

PROPER RECYCLING PLASTIC BAGS & FILM

A Guide to doing it right in Lawrence and Mercer Counties.

Plastic bags are a popular choice for transporting goods from the point of purchase to our homes. Film plastic is commonly used by manufactures for packaging because it is less costly and lightweight compared to other materials such as cardboard.. Most plastic bags that arise from grocery and department store purchases are recyclable.

What Types of Plastic Bags and Film Can I Recycle?

There is a long list of film plastics that can be recycled with plastic bags. It includes the following.

Newspaper bags	Dry Cleaning Bags	Product Wraps	Veggie Bags
Bread Bags	Furniture Wrap	Electronic Wrap	Bubble Wrap
Food Storage Bags	Cereal Box Wrappers	Tyvek Plastic	Shipping Envelopes
Ice Bags	Bags Labeled #2 or #4		

What Problems Do Plastic Bags Cause in Regular Curbside and Drop-off Recycling Programs?

Plastic bags do not belong in curbside and drop-off recycling programs. Materials from these programs are sent to recycling centers that are not equipped to process plastic bags and film. Plastic bags containing recyclables that arrive at recycling centers must be physically opened to remove their contents. Loose bags wrap around cogs, conveyers, and equipment resulting in facility shutdowns. The manual labor used to open and remove plastic bags and shutdowns is extremely costly to recycling operations. Plastic bags that end up at local traditional recycling centers will not get recycled.

Plastic bags also contribute to litter and microplastic pollution because they are easily carried by wind and water.

Plastic bags are recyclable but they must be taken to designated locations. Do not put plastic bags or film into your curbside recycling bins or the county big blue bins.

Plastic Bag Alternatives

Bring reusable cloth bags with you when you go shopping. Reusable bags can be washed and used many times. They are also available in a variety of sizes.

Paper bags may be a good option if you don't have reusable cloth bags. Paper bags can be recycled in some curbside and drop-off programs. Remember to check with your program guidelines first.

There are also reusable veggie, sandwich, and other specialty bags available that can be used in place of traditional plastic bags.

Reuse your plastic bags around the home whenever possible.

Plastic Bag/Film Recycling Locations

Giant Eagle
Lowe's
Target
Wal-Mart

Always check with a location before bringing your material there.

 www.mercercountypa.gov/recycling

www.lawrencecountypa.gov/recycling

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