



Illinois Chapter

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Walter Willis
847-377-4951

Peggy Macenas
National Waste & Recycling Association
630-848-1101

ON AMERICA RECYCLES DAY - ARE YOU RECYCLING RIGHT?

- One in Four Items in a Recycling Cart are Not Recyclable
- NWRA and SWANA Join Forces Against Recycling Contamination
- Task Force Creates Statewide Recycling Guidelines

CHICAGO, IL- Nov. 15, 2018 - On America Recycles Day, local government leaders, multiple organizations and the waste industry, are asking consumers if they are recycling right. Based on audits performed by the recycling industry, one in four items placed in the recycling cart is not recyclable which has led to increased contamination.

To tackle the issue of recycling contamination, the National Waste and Recycling Association (NWRA) and Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) formed a state-wide task force to bring the recycling industry - haulers and sorting facility operators - together with government and business to develop simple, cohesive recycling education materials to help residents better understand what items should and should not be placed in recycling carts.

“Recycling is more highly contaminated with non-recyclable garbage than ever before,” said Walter Willis, SWALCO executive director and co-chair of the NWRA - SWANA task force. “The non-recyclable items weigh down sorting facilities, reduce commodity prices, and affect the re-manufacturing markets,” continued Willis.

“Recycling facilities report contamination from 25% to over 35% in some of the recycling streams,” said Lisa Disbrow, vice chair of the Illinois Chapter of NWRA and co-chair of the NWRA and SWANA task force. “As recycling facilities add labor to help remove contamination and slow lines to improve recovery, these additional costs are passed along which may increase costs for local governments, and ultimately residents,” commented Disbrow.

The task force identified the most common items placed in the recycling cart that are not recyclable including plastic bags, tanglers (i.e. garden hoses, wire, cords, clothing), food



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waste, medical waste including syringes, and batteries. As a result of the task force discussions, guidelines were developed to represent the common recycling denominators of all programs throughout the state, and the goal is to have them as go-to guidelines for all programs, all haulers, and all educators throughout the state. Participating in the discussions at the task force, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency developed and launched a new webpage this month to answer recycling questions for Illinois residents:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/waste-management/Pages/recycling.aspx>

“Plastics are the most commonly misunderstood items,” explained Jennifer Jarland, Kane County Recycling Program Coordinator and member of the Task Force. “The resin identification code number in the triangle does not mean that a plastic object is recyclable! Plastic containers - bottles, tubs, jugs and jars - are the only plastic items recyclable in your curbside carts. Please keep all flexible plastic packaging, pouches, bags, and wraps out of your recycling!”

In addition to representatives of NWRA, SWANA, IEPA, the task force participants include: USEPA, City of Chicago, Cook County, DuPage County, Kane County, Madison County, Will County, Solid Waste Agencies of Cook County, Lake County and West Cook County, and multiple organizations including the Illinois County Solid Waste Management Association, Illinois Recycling Association, and the Steel Recycling Institute.

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ABOUT NWRA

The **National Waste and Recycling Association (NWRA)** represents the private sector waste and recycling services industry. Association members conduct business in all 50 states, and include companies that manage garbage, recycling and medical waste, equipment manufacturers and distributors, and a variety of other service providers. For more information about NWRA, please visit www.wasterecycling.org.

ABOUT SWANA

The **Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA)** is an organization of more than 10,000 public and private sector professionals committed to advancing from solid waste management to resource management through their shared emphasis on education, advocacy and research. For more than 50 years, SWANA has been the leading association in the solid waste management field. SWANA serves industry professionals through technical conferences, certifications, publications, and a large offering of technical training courses. For more information, visit swana.org.

RECYCLING GUIDELINES

YES!

Clean & Empty

Replace lids & caps



METAL

Steel & Aluminum Containers and Foil



PAPER

Cardboard (flattened),
Office Paper, Newspaper, Magazines



GLASS

Containers: Bottles & Jars Only



PLASTIC

Containers: Bottles, Tubs, Jugs,
and Jars Only



CARTONS

May be acceptable in some
programs, check with
local authority.

NO!



No Plastic Bags

No Product Wrap
(return clean to retailer)



No Big Items (Electronics, Wood,
Propane Tanks, Scrap Metal or Styrofoam
– check with local authority for other options)



No Tangles (Hangers, Hoses,
Wire, Cords, Ropes or Chains)



No Clothing
Textiles or Shoes (donate)



**No Food, Liquid, Diapers,
Batteries or Needles**



No Shredded Paper
(check with local authority
for other recycling options)

**Put material in loose
- Not in Bags**

These Guidelines represent the common items accepted in most recycling programs in Illinois.
For greater detail on specific items or programmatic variations, reach out to your local authority.

To find out more detail, including recycling and reuse programs beyond the bin, visit
<https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/waste-management/Pages/recycling.aspx>