

## Strafford,VT Recycling Frequently Asked Questions

### **Where is the Strafford Recycling Center?**

It is in South Strafford at 159 Route 132, next to the baseball field.

### **When is the Recycling Center open?**

It is open every Saturday morning from 9 to noon.

### **Where can I take my trash?**

The Recycling Center does not collect trash. On Saturday mornings, trash is collected by Durkee Rubbish at the South Strafford Fire Station about 200 yards down the road from the Recycling center. Durkee will also pick up trash from your house on Monday mornings, if you contact them (Debbie & Doug Clark, 765-4308).

### **What can I recycle at the Stafford Recycling Center?**

We take the following materials in separate bins:

- Mixed paper
- Corrugated cardboard
- Commingled household plastic containers and tin cans
- Deposit plastic bottles
- Deposit glass bottles
- Deposit aluminum cans
- Non-deposit aluminum drinks cans
- Aluminum foil and disposable aluminum cooking pans (clean please)
- Soft household plastic bags
- Scrap metal
- Food scraps
- Glass bottles and jars (no other glass)

### **How do I know what goes where?**

Ask the volunteers who are on duty every Saturday morning.

### **What can go into the mixed paper bin?**

Any material which is purely a paper product, except for tissues, paper towels, etc. This includes writing paper, construction paper, junk mail, newspapers, magazines, boxboard (such as cereal cartons), shipping tubes, wrapping paper.

### **Can I recycle books in mixed paper?**

Paperbacks can be recycled as is. Hardback books must have the covers removed.

### **Can I recycle milk cartons?**

Contrary to what has sometimes been done in the past, refrigerated milk, juice, etc. cartons cannot go into the mixed paper bin. The coating on the cartons prevents them from being recycled. These cartons and also the unrefrigerated cartons that sit on the store shelves for things like chicken broth should be put in the trash.

### **What can go into the corrugated cardboard bin?**

Only cardboard which has two layers with corrugated (crinkled) material between the layers. Any other sort of cardboard material goes into mixed paper. (We lower our costs by separating corrugated cardboard as a separate product.)

### **What can go into the commingled bin?**

Household plastic containers such as detergent bottles, yogurt or cottage cheese containers, water bottles, milk bottles, etc. go into this bin. This does **not** include Styrofoam products such as the trays under meat from the supermarket or egg cartons (Styrofoam does not recycle, despite the symbol that may be on it.) Also, the commingled bin takes tin (really steel) cans and cat food cans (which we used to separate).

### **What do the recycling symbols on plastic products mean?**

Basically nothing. The symbols indicate the type of plastic that the product is made from. *If* someone were financially motivated to set up a factory to recycle that type of material, that would be useful information for them. But for most types of plastic there is not a recycling system in place for that material.

### **What do I do with plastic products that the recycling center does not take?**

Unfortunately, this material mostly must be disposed of as trash. This includes five-gallon buckets, cat litter buckets, plant pots, clothes hangers, children's toys. In some cases, local growers will collect used but usable plant pots.

### **What can go into the food scraps bin?**

Basically, anything that is food scraps. This includes fruit and vegetable scraps, old pasta or bread, etc. Importantly, meat scraps and bones can go into the food scraps also. This is not something that you can do in your home compost pile. This includes such things as lobster and shrimp shells. (No clam, oyster shells.) The easiest way to handle your food scraps is with a bucket with a tight-fitting lid. You can also put brown paper shopping bags with scraps in them into the bin. A complication is that there are "biodegradable" plastic bags that some people like to put their scraps into. These bags seem to be made for the sorts of industrial composting facilities that big cities operate. They do not break down enough in the more basic operation in Corinth which takes our food scraps. Also, these "biodegradable" bags are the wrong sort for our soft plastic bag collection, so they have to go in the trash.

### **What sort of soft plastic household bags does the recycling center collect?**

The plastic bag/film collection is a bit confusing, since it requires everyone to be their own material scientist. TREX is interested in a certain range of plastic film that people commonly acquire when shopping. In general, these are any soft plastic films marked as #2, #4, LDPE, or HDPE. Items that are acceptable are the following:

- Overwrap from water, soda, paper towel, etc. bundles
- Bread, carrot, celery bags
- Bags you put produce in at the produce counter
- Cereal box liner bags
- Ziplock food storage bags
- Ice bags (dried)
- Wood pellet bags
- Plastic shopping bags from stores
- Bubble wrap
- Packaging air pillows (deflate)
- Salt Bags
- Newspaper sleeves
- Plastic shipping envelopes (e.g. Amazon)

There is a lot of plastic packaging not included in this list. That is still just trash. This includes most of the packaging for people and pet food. This is a different type which preserves the food better. Notice the difference in stiffness between the bag for your bread and your package of grated Cabot cheese. Also, crinkly plastic food packaging is not the type we want. This includes the bags that grapes and some other produce come in. Also, please do not bring in large plastic wrapping, such as the wrapping that your new mattress came in. We are not set up to handle that.

### **Should I crush aluminum drinks cans?**

Please don't crush aluminum drinks cans (deposit or non-deposit). The people who take them run them through scanners to check the barcodes.

### **What can go into the scrap metal bin?**

Anything that is **mostly** metal, this means 80% metal or more. Many home appliances now are mostly plastic with very little metal, like coffee makers or mixers, so these must go in the trash. One seeming exception is that house wiring with insulation on it can go into the metal bin. The copper or aluminum in the wiring is valuable enough that the metal guys are interested in it. This doesn't apply to extension cords or other household electrical cords.

Old washers, driers, ranges, ovens can go into the metal bin. Any appliance with refrigerants cannot go into the metal bin. This includes air conditioners, refrigerators, dehumidifiers, heat pumps. These can be taken to the Hartford Recycling Center where there is a fee to dispose of them.

**Can lightbulbs be recycled?**

Lightbulbs can't be recycled because they are a mix of several materials.

**If lightbulbs can't be recycled, why does the Recycling Center collect fluorescent lightbulbs?**

These are collected as hazardous waste because fluorescents contain mercury.

**Can I leave batteries at the Recycling Center?**

Yes, we collect most types of household batteries as hazardous waste. The cylindrical AA, AAA, C, D batteries can be put in the box unwrapped. Any lithium batteries, like disc types in watches and other devices, should be individually wrapped. There are small plastic bags for this on the battery box. On lithium batteries from tools, the contacts can be taped over instead of bagging the battery. We also take sealed lead-acid batteries, such as from fence chargers. Auto batteries can be brought to your auto mechanic, e.g. Mark Castro.

**What glass can I recycle?**

*Only* glass bottles and food jars can go into the commingled bin. These are made with a particular kind of glass. Any other sort of glass (or pottery) such as drinking glasses, vases, mirrors, window glass, light bulbs, etc. must be disposed of in the trash.

**Can I take stuff to the Hartford Transfer/Recycling Center?**

As a member town of GUVSWD, Strafford residents can use the Hartford Transfer/Recycling Center (Rt. 5, south of the VA Hospital). For their rules, hours, and charges check their website. This is the place to take large trash, refrigerators, air conditioners, propane tanks, wood waste, and many things that we don't handle in Strafford. You need a \$30 vehicle sticker (July 1 – June 30) that is available at the Town Office.