



When in doubt, leave it out!

MANASSAS, VA – Date: March 19, 2019

Recycling has been in the news a lot lately. Municipalities throughout Virginia and across the United States are having a very difficult time disposing of and processing their recycling.

For years, the City of Manassas has had an award winning recycling program. Recycling in the City of Manassas is alive and well thanks to excellent participation by residents, good stewardship of the recycling program and a good relationship with the American Recycling Center, which is located right here in our community. In 2018, the total volume of recycling collected increased by 1,980 tons over 2017. But we need to keep working to keep our recycling clean and useful.

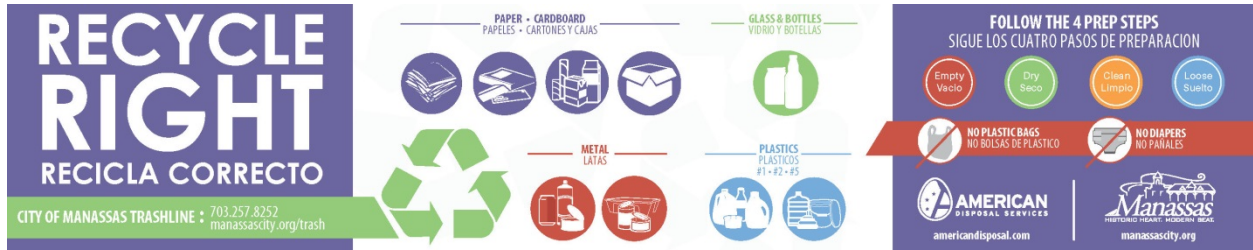
Does our recycling go to the landfill?



The main problem with recycling is the amount of material that gets put in the cart – but doesn't belong there. "Recycling contamination" or "dirty recycling" is caused by people putting their garbage, used diapers, used paper towels, plates, and tissues, yard leaf waste, Styrofoam, clothing, electronics, batteries, hoses, rope, wire, clothes hangers, and jars and cans full of food, plastic bags and wrappings into their recycling container.

A majority of the recycling in the United States goes for sale to foreign markets. These markets are setting stricter standards on how much contaminated or "dirty" material they are willing to accept. While City of Manassas residents do their best to recycle, there are still recycling carts filled with household trash and other unacceptable items. These items must be pulled from the rest of recycling and sent to the landfill. As a result, it now costs more to dispose of recyclable materials.

When in doubt ... leave it out



Change can be overwhelming at times; hopefully this will make your recycling easier. We are asking all of our residents to stick to recycling just five items in their curbside container:

- Paper (including junk mail, envelopes, magazines and newspapers)
- Plastic water bottles, jugs and containers (#1, #2, and #5)
- Glass bottles and jars
- Aluminum and metal cans
- Cardboard

It is important for you to understand that the way you put your recycling into your container matters. Here is what you need to do:

- Make sure that all items are clean, dry, and empty before putting them in your container.
- Keep your recycling loose in your container. **DO NOT** put your recycling in plastic trash bags or plastic grocery store bags.
- If you are not sure about the item that you are recycling – **DO NOT** put it into the container and hope for the best.

Not all recycling takes place at the curb

One of the most common items found in recycling carts that are not recyclable are thin-film plastic bags and wraps, such as ones wrapping packs of bottled water, or the bag that your newspaper comes in. These items become tangled in the equipment sorting recyclable materials causing equipment malfunctions. Recycle these items by bringing them to your grocery store. These plastic bags go to a company, in Winchester, called Trex. They take the clean plastic bags and wrappings, and use them to make decking, benches and playground equipment.

The City also receives many calls from residents asking about recycling clothing, textiles, furniture, paint, books, and other items. Donating these items to local charities is recycling too! You can put your wishful recycling to good use and receive a benefit in exchange. A number of these programs will also come to your door to collect your donation, and it's tax deductible.

Residents can also recycle electronics, household hazardous waste materials and shred their documents at any one of our nine community drop-off events at the Manassas Transfer

Station. The popularity of RecycleFest has raised the amount of recyclables we collect from 60 tons per year in 2014 to 158 tons in 2018! This is awesome recycling and it's FREE.

What's the point?



The City of Manassas is working in partnership with American Disposal Services to improve the quality of our recycling. Together we agreed that if we invested our energy in recycling a few things correctly – we could reduce contamination. This would set us apart from other communities that are suspending their services. Our community would be at the cutting edge of finding a solution to the problem of recycling.

If we can work on improving our recycling:

- we can reduce the cost of recycling
- keep recycling jobs within our community
- work toward leaving a better and cleaner environment for our families.

Residents can visit www.manassascity.org/recycling or call (703) 257-8252 for more recycling information and advice for proper disposal.

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