

Packaging

Packaging contains valuable material. Here is how to dispose of various packaging so it can be recycled into new products.

Household packaging can be handed in for recycling at recycling stations located in public places such as Public malls, University Campuses, etc. [Find your nearest station here.](https://www.sopor.nu/en/recycle-here/find-your-waste-station/) (https://www.sopor.nu/en/recycle-here/find-your-waste-station/). If you live at a property with its own collection point, you turn it in there.

Empty

Empty the packaging and make sure there are no food scraps left inside. Packaging does not need to be cleaned.

Manual sorting is based on weight for certain types of material, which is why it is important that they are emptied. In addition, packaging may have a long journey to the recycling station. So, it is good if there are no food scraps and similar items that are smelly and unhygienic.

Separate

If the packaging consists of more than one material, separate them if possible. A glass jar with metal lid is easy to take apart, while the pump of a spray can is usually difficult to remove. In such case, leave it in place. If a piece of packaging consists of several materials that cannot be separated, sort it based on which material makes up the greatest proportion of the weight.

Facilitate recycling

Bend in sharp lids on food tins and flatten them, if possible. Make sure that spray cans/bottles have been completely emptied of both content and propellant; otherwise dispose of them as [hazardous waste](https://www.sopor.nu/en/sort-recycle/hazardous-waste/) (https://www.sopor.nu/en/sort-recycle/hazardous-waste/). Pack smaller paper packaging inside larger packaging, so it takes up less space both under the sink and at the recycling station. Keep plastic and metal packaging separate from each other in their respective containers. They are sorted by machine before recycling.

Sort

A simple and space-saving method for source separating is to collect all packaging in the same bag. Then you sort at the recycling station and put the right packaging in the right container.

Only packaging at a recycling station

Food scraps, car parts and old furniture are examples of waste that should not be discarded at the recycling station, but sometimes end up there anyway and contribute to littering.

Tip for plastic bags with aluminium foil

Some plastic bags have a metal foil on the inside. This can make it difficult to tell which is the main material of the packaging. Try crumpling it together. If it unfolds itself again, it is mostly plastic. If it stays crumpled up, it is mostly metal.

Paper Packaging

Examples of paper packaging include pasta and cereal boxes, milk and juice cartons, sugar and flour bags, dog food bags, paper carrier bags, corrugated boxes from TVs, stereos, furniture, packing paper, etc.

If there is a collection point for paper packaging near or at your property, you can dispose of it there. Many of the municipalities' manned recycling centres also have collection containers for the recycling of packaging.

Please remove plastic caps and dispose of them with plastic packaging. And remember that newspapers, catalogues and similar items should be placed in the container for newspapers and recyclable paper. Envelopes should be placed in the residual waste bin.

Glass Packaging

Take your glass packaging to a recycling station. You can find your nearest recycling station [here](https://www.sopor.nu/en/recycle-here/find-your-waste-station/) (<https://www.sopor.nu/en/recycle-here/find-your-waste-station/>). There, you can also see which packaging you can leave at which station, and when a recycling station is emptied and cleaned. If there is a collection point for glass packaging near or at your property, you can dispose of it there. Many of the municipalities' manned recycling centres also have collection containers for the recycling of packaging.

For glass packaging to be recycled, it must not be mixed with other items. In other words, ceramics, porcelain, drinking glasses and other glass products that are not packaging must not be placed in the recycling container for glass packaging. They should be handed in as residual waste or bulky waste at the recycling centre.

- **Light bulbs** are collected together with **e-waste** (<https://www.sopor.nu/en/sort-recycle/e-waste/>).
- **Returnable glass bottles** should be taken back to a shop to receive the deposit back. Coloured and clear glass packaging are put in different containers to make it possible to recycle them. Although the same vehicle collects packaging from several different containers, it has separate compartments for coloured and clear glass, and in some cases also for other types of packaging. The different types of packaging are kept separate throughout the recycling process.

Metal Packaging

Food tins, spray cans, tubes, caps, lids, and dry paint cans (scraped out and dry) are examples of metal packaging.

If there is a collection point for metal packaging near or at your property, you can dispose of it there. Many of the municipalities' manned recycling centres also have collection containers for the recycling of packaging.

- **Metal cans with leftover paint or solvent** must be handed in as hazardous waste so they can be disposed of properly. Cans that are completely scraped out and dry can be placed in the container for metal packaging.
- **Metal electrical and electronic products** must be disposed of as e-waste;
- **Metal items that are not packaging**, such as holders from tea lights, pitch torches and grave candles as well as frying pans, cutlery and metal buckets, must be handed in at a recycling centre as bulky waste. Do not forget to remove the wick holder from the tea light cup; otherwise, the cup will be sorted out with iron and the aluminium will burn up in the smelter.
- **Returnable cans** should be taken back to a shop to receive the deposit back.

