

# RECYCLING NEWS BULLETIN

Volume IV: August 2018



RECYCLE OFTEN.  
RECYCLE RIGHT.

In our last edition, we talked about how commodity markets plummeted due to the global over-supply of recyclables and simultaneously reduced demand, driven by China's restrictive import policies. China's 0.5% contamination limit elevated quality expectations for all buyers across the globe on how important it is to reduce contamination. This edition will focus on one of the biggest culprits of contamination - plastic bags.

## Think Outside the Plastic Bag

Plastic bags and bagged recyclables are NOT recyclable in curbside and business recycling containers! Waste Management is pleased to announce a new campaign, complete with tools and resources to provide solutions and help customers 'Think Outside the Plastic Bag' and 'Free Your Recyclables'.

## Free Your Recyclables! Empty Them Loose Into Your Recycling Container

Did you know that when you bag your recyclables, all your good recycling work could be going to waste? Plastic bags wreak havoc on processing equipment and pose safety hazards to workers, so ditch them and empty your recyclables directly into your recycling container.

Recyclables should never be placed in plastic bags in your recycling carts. We have no way to know what is in them, so for safety reasons we treat all bagged material at our facilities as trash.

Here are two main reasons why you should 'Free Your Recyclables' at work and at home:

- **Worker health and safety:** Plastic bags pose a huge safety threat our employees at our facilities. They get wrapped around screens, clogging up the equipment and shutting down our processing system. Our staff stops working multiple times each day to carefully climb into machinery and cut plastic bags out of gears and screens.
- **Materials must be clean and dry to be recycled:** Plastic bags pick up dirt and moisture in your recycling cart and in the collection truck. By the time they get to the recycling facility - even a bag that was clean to start with is too dirty and wet to be recycled. There is simply NO market for wet, dirty plastic film and bags, so they end up in the trash.



Visit [RORR.com](http://RORR.com) for tools on recycling right.

## Take Action

- Don't bag your recyclables! We need to help individuals change their behavior and place recyclable materials directly into containers - no plastic bags! It's safer for workers and better for the environment.
- Visit [RecycleOftenRecycleRight.com](http://RecycleOftenRecycleRight.com) to download free tools and learn more about recycling right, including the 'Free Your Recyclables' and 'Think Outside the Plastic Bag' campaign materials (*coming soon*).
- Reduce and reuse: Avoid plastic bags all together by taking reusable bags with you the next time you go shopping. Save leftover plastic bags to use as trash liners (never recycling) around your home.
- Take back recycling options: Clean and dry plastic bags can be recycled at many local retailers. The bags that are collected in these programs are kept separate so they stay clean and dry. They are made into large bales and shipped to end markets to manufacture into durable items such as plastic lumber. Visit [plasticfilmrecycling.org](http://plasticfilmrecycling.org) to find a take back location near you.
- Become a Recycling Ambassador. Share good recycling practices from Waste Management's education and outreach program, Recycle Often. Recycle Right.® Download educational materials that help residents and businesses reduce and eliminate contamination.
- Collaborate! Join us in the battle against recycling contamination. It takes all of us working together to educate consumers to the new realities of recycling.

