



# Press Release

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## **Recycle Right – Quality Matters!**

**Waukesha, WI** - While Waukesha County residents have always been diligent with recycling, there has been an increase in non-recyclable material (“residue”) entering the new Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) located in the Menomonee Valley (“Valley MRF”). For over 20 years, the residue rate at the old County MRF in Waukesha averaged 3.5%, but that recycling system required residents to separate paper/cardboard from bottles/cans at the curb (blue bin). The new single-sort recycling system (all recyclables mixed together) is much more convenient for residents, however, the residue rate at the Valley MRF is now over 10%, which is costly and sometimes dangerous.

Recently, two small fires at the Valley MRF were caused by exploding propane gas cylinders that residents included in their curbside recycling containers. The fires were quickly controlled, but it demonstrates the risks associated with contamination of acceptable curbside recyclables. While made of steel, compressed propane cylinders cannot be placed in a home recycling container because of the high risk of explosion and fire while compressed into large bales to prepare for market. Other examples of residue that poses a serious danger to MRF workers, or has caused damage to the new processing equipment at the Valley MRF, include scrap metal (brake rotors, etc.), tires, electronics and medical waste. While often made of recyclable material, none of

these should ever be placed in home recycling containers. For proper disposal or recycling of these items, check out the County recycling web site at: [www.waukeshacounty.gov/recycling](http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/recycling).

Preventing contamination of home recyclables is imperative to maximize program revenues, reduce residue disposal costs (up to \$80/ton), ensure worker safety, and protect the large public investment in new recyclable processing equipment at the Valley MRF.

As a reminder to residents, please place only the following items in your home recycling container:

<b>Acceptable Recyclables</b>	
<b>PAPER</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newspapers (including all inserts)</li> <li>• Magazines/Catalogs</li> <li>• Junk Mail (including envelopes)</li> <li>• Office Paper (including computer &amp; copy paper)</li> <li>• Construction Paper</li> <li>• Paperback Books/Telephone Books</li> </ul>	<b>PLASTIC CONTAINERS labeled #1, 2, 4, 5, or 7</b> Liquids out, Caps on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bottles (water, soda, juice)</li> <li>• Jugs (detergent, milk, juice, cleaning products, cooking oil)</li> <li>• Tubs (margarine, sour cream, yogurt)</li> <li>• Deli, Berry &amp; Produce Containers</li> <li>• Cups</li> <li>• Lids</li> </ul>
<b>CARDBOARD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empty Cardboard (flattened)</li> <li>• Food Boxes (cereal, cake mix, frozen food)</li> <li>• Beverage Carriers</li> <li>• Paper Egg Cartons</li> <li>• Brown Grocery Bags</li> <li>• Toilet Paper &amp; Paper Towel Tubes</li> <li>• Tissue Boxes</li> </ul>	<b>LARGE RIGID PLASTICS</b> Remove all metal components <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plastic Buckets (5 gallon, ice cream, kitty litter)</li> <li>• Laundry Baskets</li> <li>• Plastic Crates</li> <li>• Plastic Dish Drying Racks</li> </ul>
<b>METAL CANS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aluminum cans</li> <li>• Steel/Tin cans</li> <li>• Clean Foil &amp; Pans</li> <li>• Empty Aerosol Cans (not paint or pesticide cans)</li> <li>• Pots &amp; Pans</li> </ul>	<b>CARTONS</b> Remove caps & straws <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Juice Boxes</li> <li>• Soup Cartons</li> <li>• Milk &amp; Juice Cartons</li> </ul>
<b>GLASS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bottles &amp; Jars</li> </ul>	

For more information, including a printable list of items that are acceptable and not acceptable for the home recycling container, please visit the County web site noted above, or call (262) 896-8300.

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