



Shared Planet Solutions

Simple - Affordable - Sustainable™

The Value of Recycling for Your Family



What's recycling?

As related to Municipal Solid Waste (MSW), recycling is the process of collecting and processing materials that would otherwise be thrown away as trash and turning them into new products.

According to the EPA, in 2010, Americans produced about 250 million tons of MSW, or about 4.3 pounds of waste per person per day. So that means a 140 lb. person would toss the equivalent of their body weight of trash away in about a month. One month!

So why recycle?

That's simple! Because recycling benefits each and every one of us in countless ways. Here's a few to consider to show the value of recycling:

For all humans and everything else that lives on our shared planet, recycling...

- Reduces the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators;
- Conserves natural resources such as timber, water, petroleum, and minerals;
- Prevents pollution caused by reducing the need to collect and process new raw materials;
- Saves energy;
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global climate change;
- Helps sustain the environment and quality of life for future generations;
- Helps create new well-paying jobs in the recycling and manufacturing industries in the United States.
- Lowers the cost of trash removal and reduces the frequency of trash collection;
- Leads to well-deserved recognition for being a valued and responsible member of the community;
- Provides the peace of mind that you are taking reasonable steps to minimize the environmental impact of you and your family. Your family will thank you for caring and will teach them the necessary good habits to be responsible caretakers of our planet for their families.

That's great, but is recycling easy to do?

It's easier than ever! Single stream recycling takes the hassle out of separating recyclables and since recyclables are commodities (have value), just about every trash hauler will pick-up a wide range of recycling in addition to convenient municipal drop-off centers.

The Value of Recycling for Your Family (continued)



Well if it's that easy, isn't everyone doing their part?

Common sense would suggest so, but surprisingly, even with the many benefits along with the ease of recycling, only about 30% of what can be recycled actually is, meaning that the other 70% of value is ending-up in a landfill. Nonsensical, right? Here are some reasons for this poor recycling rate that ultimately hurts all of us:

- **Lack of Value:** At the core, most people simply do not see the personal value in recycling, i.e. what's in it for them. While it's hard to believe that in an age where information is at the fingertips, our society has done a poor job of instilling the value of recycling and its significance to future generations.
- **Lack of Convenience:** Most people, even if they don't appreciate the value of recycling, will recycle if convenient. That's why single stream recycling was invented. However, unless a recycling bin is within easy reach, most will toss whatever they have into the closest trash can as soon as they are finished with it. Hard to believe? Just take a look inside the next public trash can you come across to see for yourself.
- **Confusion:** While the majority of things with a recycling symbol are accepted at most recycling centers, there are exceptions, like Styrofoam, where it's very rare for any recycler to process it even though it has the #6 symbol. That confusion can lead to inaction since it feels too hard to make the right, informed decision. In addition, some people incorrectly think that recycling will be separated from the trash once collected.

So what can you do to help?

As an integral member of our community, your family can have a significant impact on recycling rates, which benefits you, your family, and our planet. It's as easy as 1-2-3:

1. **Obey the law:** Recycling is a civic duty, so make sure you are in compliance with all applicable recycling ordinances, including proper containment to prevent litter.
2. **Go above and beyond:** Most recycling ordinances require households to recycle general consumable recyclable material, like cardboard, newspaper, plastic containers, cans, and bottles. Since you now know the value of recycling, do the right thing and take steps to recycle as much as possible, like disposable plastic bags/wraps and electronics.
3. **Make it easy:** You already collect recycling, so make the most of it. Make sure the family knows what can and cannot be recycled and make sure everyone knows where the recycling bins are located. It's also important to share with them why recycling is vital.

Ready to provide the value that your family needs? Start Today!

Your family and future generations are counting on it!

Remember that it's better to Reduce and Reuse so you can avoid recycling. Learn more at www.SharedPlanetSolutions.com.