

What Happens to Our Recyclables?



First, collection trucks bring them to a recycling facility, where they are unloaded onto an area called...



PAPER

CORRUGATED BOXES / OLD NEWSPRINT / MIXED PAPER / OFFICE MIX

Paper recyclables are baled, and then sold primarily to paper mills.

Some mills use 100% recycled paper. Others combine recycled paper with wood scraps from lumber mills.

The two are mixed to a pulp and poured onto large rollers. Once a sheet forms, it is drained, fed through heated rollers, trimmed, and wrapped into rolls.

PLASTIC

Mixed plastic is sorted by type and color. Air is blown into the mix to separate heavier and lighter plastics.

In some facilities, plastic containers are optically scanned for separation into types, such as PET, HSPE, etc.

Baled, recycled plastics are sent to a plastics remanufacturing plant. The plastics are ground up, washed, melted and formed into plastic pellets for reuse.

GLASS

First the glass recyclables are crushed and cleaned of debris and contaminants.

The crushed glass, referred to as cullet, is loaded onto trucks for transport to a variety of applications, (eg. road bedding).

To make new glass containers, the cleaned cullet is mixed with sand, soda ash, feldspar and limestone at a glass plant. This mixture is fed into a furnace.

METAL

Magnets separate the steel into a storage bin for baling. The remaining Aluminum is then separated by an eddy current.

Cans are crushed and baled for transport. Aluminum is melted and either rolled into sheets or poured into ingots.

Tin and steel are recovered through chemical and electrolysis baths. They are purified, and cast into ingots. The steel is heated and poured into sheets.