Plastic Packaging

Examples of plastic packaging include plastic carrier bags, plastic bags, plastic tubes, refill packs, plastic film and foil, inner bags in, for example, cereal packs, bottles, jars, small cans and buckets (jam, yoghurt), chip bags and styrofoam, including meat and fish trays.

If there is a collection point for plastic packaging near or at your property, you can dispose of it there. Many of the municipalities' manned recycling centres also have collection containers for the recycling of packaging.

Remove caps and lids. Empty your bag of plastic packaging into the container so that they lie there loosely. This facilitates recycling.

- **Plastic returnable bottles** should be taken back to a shop to receive the deposit back.
- **Large plastic packaging** that does not fit into the opening of the container must be taken to a municipal recycling centre.
- **Storage boxes** for e.g. CDs, video cassettes, board games, and plastic flower pots should be discarded as residual waste.

Items that are not packaging – children's sledges, laundry baskets, furniture, etc. – are discarded as plastic waste at your recycling centre if they have the fraction. If not, they are discarded as bulky waste. Check with the staff at your recycling centre.

Remember that if the packaging has any leftover glue, paint, solvent or similar, it should be handed in as hazardous waste. The same applies to plastic electrical items.

Hazardous Waste

Hazardous waste can harm people or the environment if left in the wrong place. It must not be mixed with other waste or flushed down the drain, but must be turned in at a special collection point.

Municipal recycling centres accept most types of hazardous waste. There may also be hazardous waste collection points, for example at petrol stations, where hazardous waste can be turned in. Some municipalities collect hazardous waste directly from households. Some hazardous waste can also be handed in at shops and similar places.

Hazardous waste includes anything that may be toxic, carcinogenic, corrosive, harmful to reproduction, dangerous to the environment, infectious or flammable. In a regular household, this could be things like chemicals, paints, solvents, pharmaceutical products and pesticides.

Chemicals

The following and similar **chemicals** should be turned in to a hazardous waste collection point or manned municipal recycling centre in their original packaging:

- Pesticide
- Waste oil
- Solvent

- Hair dye
- Strong detergents

If the chemical is disposed of in different packaging, it is important to label it with what it contains.

Remember not to mix different products, but hand them in separately. Also make sure that the packaging is not leaking. All this is done to ensure that the different products are disposed of properly, but also to avoid exposing the people who will be handling the waste to any risks.

Packaging containing leftover chemicals should be handed in as hazardous waste at the municipal recycling centre, hazardous waste collection point or similar.

If the can or bottle is marked with any of the three symbols above, it should be disposed of as hazardous waste even if it is completely empty and dry

Medicines & Pharmaceutical Products

Medicines and other pharmaceutical products could harm both animals and fish if they are not disposed of properly.

Pharmacies accept leftover or outdated **medicines** from households. For used syringes and needles, most pharmacies can provide you a special container. When this container is full, you can turn it in at a pharmacy or the municipality's hazardous waste collection point.

Special rules apply to **cytostatics** (cancer drugs). "Normal quantities" can be handed in to a pharmacy, but the municipal recycling centre can accept it as well. **Mercury thermometers** are also handed in at the recycling centre.

Remember that medicines should never be flushed down the toilet or poured down the drain. The treatment plants cannot remove the hazardous substances, and they will instead follow along out into the waterways.

Paints, glues and varnishes

Paints, glues and varnishes often contain solvents and other substances than can harm the environment.

Leftover **paint**, **impregnating agent**, **glue**, **varnish**, **putty** and similar products, as well as **spray bottles** and **nail varnish**, should be handed in at a hazardous waste collection point or recycling centre. Packaging containing leftover paint, even if it is dried out, should also be handed in there. This also applies if the paint is water-soluble.

If the waste is not being disposed of in its original packaging, it is important to label it with what it contains.

If the can is scraped out and dry, it can be turned in for recycling in a container for plastic or metal packaging.

Regardless of the chemical, never flush leftovers down the toilet or pour them down the drain. The treatment plants cannot remove the hazardous substances, and they will instead follow along out into the waterways.

Tips for cleaning brushes

Solvent-based paint

1. Wipe most of the paint off the brush on a piece of paper and dip the brush in a can of brush cleaner, varnish remover or similar.
2. Keep the brush cleaner in the can with the lid on for repeated use.
3. When it has become too dirty, hand in the brush and the brush cleaner to the municipal recycling centre.

Water-based paint

1. Wipe off as much of the paint as possible from brushes and rollers onto newspaper or masking paper.
2. You can dispose of the paper with paint in your household waste.
3. Then wash the brushes in a little water in a can. You can then rinse the brushes under the tap.
4. Leave the can of water stand a few days so that the paint residue sinks to the bottom. Then carefully pour off the clear water phase.
5. Take the paint sludge to a recycling centre.

