

# Let's Talk Trash. Prevent Contamination.

When a load of recycling becomes too contaminated, the entire load will be sent to a landfill including all of the recyclable materials. Our current contamination rate is 25%, meaning that roughly 1 in 4 items placed in a recycling bin do not belong in a curbside recycling program, and this creates a loss of income for our local recycling centers.



Ozark Rivers Solid Waste  
Management District



**MISSOURI**  
DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES

This project was funded in part by the  
Missouri Department of Natural Resources



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## RECYCLING CONTAMINATION

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KNOWING WHEN TO  
THROW IT OUT



# Just These? Yes, Please!

Recycling contamination impacts the recycling process, costing more money and time for recycling workers and wasting the efforts of residential recyclers. For example, when plastic bags enter the recycling stream and get caught in equipment, work stops until plastic bags are removed by workers and that's a hazardous task. By recycling right, contamination will be reduced and all will benefit. Rethink your recycling habits and be sure to provide clean and valuable materials for the manufacturing stream. When waste is reduced, it's good for profits, people and the planet.



## RECYCLE IT.

- METAL** Steel (Tin) Cans  
Aluminum Cans
- PAPER** Junk Mail  
Greeting Cards (NO foil/glitter)  
Magazines  
Newspaper  
Phone Books  
Paperback Books  
Paper Bags
- CARDBOARD**  
Clean & Dry  
NO Food or Grease remnants
- PLASTICS #1 & #2**  
Bottles  
Jugs



## TRASH IT.

- DON'T** include soiled food items.  
They can turn an entire load of recycling into trash.
- DON'T** include single-use items such as plastic grocery bags, straws, utensils, cups and take-out containers. It's better to throw out something that is recyclable than to include something that isn't and risk contaminating a load of "good" recyclables.
- DON'T** add sharp or dangerous materials like needles and electronics.  
They can cause injury to workers.

EMPTY  
CLEAN  
DRY