

## Why Aren't These Items Recyclable?

### Recycling 101

Your cart items are delivered to a facility where the different material types – paper, metal, glass, plastic – are separated from each other, baled and shipped to a manufacturer. The better the separation of material types, the higher the market value of the bales. What you put in the recycle cart matters. Some products are difficult to separate (shredded paper), some are a fusion of different materials (paper coffee cups) and some are too small to recycle (prescription bottles). Items placed incorrectly in the recycle cart may end up in a bale of material, diminishing its value. Below describes why each item does not belong in the recycle cart.

**Styrofoam products** have no market since they are lightweight and expensive to ship. The shipping costs outstrip its value.

**Plastic cutlery** - forks, spoons, and knives - are too small to capture in the sorting process.

**Plastic food pouches** are the newest type of packaging. Although lightweight and convenient for the consumer, they are flimsy and difficult to sort. Some pouches are made of composite materials – plastics mixed with metal foil for instance – which is difficult to separate.

**Toothpaste tubes** – like food pouches they are flimsy and difficult to sort.

**Toothbrushes**, like plastic cutlery, are too small to capture in the sorting process.

**Plastic grocery, newspaper, dry cleaner and produce bags** can be recycled but not in the recycle cart. When placed in the cart, they tend to tangle in the equipment at the recycle sort facility, forcing operations to shut down. Bring them to the Mansfield transfer station where there is a container just for plastic bags and plastic film.

**Plastic lids off the container** - all by themselves they are too small for recycling. They get lost in the mountain of recyclables that the facility sorts each day. If it is a screw top lid, then empty/rinse the container and screw the lid back on for recycling.

**Individual condiment packets** – All packets are too small to recycle and contaminated with food.

**Prescription bottles** are too small to capture in the sorting process.

**Plastic straws** are too small to capture in the sorting process.

**Air pillows** do not belong in the recycle cart because they, like plastic bags, can tangle in the equipment at the sorting facility, causing operational shutdowns. They can be reused (best choice) by bringing them to the Mansfield transfer station where there is a box for reusable shipping material. Another option is to recycle them with plastic bags. A container just for plastic bags and film is located at the transfer station.

**Plastic wrappers** that cover cases of product, such as water bottles, can be recycled but not in the recycle cart. When placed in the cart, they tend to tangle in the equipment at the recycle sort facility,

forcing operations to shut down. Bring them to the Mansfield transfer station where there is a container just for plastic film.

Coffee Pods are too small to recycle and contaminated with coffee grounds.

Black Plastic containers, pots or tray - optical sorters are used to differentiate different types of plastics at the recycling facility. Plastics are marketed by type. At this time, optical sorter technology can not "read" the chemical composition of black plastics.