E-Waste

It is important that you turn in your e-waste (electrical and electronic waste) for recycling, as it contains materials that can be turned into new products. For example, metals can be recycled any number of times without losing quality.

E-waste also contains environmentally hazardous substances. Mercury, lead, cadmium and freons are examples of substances that are hazardous for both nature and humans. By turning in e-waste for recycling, we save natural resources and contribute to a cleaner environment.

All products with a **cord or battery** must be turned in as e-waste when they are no longer operable. Many products have built-in batteries. In such case, the entire product must be turned in. In other words, you do not need to remove the battery. Fluorescent tubes and light bulbs are also considered e-waste.

Municipal recycling centres accept all types of e-waste. The municipality can also pick up larger items, such as refrigerators or freezers, for a fee.

All shops selling new electronics must accept and recycle old electrical items. Smaller shops apply a one-for-one principle, meaning they will recycle your old electric toothbrush when you buy a new one. Larger shops (such as electronics chains) must accept electrical items whether you buy a new one or not. Not sure what applies? Ask in your shop what rules apply there.

Batteries can be left in battery bins, which can be found all over urban areas.

Batteries

Batteries can contain mercury, cadmium and lead – substances that cause great harm if released into the environment.

Loose small batteries are used in items such as flashlights, clocks, remote controls and cameras. Built-in batteries can be found in items such as electric toothbrushes, computers, toys and tools.

Loose **small batteries** should be disposed of in a battery bin or similar container. Products with a **built-in battery** are disposed of together with other e-waste, usually at a municipal recycling centre. **Car batteries** are disposed of at a municipal recycling centre or similar collection point, or handed in at a place that sells car batteries.

Keep in mind that many things that move, flash or make noises are powered by batteries – even if you cannot see them.

So what are the different types of batteries?

ALKALINE BATTERIES – THE MOST COMMON TYPE

Alkaline batteries (which have replaced the old zinc-carbon batteries) are the common disposable batteries you put in things like smoke detectors, remote controls and toys. They can be round, square or rod-shaped, but a common denominator is that they cannot be recharged.

Since 2009, all alkaline batteries are recycled, especially the metal casing around them. The content (which consists of carbon) is called the “black mass”. A lot of research is currently being conducted on how to recycle it. Until this is solved, the content is taken care of and stored safely.

LITHIUM BATTERIES – THE MODERN BATTERIES

Let's move on to lithium batteries. If you are very interested in batteries, we can tell you that there are several types of lithium batteries, but there are mainly three types that you encounter in everyday life. And if that was not complicated enough, they can be divided into two groups.

The first group is called primary lithium batteries and cannot be recharged. They are very small and rare and can be found in watches, computers and toys. Because they are so small, they are quite difficult to recycle. For this reason, they are made into new energy instead.

The second group of lithium batteries (made up of lithium-ion and lithium-polymer if you really want to impress people with your knowledge) are found in modern laptops, phones, games, cameras – in short, most things fun and wireless. It is the best type of battery on the market today in terms of both power and the environment. As much as 90 percent of the most common lithium batteries are recyclable.

LEAD-ACID BATTERIES – BIG AND HEAVY

Although they are most common in cars, lead-acid batteries are also found in some gardening equipment and mopeds.

Lead is a toxic heavy metal, so it is especially important to recycle your large batteries. That way, the lead can be disposed of safely.

Lead-acid batteries can be taken to a recycling centre. Car batteries (which also contain corrosive acid) can also be turned in to a petrol station when you change your battery. And, the beauty of it all is that up to 98 percent of the contents of a car battery can be used again – as new batteries and as energy!

MERCURY BATTERIES – ENVIRONMENTAL TROUBLEMAKERS

Batteries containing the heavy metal mercury are mainly found in some button cell batteries. They are round and small, and can be found in everything from watches to singing birthday candles and remote controls. Mercury is so toxic that Swedish authorities have decided to phase mercury batteries out of the battery market. When you recycle your mercury

batteries, the heavy metal is sorted out and stored so that it does not get back into the environment. That is why it is particularly important to recycle your button cell batteries.

P.S. Many new button cell batteries do not contain mercury. But to be on the safe side, you can make a habit of taking gadgets containing small and round batteries to recycling more quickly.

CADMIUM BATTERIES – ENVIRONMENTAL TROUBLEMAKERS ON A PAR WITH MERCURY BATTERIES

Cadmium batteries (a.k.a. nickel-cadmium batteries) contain the dangerous heavy metal cadmium. Fortunately, they are not very common today. This is because an environmental tax has been imposed on cadmium batteries, making them more expensive for manufacturers to put in their gadgets than other more environmentally-friendly battery types. Another reason is that more powerful batteries have come onto the market. One example is lithium batteries.

