Recycling is still worth it.

There have been many changes and challenges with recycling safety and you want to know if it’s still worth it. The answer is YES! But like most things, it’s complicated. We’ll take a closer look at how glass bottles are recycled, from a collection truck to a new bottle on a shelf.

In late 2017 China — the world’s largest recycler — stopped taking recyclables. That created a huge need for new places to send recycling. For Seattle, this meant finding new places to send our mixed paper (e.g., magazines, office paper, and newspaper) and mixed plastics (e.g., yogurt tubs and to-go containers). This was challenging because in the past, most recyclables were sent to China. Now, Seattle was able to recycle only what places in nearby states were able to handle.

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Recycling is picked up by a collection truck.

STEP 1

Recycling is picked up by a collection truck.

STEP 2

Recycled materials are sorted at a Material Recovery Facility.

STEP 3

Sorted materials are baled together to be sold.

STEP 4

Recyclables are sorted by magnets, screens, air jets, lasers, and other machines.

STEP 5

Baled materials are sold for new products.

For Seattle, this means that 100% of recycled glass is recycled, right here in Seattle. This “closed loop” system means that materials don’t have to travel far — an additional environmental benefit. From old bottle to new bottle right here in our city. This “closed loop” system means that materials don’t have to travel far — an additional environmental benefit.

Glass is sorted, crushed, melted, and made into new bottles for the local beer and wine industry right here in Seattle.

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Where to start? Here are some tips, but especially, limited to collection, public education, and properly recycling is critical. Things that you can do every day that is good for the environment. To keep it thriving, learn how to reduce, reuse, and make sure that materials are recycled instead of sent too landfill. Figure out what to do. It’s not easy to change. But less. Until that leads to less, that saves time. And, through this program, you can get new places to send recycling.

• Recycle something you already have. Give new purpose to worn objects and furniture. For example, you can make a bed by giving old clothes to a neighbor or friend.

• Use less “one-time use” items. Bring your own: utensils, cups, water bottles, cloth napkins, and bags. Start small, but get started. Small steps add up.


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Recycling is good for the environment. Using less is better.

A look at the environmental impact of the packaging that our food comes in.

Follow these tips and make sure you’re recycling right.

1. All recyclables need to be Empty, Clean & Dry. Keep food and liquids out. When they get into the mix, they ruin other materials and can make them unrecyclable.
2. Focus on the 5 most wanted recyclables. These are the most valuable recyclables. Focus on these categories, and you’ll get it covered.
3. When in doubt, find out. Put only accepted items in the Recycle Cart. Don’t know if something is recyclable? Look it up on the Where Does it Go tool. seattle.gov/utilities/WhereDoesItGo
4. Reduce your environmental impact by refusing single use packaging, reusing containers, and preventing food waste.

What’s in the Recycling Cart

- 100% of glass and metals are recycled in the Northwest.
- 75% of cardboard is recycled in the Northwest.
- 45% of paper is recycled in the Northwest.
- 55% of paper is recycled in Asia.

Follow these tips and make sure you’re recycling right.

1. Use the Recycle It app to help keep track of what you collect and where to drop it off.
2. Reduce your environmental impact by refusing single use packaging, reusing containers, and preventing food waste.
3. Download the app at: Seattle.gov/RecycleIt

Have stuff to recycle that doesn’t go in your cart? Bring it to a Recycling & Reuse Collection Event at locations around the city throughout the year.

- Electronics: computers, monitors and small electronics
- Foam blocks
- Household goods & clothing
- Batteries & fluorescent lightbulbs

Locations and list of accepted items: seattle.gov/Utilities/services/Recycling