About Recycling

1. Why should I recycle?

Recycling helps divert valuable resources out of landfill, which reduces the need for more landfill sites and the ongoing cost of managing waste. The recycling of these materials into new products almost always uses less energy and fewer natural resources than products made from virgin materials. This results in less natural habitat destruction. Recycling is also associated with less air and water pollution than production from virgin materials. For more information about the benefits of recycling, visit the Get It Right on Bin Night website.

2. Why is reducing better than recycling?

While it’s clear that recycling is important, what’s even better is reducing the need for it by using less. For example, the environmental impact of a glass jar is much lower if it is recycled. However, recycling the glass jar still requires the use of energy and water. Therefore, reusing the jar for storage and other things reduces this impact even further.

For information on how to reduce the amount of garbage and recycling you generate, visit Council’s Reduce Waste web page.

3. What happens if I put the wrong thing in the recycling bin?

When the wrong thing goes in your recycling bin, the bin is considered contaminated. Contamination compromises the sorting of materials, and poses a risk to the workers involved in this sorting. Contaminated recyclables can therefore become landfill.
4. **If I can’t put it in my recycling bin, does this mean it’s not recyclable?**

Some items that can’t be recycled through your household recycling bin can be recycled elsewhere. Visit Council’s [Specialty Recycling and Disposal Directory](#) for specialty recycling options.

5. **Why are there differences between what local councils can and can’t recycle?**

What can and can’t be recycled through your household recycling bin depends on which Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) your recyclables get taken to for sorting. There is no one MRF that is big enough for all of Victoria’s recycling, so different councils use different facilities. The MRFs have different capabilities, and hence there are some differences in the items they can process. This is what determines which items councils can accept through the household recycling bin system.

6. **How contaminated are household recycling bins in Frankston City?**

A recent audit revealed that Frankston City’s household recycling bin contamination rate was 12.0% by weight for single-dwelling households. This is an increase from 2015-16 when it was 10.3% and a decrease from 2014-15 when it was 13.8%. The contamination rate of multi-unit dwelling household recycling bins is much higher at 17.5%, down from 20.3% in 2015-16.

7. **What are the most common types of contamination in Frankston City household recycling bins?**

Common household recycling bin contaminants include bagged rubbish, bagged recyclables, clothing/textiles (including shoes, clothes and pet beds) and non-recyclable glass, such as pyrex. Soft/scrunchable plastics, polystyrene and e-waste have also been common recycling bin contaminants in previous years.

Visit Council’s [Bin Information](#) web page for information about what can and can’t be placed in your household recycling bin.

**Tips for making sure your recyclables get recycled**

1. **Why can’t I bag my recyclables?**

Your household recycling is sorted into categories at a Materials Recovery Facility for recycling. When your recyclables are in a plastic bag, this compromises the sorting process. Sorting is undertaken both mechanically and by people manually. Some plastic bags in the recycling stream contain contaminants such as food scraps, nappies, toxic chemicals and syringes. This places the people sorting at risk. There’s no time to open plastic bags to see what’s inside. Therefore if your recyclables are in a bag, they’re seen as a contaminant and will be sent to landfill.
2. Lids on or off?

While plastic lids are accepted both on and off empty plastic bottles, the preferred method is for the lids to be put back on the bottles after they have been emptied and squashed. However all metal lids should be removed from glass and plastic jars and placed in your household recycling bin separately.

While all lids placed loose in your recycling bin can still get through the sorting process and be recycled, items the size of a juice bottle lid or smaller can end up falling through and being sent to landfill. Enthusiastic recyclers can address this by:

- securing aluminium bottle tops (such as wine lids) in aluminium cans crimped shut
- securing steel bottle tops (such as beer bottle caps) in steel cans crimped shut
- placing plastic lids in plastic containers

For more information, see ‘Are small items ok to put in the recycling bin?’

3. To squash or not to squash?

Dismantle cardboard boxes and squash empty plastic bottles and drink cans before placing them in your recycling bin. They will then take up less space in your recycling bin and in the collection truck.

4. How clean do items need to be for them to be recycled?

Remove food scraps from recyclable items and then rinse them in left over washing up water, before placing them in your recycling bin.

Please note that paper/cardboard should not be rinsed and can be placed in your recycling bin if all food has been removed.

Keeping your recyclables clean increases their value and makes them more likely to be recycled.

To reduce food waste ending up in landfill, it’s also a great idea to put food scraps in a compost bin or worm farm if you can (instead of your garbage bin). For more information on composting and worm farming, visit Council’s Reduce Waste web page.

