



Why can't I recycle that?

Whether or not something is recyclable is determined by the marketplace and the technology used to sort and process items. Cary has considered these factors along with volume, quality and efficiency of service to provide our citizens with the Cary Recycles program. Committed to high quality service, we accept items that can be safely collected and that the materials recovery facility (MRF) can most consistently sort, bale and send to end-buyers.

Please note: The list of what Cary accepts may differ from that of neighboring recycling programs, even if we use the same MRF. For example, the market demand of an item may be such that the MRF can meet it by collecting the item from a single municipality (thus not accepting it from others). Therefore, it's important to follow your municipality's recycling guidelines.

Who does Cary contract with for curbside recycling?

While the Town staffs and operates our Cary Recycles curbside recycling collection services, we contract with Sonoco in Raleigh as our MRF to sort, bale and sell the items we collect. Different MRFs can process different materials, and we work closely with ours to continually review the convenience and effectiveness of our recycling program. Learn more about Sonoco's sorting process here: <https://youtu.be/HowgQLdv3pk>

Why does Cary collect recycling every other week?

In 2009, Cary switched from 18-gallon recycling bins to 65 and 96-gallon recycling carts and introduced every other week recycling. These updates increased the efficiency, cost-effectiveness and safety of our service. Households that consistently need more than one recycling cart can request a free cart at services.townofcary.org or call (919) 469-4090. Please remember that recycling more and recycling right should go hand-in-hand; [Cary Recycles accepted list](#)

In my recycling cart, why can't I recycle...

- **All items that have a recycling symbol with/without a number?**

We accept items that we can safely collect and that the MRF can sort, bale and send to end-buyers based on market demand. Just having a recycling symbol, alone or with a number, is not enough to meet this requirement.

- **All containers, including plastic clamshells, labeled #1-7?**

The number found on the container indicates the main type of plastic it is made from, but the shape of the container may mean different requirements for proper sorting and processing and the market demand for their recovery.

- **Plastic bags, wrap/film such as the overwrap on a case of bottled water?**

Plastic bags, wrap/film should stay clean and dry for recycling, and this is not possible in our collection process. The MRF is also not capable of handling this type of material as it gets caught in equipment and other recyclables. Find drop-off locations for plastic bag recycling: <https://www.plasticfilmrecycling.org>

- **Bagged recyclables (items tied up in a plastic bag)?**

Items must be loose to sort correctly at the MRF. The MRF deems it unsafe and inefficient to empty bags of materials on the sorting line. Be sure to place and keep items loose in the cart so your efforts don't go to waste.

- **Pizza boxes**

Food waste in our recycling carts is considered contamination, including food stuck on and grease soaked into cardboard. Contamination lowers the quality of the material, could deem it trash and can contaminate other clean items we collect.