When in doubt— don’t throw it out… What to do with all that stuff you cannot throw in the Recycle bin!

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and research by Diana Karamourtopoulos
Quick review

Q. What items must be recycled by law in NJ and what cannot?

A. Some items are governed by state, some by county rules

NJ mandatory recycling law (NJ Statewide Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Act), enacted, 1987
Essentially the answer to whether many items can be recycled or not, is..... “it depends”

- It depends on which county you live in
- It depends on which municipality you live in
- It depends whether you are a business or residence
. But It REALLY depends where you live.....Check out here as a starting point mcmua.com/reyclecoach.asp
Find your county’s recycling page on https://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/county_websites.htm

Under your county website, you should be able to find your towns list.
I want to recycle... if I am not sure, is it better to put it in the recycle bin?
Aspirational Recyclers Beware....

HOT COFFEE CUPS

SHREDDED PAPER

YOGHURT CUPS
Shredded Paper

- Shredded paper can easily slip through the recycling machine, so it needs to be recycled very specifically, depending on each county.

- **Somerset County**
  - You can recycle shredded paper, but it must be put in clear or labeled plastic bags!

- **Morris County**
  - Again, no loose shredded paper - must be in a clear plastic bag.

- **Union County**
  - No shredded paper is allowed in recycling bins. Instead bring your confidential / sensitive materials that need to be shredded to mobile paper shredding events, where it can be recycled properly.

An example of shredded paper in clear bags, as is accepted in Somerset and Morris Counties.
Reduce the amount of paper that needs to be shredded

- Switch to online statements where possible
- Rip off personal information and recycle the rest unshredded
- Remove yourself from unsolicited mail
- [https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0262-stopping-unsolicited-mail-phone-calls-and-email](https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0262-stopping-unsolicited-mail-phone-calls-and-email)
Styrofoam (Polystyrene)

Many styrofoam products labeled #6 cannot be recycled. However, there are things you can do to repurpose styrofoam:

- **Styrofoam Packing Peanuts** - UPS or other mail carriers will accept these to re-use, but make sure you call ahead!
- UPS will also accept bubble wrap that was used to protect your packages, if you don’t pop the bubbles.
- If your package was protected by cardboard peanuts or airbags - these can be recycled (just puncture bags to let the air out and place with plastic bags.)
Styrofoam Packing

- Some Foam pack industries will accept foam packing.
- No meat trays or egg cartons are accepted at the facilities.
- Dart Container Corporation
  [http://www.dart.biz](http://www.dart.biz)
- Foam Pack Industries - Springfield, NJ
  Other locations

How to avoid styrofoam in boxes?

- When ordering online, contact customer service (they should have an e-mail – for Amazon its [cs-reply@amazon.com](mailto:cs-reply@amazon.com)) and ask for them to note on your account that you would like minimal packaging as much as possible. You can also check out Amazon’s [Frustration-Free](http://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html/ref=cm_hphelp_link_25?nodeId=20002777&utm_source=amzn_referrer&utm_medium=amzn_referrer&utm_campaign=amzn_referrer) packaging, which is

Lobbying for Less Styrofoam

- If you are looking for companies to reduce plastic, join [New Jersey Environmental Lobby](http://www.njenvironment.org/)
- Use Alternatives:
  - Cornstarch packing peanuts
  - EarthAware™ Biodegradeable Packaging
Pharmaceuticals

- Pharmaceuticals cannot be recycled!
- Best Practice: do not discard in sinks or down toilets due to water quality impact.
- Look for locations that take back your containers and excess medication.
- Alternatively “ruin” medicine and discard in trash

- Medicine containers are not recyclable
  - 1. Keep medicine in original bottle, but X personal information.
  - 2. Mix medicine with water (if not a liquid) and a substance that make it unusable / undesirable
  - 3. Place in an opaque container (such as an old yogurt container) and hide in the trash
Where to get rid of: Pharmacies...