5. Do I need to remove labels?

Labels can be left on items before placing them in the recycling bin (e.g. plastic bottles, glass jars). The glues and labels are washed off in the recovery and sorting process.
6. **Do I need to remove the plastic tabs on bottle necks?**

   Once the bottles are crushed, minor contamination such as the plastic tabs on bottle necks, are separated via floatation and removed, so there is no need to remove these plastic tabs.

7. **Are small items ok to put in the recycling bin?**

   Small items can slip through during the sorting of household recyclables and be sent to landfill. While many small items can still make it through the sorting process and be recycled, items the size of a juice bottle lid or smaller can end up being sent to landfill. Recyclable items larger than this are usually distributed for further sorting and recycling. This applies to all materials accepted through the household recycling system. For information about what to do with small lids, see ‘[Lids on or off?](#)’

8. **Why are there separate bins for garbage, recycling and food waste recommended in the kitchen?**

   Separate bins makes life a lot easier as it prevents you or your family from needing to sort your garbage from your recyclables later. A separate bin for food waste makes it easy to collect and ready to add to your compost or worm farm if you have one.

---

**Can I Recycle...?**

1. **What can be put in my recycling bin and what can’t?**

   Visit Council’s [Bin Information](#) web page for information about what can and can’t be placed in your household recycling bin.

2. **Coffee Cups**

   Only small amounts of non-polystyrene disposable coffee cups can be disposed of in your household recycling bin. Coffee cups should not be placed in public place recycling bins, as the facility they go to processes them as a contaminant.

3. **Cork**

   Cork cannot be recycled through the household recycling bin system. Council is not currently aware of a cork recycler in Victoria. However, there are lots of ways that cork can be upcycled into other useful items, such as bird toys, bee hotels, plant labels, stamps, cork boards and business card holders.

   Some local childcare centres and kindergartens accept cork donations for arts and crafts. Please check that corks are accepted before making a donation.
4. **Items made from a mix of materials – e.g. toys and bric-a-brac**

You can recycle many items that are made from a mix of materials. For example, empty long life milk containers and juice containers can be recycled through your household recycling bin. However, please view Council’s [Bin Information](#) web page to check if your item can be recycled through your household recycling bin, as there are some exceptions. For instance, plastic toys and bric-a-brac which can contain a combination of difficult to separate metals, batteries, fabric and plastic are not accepted.

5. **Paper lined with wax or plastic**

Plastic lined paper can be recycled through your household recycling bin, but wax lined paper cannot. Wax lined paper isn’t common. However if you are wondering how to tell the difference between liquid paperboard (paper/cardboard lined with plastic) and waxed paper, scratch your fingernail along the surface of the item. If your fingernail is clean and no wax lifts off, it’s liquid paperboard and can be recycled.

6. **Shredded/ripped up paper**

Small pieces of paper such as shredded or ripped up paper, can slip through during sorting at the Materials Recovery Facility and be sent to landfill. However, if the pieces of paper are secured inside another paper item (such as an envelope) it will be recycled.

7. **Soft (scrunchable) plastics, such as cling wrap, bread, pasta and rice bags, chocolate and muesli bar wrappers, frozen food bags, chip packets and fresh produce bags**

Soft/scrunchable plastics are not recyclable through your household recycling bin, but can be recycled through collection bins outside most major supermarkets. For more information, search ‘Soft Plastics’ on Council’s [Specialty Recycling and Disposal Directory](#).

8. **Straws**

Disposable/single-use plastic straws placed in household recycling bins are susceptible to falling through during the sorting process and can end up being sent to landfill. They are considered a contaminant and cannot be recycled unless they are first secured in a plastic bottle or container.

9. **Wine casks**

Wine cask bags/bladders cannot be recycled through your household recycling bin.
Recycling codes and numbers

1. Some items have a recycling triangle on them and some don’t. Can I recycle things that don’t have a recycling symbol?

The recycling symbol can either mean that the item has some recycled content, or that it can be recycled. Therefore, it should not be used to determine what can and can’t be recycled through your household recycling bin. Please refer to Council’s Bin Information web page to determine if the item can be placed in your household recycling bin.

2. Some plastic products have a recycling code on them, and some don’t. Can I recycle plastic that doesn’t have a recycling number on it?

Some plastic products have a triangle with a number inside stamped on it. This is its Plastic Identification Code. This code identifies the type of plastic the product is made from, which then determines what products that plastic can be made into after being melted down. It is NOT indicative of whether you can put it in your household recycling bin. Please refer to Council’s Bin Information web page to determine if the item can be placed in your household recycling bin.

More information

- Council’s Bin Information
- Council’s Specialty Recycling and Disposal Directory
- Get It Right on Bin Night