

Why can't I recycle my plastic bags?

When we pick up your recycling in one of our trucks, it is combined with other people's recycling and taken to a Materials Recovery Facility, or MRF. There the material is separated by type so it can be sent to manufacturers for reuse. A long assembly line of people and machines help sort out plastic bottles from aluminum cans, cardboard from paper. The process has a bunch of mechanical elements, and plastic bags quite literally get stuck in the gears and grind the process to a halt. Plastic bags and film are our MRF's #1 problem; several times a day, they have to completely stop their assembly line to pull plastic bags out of the machinery.

Grocery store plastic bags are the biggest culprit, but any stretchy plastic will cause the same problems. Besides trash bags, another repeat offender, this category includes sandwich bags, plastic wrap, produce bags, and quite a bit of packaging. If it's plastic and you can stretch it, it belongs in the trash. Remember: when in doubt, throw it out.

How do I Reduce?

This one is easy- bring your own bags to the grocery store! If that sounds like too much forethought, just keep a couple of reusable bags in your car. They also make bags that fold up quite small for those of the purse-carrying persuasion. For extra credit, bring spare bags for produce, or simply don't bag fresh items individually. Tupperware can be used in place of Ziploc bags.

How do I Reuse?

Zip-top bags can be washed out and reused for the same purpose. Grocery and other bags can be used to line small household trash cans, or to pick up after pets.

How do I Recycle?

While plastic bags CANNOT go into your recycle bin, they can be recycled if processed separately. You can drop off your plastic bags to be recycled at any Walmart Supercenter, Lowes or Target. Find your nearest plastic bag recycler at <http://www.abagslife.com/find-a-recycle-center/>!

But what about trash bags?

Please don't bag your recyclables! Recyclable materials are generally clean, so most people can get away with not lining their indoor bins and rinsing them out if they get dirty. If that's not possible for you, make sure to shake the recyclables out when you get to your outside container- put the trash bag in the trash where it belongs.