

Plastic and Glass Recycling

Plastic Recycling

Seeing recycling symbols on products these days is very common. However, a recycling symbol does not always mean that the material is recyclable. Recycling symbols were actually developed for manufacturers rather than the general public; they were established for manufacturers to identify the types of materials and resins used in a product which helps in the recycling/sorting process.

Because of this, identifying recyclable materials can be confusing, especially in regard to #1 (PET) and #2 (HDPE) plastics. The City of Livingston accepts these materials, but only certain types of #1 or #2 plastics. Depending on the item, the manufacturing process of #1 and #2 plastics can differ, possibly requiring additives which change the composition of the plastic's resin, rendering it a hybrid. Since hybrid plastic melts at a different temperature than pure resin, it becomes a contaminant. Also, some of these ingredients can affect drying times, processing equipment and available markets. Not every plastic can be recycled.

Identifying recyclable #1 and #2 plastics

The easiest way to know which #1 or #2 plastics are acceptable is to "check the neck"; a container's neck needs to be smaller than its body to be recyclable. Small neck #1 or #2 plastics, typically in the shape of a bottle (such as pop bottles or milk jugs) are made through a blow mold process and can be recycled. Wide mouth #1 or #2 containers are made by injection molding requiring a hybrid resin, making them non-recyclable. Typically non-recyclable #1 and #2 plastics include berry containers, lids, ice cream buckets, plastic cups, and more. Once a plastic recycling bin reaches a certain percentage of non-recyclable material all the material (both non-recyclable and recyclable) are thrown in the trash.

Glass Recycling

All glass accepted for recycling in Livingston must be packaged, shipped to Salt Lake City, and processed to be recycled. The heavy weight and work required to recycle glass large amounts of CO₂ is released in the process compared to recycling aluminum. The environmental cost and financial cost of recycling glass has lead us to store the glass in a large stockpile at the Transfer Station in hopes that a cheaper or more cost effective way to recycle may become available. If you recycle to help the environment we encourage you to look at purchasing aluminum over glass containers at the store over recycling glass.

Another option for recycling glass can be found through a program with Bayern Brewing out of Missoula. They use 100% recycled glass for their bottling. They only accept certain bottles and have a specific way to return bottles. More information can be found at these two links.

<https://www.bayernbrewery.com/sustainability/>

<http://www.werecyclemt.com/individual/>

