Who knew three arrows would change the direction of society?
**Common Questions About Recycling**

1. What happens to recyclables after they are picked up at the curb or drop-off site? The recyclables are taken to a processing facility, separated and then baled for shipping to various manufacturers who use them to make new products. Both machinery and people sort items to maintain the quality of marketed materials. See the process in action at recylemorewisconsin.org/whtm.html.

2. What isn’t recycled in Wisconsin? Used oil filters, yard waste, including grass clippings, leaves, yard and garden debris, aluminum, glass, steel (tin) and bi-metal containers, electronics also contain many valuable materials, pollutants can leak out and enter groundwater or air, creating health and environmental risks. Recyclers, motor oil and antifreeze, cooks, stoves, ovens, dehumidifiers, furnaces, boilers and water heaters, yard waste, including grass clippings, leaves, yard and garden debris, lead acid vehicle batteries, used oil and automobile tires, computers, televisions, desktop printers, computer peripherals, DVD players, VCRs, digital video recorders, fax machines, phones with video displays, used oil filters.

3. Why doesn’t my community recycling program accept all plastics? Markets for clean #1 and #2 plastics are consistently high, which is why they are always collected in community programs. Currently, there is not a consistent, reliable and cost-effective market for plastics #3 - #7. Because it is more difficult to accumulate and sell significant volumes of these materials, many recycling programs do not accept them. However, some communities have found local markets for #3 - #7 plastics and may accept them. Contact your community recycling program for recycling options in your area.

4. Can I recycle hard plastic from electronics packaging, food take-out containers or non-container household products like toys? Most recycling programs do not accept these materials because they vary in composition, are generally plastics #3 - #7 and unlike beverage bottles and milk jugs, there is little or no demand for them. Even if they are labeled as #1 or #2, these materials contain additives that prevent them from being recycled with other plastics. Packaging material in particular can get stuck in some of the machinery that is used to sort recyclables. Before recycling these plastics, check with your local recycling program.

5. Why should I remove plastic milk jug and bottle caps and container lids before recycling? Caps and lids are often made of different resins (#3 - #7 plastics) and become a contaminant when mixed with containers. In addition, caps and lids keep liquids and other contents in the bottle, which can make it difficult for machinery to properly sort the containers.

6. Can I recycle pizza boxes? In most programs, if cardboard pizza boxes have grease stains on the bottom, you can tear off the clean top and sides and recycle them with your other recyclable cardboard. The greasy bottom should be disposed of in the trash. If the top has chesse or other toppings stuck to it, the whole box is considered contaminated and should be thrown in the trash.

7. If plastic shopping bags are recyclable, why doesn’t my curbside program take them? Plastic bags tangle up the machinery that community programs use to sort bottles, cans and paper items collected in curbside programs. However, many retail, grocery and service stores provide special bins for recycling plastic bags. These collected bags are handled using machinery designed for that purpose. Clean plastic bags have a high recycling value and are used to make plastic lumber and other products.

8. Why and how should I recycle a computer, television or other electronics? Each year 5 - 7 million computers, television and other electronics become obsolete in the United States. Electronics contain lead, mercury, cadmium, and other harmful materials. Recycling is not properly recycled, these pollutants can leak out and enter groundwater or air, posing a threat to human and environmental health. Electronics also contain many valuable materials, including gold, copper and steel. There are a growing number of places to recycle electronics in Wisconsin. To learn more, visit dnr.wi.gov/ecyclewisconsin.

9. Are compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) worth the extra effort and initial cost? Why should I recycle CFLs? CFLs require much less electricity to power a room, last longer than standard light bulbs and cut down on the mercury emissions from burning coal in power plants. It is important to dispose of CFLs correctly. When CFLs are landfilled the glass breaks and releases mercury, either into the atmosphere as landfill gas or as leachate, the liquid that seeps to the bottom of the landfills. Power plant emission reductions outweigh the amount of mercury that might be released from landfilled CFLs. There are several recycling options for CFLs. To learn more, visit Focus on Energy at focussenenergy.com/Residential/Lighting/cfls.aspx.

10. What can I do with other materials that my community program does not collect for recycling? Recycling is just one option out of many for managing unwanted materials. Other options include donating gently used toys, clothes and household items, composting food scraps and yard materials; recyclable shopping and purchasing products that use less packaging or use recycled packaging. For more ideas and information on reducing your waste, visit recylemorewisconsin.org.

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**Puzzled By Plastics?**

People are sometimes puzzled about which plastics can be recycled and which should go in the trash. And for good reason! Plastics are a product of many chemically diverse materials. Fortunately, a national coding system requires most consumer plastics to be labeled with a resin code #1 through 7. This helps consumers identify the types of plastics used in making bottles and other containers. The resin coding system consists of a recycling triangle with a number 1 through 7 in the center. Numbers 1 through 6 each represent a different type of plastic resin. Number 7 includes all other plastics. The letters sometimes found under the triangle abbreviate the name of the plastic.

Generally, this coding system is imprinted on the bottom of a plastic container. While the code provides guidance, it should be viewed with caution because of the misleading use of the recycling triangle. The presence of the recycling triangle does not necessarily mean that the item is accepted in your local program or that it can be recycled. For example, plastic deli and produce containers often bear the #1 label. However, these containers include additives that will ruin a batch of #1 plastic used to make beverage containers. When in doubt, it is better to throw the container out.

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**What should be recycled in Wisconsin?**

- Aluminum, glass, steel (tin) and bi-metal containers
- Plastic containers #1 and # 2, including milk jugs and detergent, soda and water bottles
- Magazines and other materials printed on similar paper
- Newspaper and office paper
- Corrugated cardboard
- Major appliances, including air conditioners, clothes washers and dryers, dishwashers, refrigerators, ovens, stoves, ovens, dehumidifiers, furnaces, boilers and water heaters
- Yard waste, including grass clippings, leaves, yard and garden debris
- Lead acid vehicle batteries, used oil and automobile tires
- Computers, televisions, desktop printers, computer peripherals, DVD players, VCRs, digital video recorders, fax machines, phones with video displays
- Used oil filters

Recycling is enforced by banning a material from disposal at all Wisconsin landfills and incinerators. Some communities go above and beyond what is required by law. Find out what additional materials are accepted for recycling in your community at RecycleMoreWisconsin.org.

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**Who is required to recycle in Wisconsin?**

- Everyone, everywhere, all the time! Wisconsin’s recycling requirements apply to everyone in the state, at all locations. This includes schools, public places, businesses, special events, homes and apartments.