



# *Current Practices in Recycling*

## *Expert Group: Glass*



### General Information

Glass is made by melting sand, limestone, and soda ash together.  
Glass is a nonrenewable natural resource.

### Recycling Information

Glass is very recyclable because it can be melted and remade over and over again without needing additional material. Glass is accepted by both curbside collectors and collection centers.

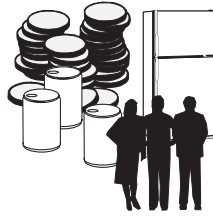
#### *What Is Currently Not Accepted?*

Window glass is currently not accepted since it breaks easily and can injure those who collect recyclable materials.



# *Current Practices in Recycling*

## *Expert Group: Metal*



### General Information

Metal is a general term used to describe a category of matter which includes steel, aluminum, iron, lead, and other metals. Some metals are found in the ground. Others must be manufactured using combinations of metals and other materials found in the ground. Metals are a nonrenewable natural resource. Almost all metal can be recycled; however, about 10 percent of our daily trash is metal.

### Recycling Information

Metal is very recyclable because it can be melted and remade over and over again without needing additional material. Aluminum is the most widely accepted metal for recycling. It is also the most profitable. Curbside collectors generally accept all clean aluminum and steel cans such as soup cans and aerosol cans. Collection centers will usually pay by the pound for aluminum, stainless steel and copper. They will often accept (but not pay for) other metals.

#### *What Is Currently Not Accepted?*

Many metal products are difficult to recycle because they contain many different metals and other nonmetal materials (such as plastic). Many metal products are also difficult to recycle because they are a part of a toy, appliance, etc., that has nonmetal parts. Recycling these products requires separating the metals and removing the nonmetal components. Currently the cost of this separation is much greater than the cost of harvesting new metals from the Earth.



# *Current Practices in Recycling*

## *Expert Group: Organic*



### Composting

#### General Information

Composting is the managed decomposition of “unstable” matter such as leaves, grass clippings, plant-based food waste, and other plant products. The term “unstable” means that decomposition happens in a matter of hours, days, or weeks. More stable matter such as plastics and metals may take years or even centuries to break down!

Composting can occur in a composting box or simply in a pile in the corner of your yard. Starting a compost pile is easy to do in the fall. After the leaves have fallen, rake them together into your composting area. Mix some soil or humus into the leaf litter to introduce organisms that will cycle your compost back to the air, water, and soil. Keep your compost moist, but not drenched. Organisms that decompose prefer moist and shaded rather than sunny and dry.

For a highly efficient compost pile, turn your pile weekly in order to balance air, moisture, and food throughout the pile. Add leaves, grass, and plant-based food to your pile. Always cover plant-based foods with a layer of leaf litter or grass to reduce the risk of unwanted visitors. Avoid adding meats, cheeses, or foods high in oil as they will create unpleasant odors and attract unwanted visitors.

Every 2 to 3 months, you can harvest rich soil from the bottom of your pile to use for topsoil, flower beds and pots, gardening, etc. In the process you will reduce landfilling, reduce your waste hauling fees, eliminate the cost of purchasing commercially packaged soil, and get exercise.



# *Current Practices in Recycling*

## *Expert Group: Paper*



### General Information

Paper is made from trees through a process that separates the wood fibers from the wood. Paper is a renewable natural resource. It takes about 17 trees to make just 1 ton of paper.

There are different grades of paper. High quality paper has longer strands of paper fibers than low quality paper. Examples of high quality paper include copier paper, computer paper, and Post-It Notes. Examples of low quality paper include newspaper, cereal boxes, and paper towels.

### Recycling Information

Each time paper is recycled, the wood fibers become shorter due to the blending and grinding of the recycling process. When the fibers become too short, the paper must be either mixed with fresh fibers or discarded.

Many communities offer curbside pickup of newspapers and magazines only. Many collection centers will accept all varieties of paper. Some will provide dumpsters to schools and businesses for a fee, but this fee is usually equal to or less than the cost of the extra dumpster pickups needed without paper recycling program.

#### *What Is Currently Not Accepted?*

Paper products other than high quality paper, newspaper, and shiny paper are generally difficult to recycle because of the different ways in which these other paper products are manufactured or because of their low quality.



# *Current Practices in Recycling*

## *Expert Group: Plastic*



### General Information

Plastics are a human invention made from the careful combination of chains of carbon bonds. Plastics are a nonrenewable natural resource. Plastics by design will last anywhere from decades to centuries.

There are currently 7 different types of plastic that are in mass production. Products made from these plastics are labelled from 1 to 7 (usually inside a triangle) to help identify the type of plastic. Different types of plastics melt at different temperatures; therefore, all plastics cannot be recycled in the same way. Some plastics are melted while others are shredded. Some are currently not being recycled at all.

### Recycling Information

The most recyclable types of plastic are the #1 and #2 plastics which have a narrow neck opening (manufactured with an air blown process). Examples include milk jugs and two liter bottles. #1 and #2 plastics which have a wide neck opening (injection molded) are not as recyclable because they tend to be thicker and therefore won't melt at the same temperature as narrow neck plastics. Examples include margarine tubs and peanut butter jars. Most recycling programs accept air blown #1 and #2 plastics, but do not accept #1 and #2 injection molded plastics.

#### *What Is Currently Not Accepted?*

Most plastics made are difficult to recycle due to the varying manufacturing methods and thicknesses of the plastics. Plastic wrappers, bottle and jar caps, plastic toys, household appliances, and #3 through #7 plastics are generally difficult to recycle.