

Chester County Refuse Authority

Press Release

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

Chester County residents are great recyclers, but shouldn't be tempted to be too zealous putting items in the bin that do not belong and "trashing" the recyclables. Properly prepared and collected recyclables are valued commodities sold on a global market. When too many non-recyclables (trash) are mixed in with the recyclables it all becomes "trash", is too costly to separate, and requires disposal at a landfill.

Scrap metal, pieces of wood, yard waste and children's toys are just a few of the items that "*contaminate*" the recyclables. Scrap metal may be taken to a scrap dealer, yard waste should be composted and reusable children's toys may be donated or thrown away if broken. Do not put them in the recycling bins.

Plastic bags present another problem. Recyclables should never be put in plastic bags. Plastic bags are not recyclable in curbside programs. They jam the source separating equipment at recycling facilities. Plastic shopping bags can be returned to your local grocery store and plastic trash bags should be used for trash only not recyclables.

Most curbside programs in Chester County collect mixed paper, flattened corrugated cardboard cut down to 18" x 24", glass bottles and jars, steel and aluminum cans, plastic bottles with #1 and #2 in a recycling symbol. Some programs also collect clean aluminum foil and pie tins, empty steel aerosol cans, and plastics with the numbers 3-7 within the recycling symbol except Styrofoam. Everything else should be thrown away and that's okay. Remember only plastic containers and bottles with recycling symbols can be recycled. If there is no recycling symbol, throw it out. If in doubt, throw it out!

Still unsure or want to know more? Contact your hauler, municipal recycling coordinator or visit www.chestercountyswa.org for more information.