



Plastic Bags and Plastic Wraps Not Accepted in Curbside Single Stream Residential Recycling

Frequently Asked Questions

Plastic bags and plastic wraps are not accepted in the District of Columbia’s residential curbside recycling program. On a daily basis, these items clog and shutdown machinery used for screening and processing of products received at local recycling facilities. This can pose safety hazards for sort-line employees and anyone performing maintenance. Furthermore, the final condition of such bags and wraps, once recovered, often renders them unmarketable, which means they end up being trashed.

Types of Plastic Bags and Wraps Not Accepted for Curbside Single Stream Residential Recycling:

- Plastic Liners or trash bags (any color)
- Retail/Grocery Plastic Shopping Bags
- Bread/Bakery Bags
- Dry-Cleaning Bags
- Newspaper Bags
- Produce Bags
- Zip Close Food Storage Bags
- Crinkle Bags (e.g. snacks, pasta)
- Plastic Case Wrap and Film
- Air Pillows and Bubble Wrap

Where Can I Recycle Plastic Shopping Bags?

Most supermarkets and large retailers have plastic shopping bag return/recycling bins in their stores. Please visit <http://www.plasticfilmrecycling.org/s01/s01dropoff.html> to find a store near you that recycles plastic bags.

Can I put my compostable or biodegradable bag in a single stream recycling bin (collecting bottles, cans, cardboard and paper)?

No. These bags also pose the same operational and safety problems and thus do not get recycled.

Can I bag my other recyclables or use a liner in my bin?

No. DPW-collected curbside recyclables should involve no plastic bags at all. Materials should be placed loosely in your home’s blue collection cart. We encourage you to rinse out your containers on a regular basis to remove any residue or smell.

Can large paper bags be used as a collection liner for my recycling bin?

Yes and paper bags will get recycled.

Can I still put my trash in plastic bags?

Yes. Bags are only prohibited for recyclables. Do keep in mind that in the District of Columbia, plastic bags alone are not sufficient to containerize waste. All waste for storage or collection must be placed inside a plastic or metal container with a tight-fitting lid.

Where Can I Get More Information on Reducing and Recycling My Waste?

You can find more information on recycling by reaching www.zerowaste.dc.gov