



May 31, 2019

International Recycling Crisis -- What's Happening in Salem?

You've probably heard about the international crisis caused by China's refusal to accept the materials we recycle.

China implemented this "National Sword" policy because our recyclables are contaminated with foods, liquids, plastic bags and wrap, low grade plastics and more.

We're lucky in Salem. Unlike in some communities that are either closing their recycling programs or trashing the materials, Waste Management (the company that collects and processes our recycling) is working to find new markets. So far none of our recyclables have been landfilled or incinerated.

Let's keep it that way!

What this Crisis Means to Us

We need to improve our environmental behaviors!

You've heard of the three Rs—Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Note that Recycle is last!

First, **REDUCE** by avoiding single use containers and such whenever possible. For example, instead of paper, use plastic plates that can be washed and reused time and time again.

A way to **REUSE** is to offer things you no longer want to others. Join [Buy Nothing Salem](#) a facebook group dedicated to moving on items by sharing, lending and gifting.



Back to Basics - Recycle Right

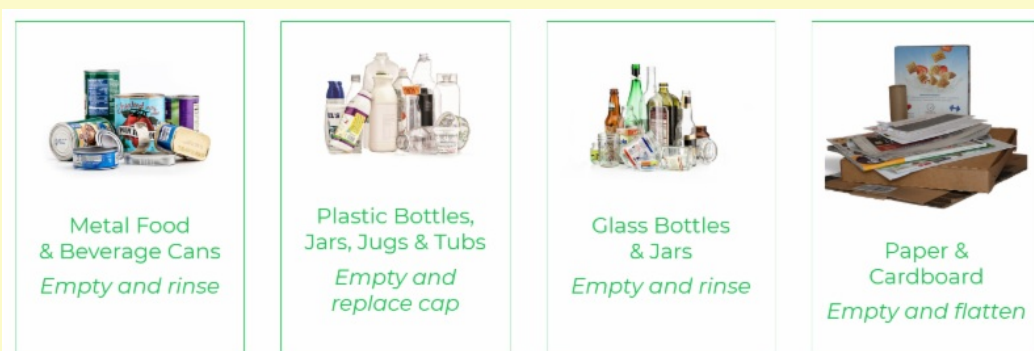
In these times it's especially important that our recycling is **clean and free of contamination**. Follow these steps and look

at the graphic below.

- No plastic bags, Styrofoam or food waste in your curbside toter. EVER.
- Don't know if something is recyclable? First look at the graphic on the lid of your toter. If it's not there, it can't go in the bin. Period!
- 1, 2, 5, 7, etc? The numbers no longer matter. If it's a plastic bottle, jar, jug or tub, recycle it. If not, don't!
- Not sure if it can be recycled? Ask the [Recyclopedia](#) an online resource that is part of Recycle Smart MA. You will be given a clear answer.
- Compost your food waste. Weekly curbside pickup is available for a small monthly fee from [Black Earth Compost](#).
- Remember: No "wishcycling." Never assume that the sorting facility will figure it out. They won't. That's what got us into this mess. Click here to read more about [Wishcycling](#).



What Can I Recycle?



???? Ask SalemRecycles

This is a new feature of our newsletter. If you have a question, send it to Micaela Guglielmi at mguglielmi@salem.com



Q: Black Plastic Take-out Trays

I just heard that the black plastic containers I get with hot food carryout are not recyclable. Is this true? I thought they were okay.

A: Here's the bottom line. The clear plastic lids of these containers can be recycled, but black plastic, in any form -- including trays and carryout containers -- CANNOT.

The optical scanners at the sorting facilities can't read through black plastic. That, coupled with the fact that black cannot be mixed with

other plastics, makes it very difficult to recycle. Remember this the next time you get sushi!

Connect with Us



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