## Did You Know?

When you put things into the recycling container that can't be recycled or put them in the wrong place, someone working at the transfer station needs to sort through and remove them, which is time consuming and can be dangerous. If they stay in the bin, they can ruin the whole lot and that could mean it all ends up sent for disposal.

**Your transfer station attendant is there to help. They know what can and cannot be recycled and what to put where. Please cooperate with their instructions.**



## What Can You Do?

Many food establishments use drink cups and takeout containers that are not recyclable. Ideas for action include:

- Advocate for the use of packaging and takeout containers that are recyclable by your local system
- Bring your own reusable containers to a restaurant when you think there will be leftovers so you can manage them yourself

Avoid single-use disposable items:

- For BBQs and other events, pick up mixed dishes and silverware from a yard sale or secondhand shop instead of using plasticware and paper plates
- Use cloth napkins and towels instead of paper products
- Pack lunches in reusable bags and containers