**Union County**
- Clark Police Department, Elizabeth Police Department, Linden Police Department, Rahway Police Department, Roselle Park Police Department, Springfield Police Department, Summit Police Department, Union County Division of Police, Westfield Police Department. Some pharmacies also accept these, you can use the website [http://disposeymeds.org/](http://disposeymeds.org/) to search for one near you.

**Morris County**
- **In Morris county**, police departments will also dispose of your medicine properly for you.; participating towns are: Butler, Montville, Chatham Township, Chester Township, Morris Township, Denville, Mount Arlington, East Hanover, Mount Olive Florham Park, Netcong, Hanover Township, Parsippany, Jefferson Township, Pequannock, Kinnelon, Riverdale, Lincoln Park, Rockaway, Long Hill Township, Rockaway Township, Madison, Wharton, Mendham, and Washington Township.

**Somerset County**
- The following police departments accept 24/7 drop off for the safe disposal of medicine: Bernards Township, Bound Brook, Branchburg, Franklin Township, Hillsborough Township, North Plainfield and Warren Township. The county also holds scheduled drop offs in various places, from 9 am - 2 pm. The next is on March 16th, at Bernards Township Public Works Garage in Basking Ridge.
E-Waste: What is Electronic waste?

What happens to recycled E-Waste?
- First, it’s inspected to see if it could be fixed.
- Component parts are recycled and precious metals recovered.
- Much e waste contains toxic by products that need to be recovered.
- Remove hard drives or wipe before discarding computers to avoid data theft.

Where to discard?
- Best Buy! Staples! BUT Call ahead to check
- County and Municipal waste collection centers.
- Community run collection events.
Union County encourages residents to reach out to Staples, Best Buy and Tech Recyclers. They accept computerse, fax machines, monitors, printers and televisions. Locations listed

**Morris County:** hosts special events where they collect e-waste. call (973) 829-8006 with questions.

**Somerset County:** Drop off E-Waste weekday from 7:30-3 at County Public Works Facility, 411 Chimney Rock Road, designated Saturday drop offs , from 8-2 at S.County Public Works Garage in Hillsborough.

computers, monitors (cathode-ray tube and flat panel), TV (cathode-ray tube and flat panel), copiers, digital cameras, DVD players, e-book readers, fax machines, MP3 players, personal digital assistants (PDAs), printers, stereos, radio equipment, VCRs, audio visual equipment, typewriters, camcorders, telephones, cellular phones, circuit boards, modems, telephone mainframes, keyboards, mice, scanners, cables, wiring, power supplies, mainframe equipment and controllers.
Clothes

- What a waste for fabric to end up in landfill.
- Donate items that you no longer use
- If fabric is worn, some agencies accept rag recycling.
- Clothing can always be used as rags around the house

Where to Donate:
- GoodWill, Salvation Army, Visiting Nurse Association, Freecycle, Big Brother Big Sister, Medical mission trips.
- Check websites for what they accept and ways to package clothing
Clothing Donation. Be smart!

- **Morris County**
  - No clothing allowed in recycling bins!
  - Encourage you to donate clothing so that it can be reused. Page 10 of Morris recycle guide notes locations to donate clothes, such as GoodWill, Salvation Army, and others.

- **Somerset County**
  - No clothing allowed in recycling bins, or at the monthly drop offs. Instead, drop your clothes to local donation bins or at a thrift store such as one of these locations.

- **Union County**
  - No clothing allowed in recycling bins or at organized drops offs. Instead, bring your clothes to local donation centers or thrift shops, such as the ones in this list.
Great resource for NJ locations to recycle those hard to recycle items!

Some of their listings will even purchase items!!
Dispose of batteries properly, some batteries contain hazardous acid, but rules changed several years ago.....

