

Recycling 101

Let's be honest: recycling is hard. A product's claim that it is recyclable does not necessarily mean that your recycling company will accept it. While you may be trying your best to follow all the rules you have learned, each recycling company has slightly different standards that you might be following incorrectly. Don't worry, though; we are here to (hopefully) help.

Who is my recycling company?

The first step to recycling properly is knowing who your provider is and what their rules are. Cabbagetown residents mainly use two different recycling companies. The Stacks uses *Conex Recycling*, whereas most Cabbagetown homes use the *City of Atlanta Recycling*. Keep in mind that some businesses may use alternative programs, so you should inquire about their programs and their rules before recycling.

What can you recycle?

There are two main recycling models. *Conex* follows the “paper-plastic-aluminum” model, whereas *City of Atlanta* uses “paper-plastic-aluminum-glass.” While that seems straight-forward, there are surprisingly strict restrictions and weird rules for the categories.

Paper

Almost all forms of paper are accepted. This includes newspapers, magazines, office paper (including shredded), junk mail, catalogs, notebooks, cardboard packages, shoe boxes, and cereal boxes. Any large metal spirals need to be removed, but smaller materials, such as staples, paperclips, and binder clips, are able to be recycled. Glue and tape do not need to be removed as long as they are not excessive. Cardboard products must be disassembled into flat pieces. In simpler terms, any paper or cardboard that is clean and flat is good to go.

Plastic

Plastic containers 1–7 may be recycled. You can determine the type of plastic your container is made of by locating the recycling symbol. Typically, it is printed on the side of a label or embossed on the bottom. Here is an example of what you are looking for:



Plastic containers must be rinsed and their caps placed back on before being placed in the bin.

Aluminum

Much like plastic products, aluminum products may be recycled as long as they have no food or liquid residues. This includes, but is not limited to, tin cans, soda cans, and aluminum foil.

Glass

The Stacks residents cannot recycle glass. Cabbagetown residents who use the *City of Atlanta Recycling* can place glass into their bin that is empty, clean, and dry. Lids should be removed if made of a different material.

What can't you recycle?

Key items that cannot be recycled with our local recyclers are styrofoam, plastic bags, hazardous materials (including chlorine, paint, motor oil, and cleaner), garbage, light bulbs, electronic devices, clothing, mirrors, photos, and diapers. Essentially, if it is not an approved paper, plastic, or metal (and sometimes glass), you cannot recycle it in the home bins. When in doubt, throw it out.

What happens if you want to recycle something that your recycling company does not accept?

Just down the street, *The Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM)* takes styrofoam, mixed paper, cardboard, books, musical instruments, bikes, electronics, paint, chemicals, mattresses, cooking oil, tires, glass, appliances, metals, cigarette butts, and plastics. *CHaRM* is by appointment only, and some items cost a small fee to recycle. Items that are difficult to recycle should never be placed on the side of the curb or in the trash.

What are some general tips?

- Make sure your containers are clean.
- Break down your boxes.
- Reduce and reuse before recycling.
- Take advantage of hard-to-recycle companies.
- If you have any questions about recycling, contact your recycling provider.