

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Recycling



### **Where does my recycling go once its picked up from my house or business?**

100% of the recycling collected city-wide is delivered to the Republic Services of Florida Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Lakeland. Inside the MRF the recyclable material is cleaned, separated and bailed into marketable commodities and sold to companies such as CellMark, Rome GA – Making Carpet Fiber, WestRock, Jacksonville FL – Making Cardboard and Unifi Plastics, Reidsville NC – Making Performance Fiber for clothing and shoes, just to name a few.

### **Can I recycle styrofoam?**

No, the City of Lakeland can no longer recycle any form of styrofoam in the blue carts.

### **What can I recycle curbside?**

Cardboard boxes, paperback books, magazines, newspaper, office paper, junk mail, cereal boxes, plastic containers, tin cans, aluminum cans, empty metal aerosol cans, glass bottles and jars of any color.

### **When is my curbside collection day?**

Curbside recycling collection occurs once every week on the same day as your garbage collection. Please refer to our [collection day map](#) to identify your collection day.

### **Where do I place my wheeled recycling container on collection day?**

Please place your blue and green carts with minimum of three feet between each cart and surrounding objects (mailboxes, cars, carts, trees, etc.)



**3**feet



**3**feet

### **What if the cardboard I have does not fit into my recycling container?**

These days, we have more cardboard boxes than ever. All cardboard should be flattened, cut smaller or folded, and must be put inside the recycling container for collection. Any item(s) not inside your recycling container will not be collected by the recycling truck. It will be collected as garbage by a separate truck.

### **What happens if my container is damaged, lost or stolen?**

Your (green) trash and (blue) recycling containers are property of the City of Lakeland. Every container has a serial number and is electronically tagged, containers are attached to your address. Container problems associated with normal wear and tear will be repaired by the City. However, containers that are stolen or damaged through neglect or misuse will be replaced at the property owners' expense.

Residents are responsible for routine maintenance, including keeping the containers clean, removing the containers from the street after collection, and storing the containers in a safe place.

**NOTE: If your containers are gray and black with a yellow lid, they are not serviced by the City of Lakeland. Contact Polk County Waste Resource Management Division at 863.284.4319 for more information.**

### **What happens when there is a holiday?**

There are six holidays that could impact your collection schedules: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

[LakelandGov.net/departments/public-works/solid-waste/holiday-schedule/](http://LakelandGov.net/departments/public-works/solid-waste/holiday-schedule/)

### **Do I need to rinse or clean my recyclables before putting them into my recycling cart?**

All recyclable material should be empty of all liquids and solid foods and should be placed in the cart as clean as possible. Imagine if you had to store your recycling in your house for several weeks. If you didn't rinse your containers, the food would attract bugs and vermin. Yuck! The same thing happens in a recycling facility when your leftover food and liquids are in the blue cart. If the food is too caked-on to remove easily, for everyone's safety, throw it away in your green cart.

## **What materials cannot be placed in the recycling container?**

Some examples of items/materials that cannot be placed in recycling containers include:

- Household garbage and diapers
- Food waste
- Household and rechargeable batteries
- Electronics
- Propane canisters (large and small) used in cooking
- Needles (sharps)
- Hazardous waste
- Yard waste
- Loose shredded paper
- Plastic bags, film or bagged recycling
- Styrofoam
- Plastic storage containers (i.e. Sterilite, Rubbermaid, etc)
- Plastic clothes hangers

## **What should I do with shredded paper?**

Shredded paper can be recycled if placed in a paper bag and closed securely prior to placing in your recycling cart to prevent items from being blown into the street.

## **Why can't I recycle plastic grocery bags/plastic wrap or bag my recycling?**

Plastic films, grocery bags, and wraps become shredded and cause malfunctions in the MRF sorting machinery. Local grocery and retail stores have recycling containers located outside their stores for collecting and recycling plastic bags. In addition to plastic bags, Publix Super Markets will accept the following, clean and dry plastic materials in their recycling bins:

- Plastic packaging from toilet paper, napkins and paper towels
- Overwrap from shipping cases (such as plastic wrap from a case of water)
- Dry cleaning bags/protective plastic and newspaper sleeves

**How do I dispose of hazardous waste such as motor oil & filters, antifreeze, gasoline, brake fluid, paints & stains and fluorescent lamps? How about electronic waste?**

Household chemicals and electronics can cause great risk to collection staff and to our environment if not disposed of properly. These items are accepted free of charge at the Polk County North Central Landfill, located at 7399 Decastro Road, Winter Haven, Florida. For more information, contact Polk County Waste Resource Management Division at 863.284.4319.

**I have difficulty wheeling my cart to the curb. Does the City provide "front door" service for recycling?**

Assisted or "front door" service for both garbage and recycling collection can be provided to City residents, living independently, that submit a completed medical waiver collection form. Please call our office to talk to a customer service representative at 863.834.8773.



**Paper & Cardboard**

Empty, flattened cardboard, cereal boxes, newspapers, junk mail, magazines



**Metal Containers**

Empty & clean aluminum/metal food & beverage containers



**Plastic Containers**

Empty & clean food, beverage, soap bottles & containers



**Glass Containers**

Bottles & jars of any color, no ceramics or windows



**NO plastic bags, wrap, or bagged recyclables**



**NO clothing, blankets or fabric.**



**NO food or yard waste**



**NO foam packaging or containers**