Auto + Boat Batteries can be returned or recycled for a deposit. $$$

Rechargeable batteries are always recyclable, and can be taken to Radio Shack, Best Buy, Staples, Target, Office Max, Lowes, Home Depot, Sears, Walmart and Verizon Wireless
Books

- Hardcover books cannot be recycled.
- Soft cover books can.
- Take hardcover books to Goodwill, Salvation Army or VNA.
- Local libraries will accept books in good condition for fundraisers.
- Donate to Visiting Nurse Sale: No textbooks accepted.
- Websites for good causes eg BooksforAfrica.Org.
- Swap sites - PaperBackSwap.com
- Textbooks cannot be recycled, but you can sometimes sell back to bookstore, or sell on websites like Amazon or Chegg.
You are required to recycle old tires by law.
This process differs by county.
Recycling keeps standing tires from attracting mosquitos.
Rubber from tires is used for playgrounds, reused for more tires and made into other rubber products.

**Morris County**
- If recycling 12 tires or fewer, accepted Saturday mornings at the Parsippany-Troy solid waste transfer station only at 1100 Edwards Road, Parsippany, NJ 07054.

**Somerset County**
- You can drop off your tires at the “First Saturday of the Month” program in Somerset County Recycling Center, located at 40 Polhemus Lane in Bridgewater, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. You do have to show proof of residency.

**Union County**
- Tires are accepted at the Household Hazardous Waste events.
- Take off your rims before you bring the tires!
Plastics

- Not all plastic can be recycled!
- Each county has different rules.
- Incorrect recycling creates extra waste that goes to landfills.
- Before recycling any plastic, make sure it is clean (rinse out)

- **Morris County**
  - Morris County does not accept ANY plastic bags in the recycling or any plastics labeled with the numbers 3,4,6,7. Make sure to remove the cap when recycling a bottle.

- **Somerset County**
  - Somerset County accepts plastics #1-7, and also does not allow any bags in the recycling bin. Make sure to remove the cap when recycling a bottle.

- **Union County**
  - Plastic labeled #1 and #2 are allowed to be recycled, but no plastic bags at all, and no caps on bottles.
Bottle Caps

Because of the type of plastic they are made of, plastic bottle caps cannot be recycled regularly.

Number of organizations collect bottle caps and re-use them:

- **Gimme 5** - You can drop off your bottle caps, as well as any other #5 plastics, to your local Whole Foods that participates in Gimme 5, and it will be repurposed! Call Whole Foods to check if they are participating in the Gimme 5 program. If not, encourage them to join!

- Some organizations are making the process even easier – for example Warren Library in Somerset City and some public schools in Madison will collect the bottle caps for you.
Reducing Plastics - Alternatives

Many plastics cannot currently be recycled!
How to reduce your plastic intake…
Behaviour changes takes about 35 days!!

Reusable bag
- new, stricter rules on plastic bags use in NJ, switch to using reusable bags.

Reusable Silverware
- Eating fastfood creates a lot of waste - plastic silverware we use cannot be recycled.

Reusable Straw
- Plastic straws cannot be recycled and often end up in our bodies of water, harming the animals that live there. Ditch the straw
Tell retailers you don’t want non recyclable plastic
Scrap Metal

- Keep recyclable materials from the trash - bulky waste pickup costs municipalities around $79/ton.
- Place at curb for Scrap hawks to recycle for you!

- What can you recycle....
  - aluminum scrap, brass, dishwashers, gutters, microwaves, refrigerators (doors removed), stoves, washers + dryers, appliances, metal cabinets, chain/wire fences, iron pots and pans, tire rims, metal sheds, window frames, bikes, copper, freezers (doors removed), lawn furniture railings, aluminum siding, toasters and wire hangers.
Where to Recycle Metal Scrap

