

# PROPER RECYCLING PLASTIC

A Guide to doing it right in Lawrence and Mercer Counties.

Plastic is a versatile material that is used in a wide variety of products and processes. Plastics are normally produced from petrochemicals, but they can also be produced from renewable plant sources using cellulose or starch. This fact sheet will focus on the common plastics found around our homes in Lawrence and Mercer counties.

Plastic is everywhere in our homes. Carpeting, computers, microwaves, cups, counter tops, electronics, and light switches are just some of the myriad plastics we see and use everyday.

Unfortunately, most of these materials are not recyclable in our local programs. Care must be taken to keep unacceptable plastics out of the recycling stream. Unacceptable materials will NOT get recycled at a recycling center.

Plastics are identified by their core chemical composition, called a resin, which is indicated by a number in the recycling symbol. Unfortunately, this practice can be misleading to the general public as we usually relate the recycling symbol to recyclability.

## What Plastics can I put in my Recycling Bin?

Plastic bottles and jugs only. These items usually have a screw-on cap, but not always, and the top is more narrow than the bottom. Common examples of recyclable plastics include water, sport drinks, detergent, condiment and soda bottles and milk or tea jugs.

Do not put plastic bags, butter tubs, yogurt containers, clam-shell containers, and food take-out containers into your recycling bins. Do not include any plastic that is not bottle or jug. They are costly to the program and will now get recycled! Check out our Fact Sheet about Plastic Bags for information on how to recycle them.

## I moved here from "... and they Recycled more Items!?

Programs vary from place to place depending on the proximity to recycling markets, recycling center processing capabilities and storage space, and recycling haulers. Some communities have access to convenient markets and can accept a wider range of plastics and other materials. This informational sheet is specific to programs available to Lawrence and Mercer county communities.

 [www.mercercountypa.gov/recycling](http://www.mercercountypa.gov/recycling)

[www.lawrencecountypa.gov/recycling](http://www.lawrencecountypa.gov/recycling)

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Recycling/Solid Waste Department  
(724) 658-6925





# WHAT IS WISHCYCLING?

Wishcycling happens when we put unacceptable items into our recycling bins “hoping” that they will get recycled. The intention may be good, but this practice hurts recycling programs. These contaminants must be removed and landfilled at an additional expense.

## Can I Recycle other Plastics?

Generally, no. As plastic engineering and recycling markets continue to evolve, there is a possibility that additional plastics may be added to recycling programs in the future. Always follow the recycling rules issued by your hauler and municipality.

Plastic from special programs, such as electronics recycling programs, are able to be recycled. In these programs, enough material is generated to be economically feasible to collect, store, and transport to distant markets.

Don't assume that a product with the recycling symbol is recyclable.

In plastics, the symbol indicates the resin a plastic item is made from. If does not indicated that the item can be recycled.



**PETE**

With plastic, focus on the shape of the item. If it is a “bottle” or “jug” and/or has a screw top lid, it can go into your recycling bin.

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