



If you support the Hartford Marathon Foundation, you probably recycle. But do you recycle correctly? The following information summarizes the process nicely and we wanted to share it with our athletes, volunteers and supporters.

The household recycling process has changed since it became popular in the 1970s. Many municipalities have expanded their capabilities, and some forward-thinking cities have even implemented [curbside composting](#) for food waste.

Nevertheless, improper recycling continues to harm efficiency and the entire process of material recovery at recycling plants.

Here are some tips to make sure your good deed is doing the most good.

### 1. Beware the food stains

Grease spots on pizza boxes and other paper containers are more than unsightly—they can actually ruin entire paper batches at the recycling facility. According to [RecycleBank](#), “grease... causes oil to form at the top of the slurry, and paper fibers cannot separate from oils during the pulping process.” Ruining carefully recovered materials is, of course, that last thing you intend to do.

SOLUTION: Contaminated paper products, including used napkins, paper towels, and pizza boxes, belong in the trash or compost heap. If tossing them makes you cringe, cut out the contaminated sections and recycle the rest.

### 2. Check the numbers

While many places, including Vermont’s Chittenden County, can recycle plastic numbers 1-7, not every municipality can. To find the “plastic number,” look for the recycling symbol on the bottom of containers; view this [list of plastic types](#) to learn more. Numbers 1 and 2 are the most commonly accepted.

SOLUTION: Contact your local recycling facilities or visit the [Earth911 database](#) to learn what types of plastic are accepted in your area.

### 3. Rinse and repeat

Aluminum, glass, and plastics are heat-treated during the recycling process, so grease is not as destructive. But while careful washing is not required, a little effort on your end will improve efficiency at the recycling center.

SOLUTION: Using soap is unnecessary, but rinse your recyclables before tossing them in the big blue bin.

### 4. Know what can’t go

It may look like plastic, but that doesn’t always mean it can be salvaged. These items generally *cannot* be recycled in your curbside box:

- Styrofoam
- Plastic bags
- Plastic wrap

SOLUTION: Some cities are way ahead of everyone else and accept plastic bags, food waste, and more. But be sure to check with your local facilities before putting questionable items on the curb.

## 5. Take a trip

Certain devices that are banned from the bins can still be brought or sent to specific drop-off locations. Common items like cell phones and eyeglasses can even be refurbished to serve those in need. For example, the "[HopeLine](#)" program provides emergency phones to people experiencing domestic violence.

Items that can be recycled at certain locations:

- a. Batteries
- b. Hazardous waste containers
- c. E-waste, including computers and other electronics
- d. Household appliances

SOLUTION: Take non-curbside recycling items to your local drop-off center. For general tips and nationwide recycling options, check out the "[How to Recycle Anything](#)" guide.

For more information about proper recycling, visit <http://earth911.com/recycling/>.