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<th>Union County</th>
<th>Morris County</th>
<th>Somerset County</th>
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<td>• 1st Thursday and 3rd Saturday in the Cranford Emergency Services Building (151 Kenilworth Boulevard) or the Rahway Park Service Yard (Rahway River Park) from 9am to 12pm where they collect: aluminum scrap/cans, brass, dishwashers, gutters, microwaves, refrigerators (doors removed), stoves, washers + dryers, appliances, metal cabinets, chain/wire fences, iron pots and pans, tire rims, metal sheds, window frames, bikes, copper, freezers (doors removed), lawn furniture railings, aluminum siding, toasters and wire hangers.</td>
<td>• In Rockaway, there is a <em>scrapyard</em> that will recycle your metals for you. They also offer pick up services if you call ahead.</td>
<td>• Scrap metals are classified as “bulky waste” and each municipality has a different rule on how to recycle them</td>
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Soil + Construction Debris

**Morris County:** locations that allow for drop off:
- Long Hill Public Works Recycling Center, South End of Warren Ave. Stirling, NJ 07980
  - Tel: (908) 647-0070  Fax: (908) 903-0210  Email: roads@longhillnj.us
- MCMUA Mt. Olive Transfer Station
  - 168 Gold Mine Road Mount Olive, NJ  
    - Tel: 973-347-8106  Email: bross@co.morris.nj.us
- MCMUA Parsippany Transfer Station
  - 1100 Edwards Road Parsippany, NJ 07054  
    - Tel: 973-808-9651  Email: bross@co.morris.nj.us

**Somerset County:** Soil + Construction debris can be collected at the same time and place as scrap metal, following each municipality’s rules. You will have to contact them for more information.

**Union County:** You can bring construction waste such as: pesticides and herbicides, caustic waste, oil-based paints and varnishes, corrosives and cleaners to the Special Waste disposal events mentioned before.
Garden Clippings

- Garden clippings (such as grass) can be composted or re-used
- Grasscycling avoids having to recycle or dump clippings and helps keep lawns healthier and water conserving
- Invest in a mulching lawnmower or tell landscapers to mulch clippings

• Leave grass Height at 4”
• Leave the lawnmower blade at 3” high
• Mow little and often
• Let it lie!
Paint Varnishes + Household Hazardous Waste

- Household hazardous waste must be disposed of properly- it’s the law!!
- It can become a fire hazard, cause contaminated runoff or pose health risks to garbage workers
- Freecycle will often connect part used paints with new owners

- **Morris County**: Household Hazardous Waste Facility open year round Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Availability by appointment call (973) 829-8006 Monday-Friday from 8:30-4:30.

- **Union County**: Drop-off events where you can bring your household hazardous waste materials (no latex paint).

- **Somerset County**: Drop off events. April 13 @ Warren Township Public Work Garage.
Home Furnishings

Furniture cannot typically be recycled curbside except by prior arrangement with “big Trash Pick up” days- these items are then landfilled.

Avoid furniture heading to the landfill by giving it a second home.

Look for alternatives to give your cast off furniture to someone that can use it!

Online

• Use a website like FreeCycle or Craigslist.
• FreeCycle, allows you to trade your items and “list” them to give them away.
• Craigslist, you can either trade or sell items. All items on these websites must be “free, legal and appropriate for all ages with an emphasis on being nice, keeping safe and building a sustainable local and world community.”

In NJ

• Goodwill - no mattresses or large appliances.
• Habitat for Humanity ReStore - in Randolph accepts furniture and appliances, pick it can be arranged. Appliances cleaned, fully operable, electronics 8 yrs. or newer.
• No children’s items are allowed.
• Big Brother Big Sister - does accept children’s items, and other small appliances.
• Salvation Army - accepts all type of gently used furniture, and pickup and drop off locations can be arranged.
Doing the Right thing with your unwanted stuff comes down to...

Ease vs Ethics

No one ever said it was easy being green!
Online portals and apps make it easy to start to head in the right direction...
The Many R’s

- RE-DUCE
- RE-USE
- RE-CYCLE
- RE-FUSE
- RE-JECT
- RE-PURPOSE
- RE-TURN
- RE-PAIR
- RE-SEARCH!