BUT cadmium batteries can still turn up in older devices, like old computers, phones and tools. Another reason to take your old brick mobile to the recycling centre or collection point.

P.S. Cadmium batteries are the source of the myth that you always have to discharge your battery before recharging it. But modern batteries (like the ones in your smartphone) can be recharged at any time without putting wear on the battery!

NICKEL METAL HYDRIDE SUCCESSORS

When cadmium batteries stopped being used, a replacement called nickel metal hydride batteries came along. You may recognise them most as the rod-shaped batteries that look like ordinary alkaline batteries, but which you can plug into a charger.

Nickel metal hydride batteries contain no heavy metals, but of course they also go straight to the battery bin or recycling centre when they cannot be recharged. They are up to 90 percent recyclable.

Miscellaneous Electronics

Miscellaneous electronics is the largest recycling group within e-waste – small and medium-sized products found in the home, such as computers, TVs, toys, mobile phones, vacuum cleaners, etc.

Municipal recycling centres accept all e-waste.

All shops selling new electronics must accept and recycle old electrical items. Smaller shops apply a one-for-one principle, meaning they will recycle your old electric toothbrush when you buy a new one. Larger shops (such as electronics chains) must accept electrical items whether you buy a new one or not. Not sure what applies? Ask in your shop what rules apply there.

Light Bulbs and fluorescent tubes

Municipal recycling centres accept all types of **light bulbs** and **fluorescent tubes**. Some shops also accept light bulbs and fluorescent tubes. Be careful not to break the bulbs, as mercury could then be released.

Newspapers and other printed matter

Put daily and weekly newspapers, magazines, catalogues (mail order, telephone and travel catalogues), advertising leaflets, brochures, office paper, writing and drawing paper and paperback books in the recycling container for newspapers and recyclable paper. They all can be recycled.

Remove plastic wrappers from magazines and advertising, and dispose of them as plastic packaging. The packing paper used as packaging for printer paper is disposed of as paper packaging.

You do not need to remove staples, spiral bindings and the like from magazines or notebooks. They are sorted out with the help of magnets and sent to metal recycling.

On 1 January 2022, the municipalities took over responsibility for collecting recyclable paper, a role previously handled by the producers via FTI (Förpackningsinsamlingen). How collection takes place varies from municipality to municipality. Most people will not notice the change, but check with your municipality to see how it works in your area.

If there is a collection point for newspapers near or at your property, you can dispose of them there. Many of the municipalities' manned recycling centres also have collection containers for the recycling of packaging and newspapers.

Paper that should not be put in the newspaper recycling container includes envelopes and bound books. These should instead be disposed of as residual waste. Milk cartons, packing paper and similar items are placed in the container for paper packaging.

Food Waste

In many places, food scraps and other food waste are collected separately. The energy can then be recovered and used for heating and fuel, while the nutrients are used to grow new food.

Different rules apply to what should be sorted out, depending on how the food waste will be treated. Always use the special bags distributed to households for food waste. And make sure no plastic packaging or other foreign objects end up in these bags.

It is also possible to have a compost bin at home for food waste. Before starting to compost food waste, contact your municipality for more information and to register home composting.

Bulky waste

Broken furniture, tools without cords or batteries, scrap metal (such as frying pans) or other cumbersome items are called bulky waste.

Municipal recycling centres accept bulky waste. If you are unable to take it there yourself, you can have it collected by the municipality for a fee.

Much of the bulky waste can be sorted into e.g. wood waste, scrap metal, etc. for recycling. Second-hand shops and charities often accept used items if they still have some useful life left.

Never leave bulky waste at recycling stations for packaging and newspapers. Such items do not belong there, and a lot of money is spent every year to clear these items away.

Responsibility of property owners

The municipality can stipulate in its waste regulations that property owners must sort bulky waste and keep it separate from other waste. Property owners include owners of individual properties and owners of apartment blocks.

It is up to the property owner and the property occupier to decide how the sorting requirement will be met, on or near the property (special space in the building, subscription to collection at certain intervals, green building on the property, or jointly with another property, etc.). The municipality cannot impose requirements on how the sorting requirement is to be met.

As the waste regulations are mandatory, a property owner cannot contract out of the obligation to provide bulky waste sorting through the lease.

Property owners are allowed to take bulky waste to the municipal recycling centre themselves. This does not conflict with the municipality's exclusive right to transport municipal waste when this possibility is regulated in the municipality's waste regulations.

Residual Waste

Once the hazard waste and everything that can be recycled have been sorted out, there is often something left – what you put in the bin. But it can also be recycled!

Nappies, broken plastic toys (that do not contain batteries), envelopes, plasters, cotton buds and a host of other waste that cannot be recycled in any other way become fuel in special waste incineration plants. This produces both heat and electricity