

# Helpful Tips to Keep Your Recyclables Free of Fright this Halloween Season

*Tingling spidey senses means “I see dead recyclable materials”.....*

Wasting recyclables is scary like walking through a dark and foggy cemetery. Keep recycling empty, as clean as possible, and dry, so it can be remanufactured like Frankenstein. Recyclables mixed with trash, food and liquid means less value after materials are sorted out by machines and human hands. The stickier the materials means grotesque stuff that no one wants to sort. The machines may not mind, but materials might get stuck together.

The bad materials on the “do not recycle list” can contaminate all other good material streams such as loose caps and other small items less than two inches. Those small blood sucking like things can stick to paper and plastic by static cling. Also, small non sticky items might fall out with glass. In both cases, the small stuff causes contamination. Some other bad materials can cause terror to recycling sorting equipment such as clothing, cords, hoses and plastic films that can tangle in the moving gears. Large items such as a toilet seat, bowling ball and scrap metal can jam the equipment or jump off the line potentially harming workers. No one wants a horror show at the recycling center.

Your sustainable materials might be a monster, but do not make it worse by suffocating it in plastic. At a Material Recovery Facility where mixed recycling goes, trash bags are removed from the recycling sorting system at the beginning during a process called “pre-sort.” It is easier to not bag when you have your own bin to store recyclables until pickup or drop-off. Using your own container saves on plastic bags. If your container gets disgusting, simply wash it out. If you have to transport your recyclables and prefer to use plastic, remember to empty recyclables loose in the drop-off bin. Plastic bags and films are considered contamination and tangles. Tangles are items that damage equipment during the recycling sorting process. Often times, the recycling process must be stopped and tangles cut away from the equipment which can take hours and cost money.

Plastic bags are a recyclable material in a film only bin. However, they do not belong in recycling totes or large dumpsters like snakes in a cave. To recycle plastic bags properly, several businesses throughout the District including Kroger, Lowes, Wal-Mart and more offer plastic bag recycling to customers.

Use [recycleos.org](http://recycleos.org) for guidelines on what to recycle and where to take mixed recycling. Separate empty and food free paper cartons, steel and aluminum cans, and glass, plastic and metal bottles along with office and newspaper, magazines and cardboard boxes. These materials can be placed into the bins all together. Also, don't forget to break down all cardboard/paperboard boxes to conserve space in the recycle bins.

Your Spooky Recycler,

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OSS Director

