

Plastic film recycling – more than just bags

Many area retailers provide recycling containers in the front of the store to return plastic grocery bags for recycling. But, did you know that many additional materials or plastic “films” can also be placed in those bins for recycling?

Plastic grocery bags and plastic wrap are categorized as “plastic film,” which includes everything from grocery and bread bags to shrink wrap and paper towel film. It is traditionally made from polyethylene resin, which is readily recyclable if the material is clean and dry. Once recycled, the film is made into a variety of different products, including composite lumber for outdoor decks and fencing, home building products, lawn and garden products, crates, pipe, and film for new plastic packaging.

Examples of plastic film that can be recycled include:

- Grocery & retail bags
- Newspaper bags
- Bread bags (without crumbs)
- Plastic film around toilet paper, paper towels, napkins & diapers
- Case wrap (from a case of water bottles and other bottled drinks)
- Produce bags
- Food storage bags (Ziploc and sandwich bags)
- Bags with sealed air for packaging (e.g., air pillows)

Items that are NOT accepted include frozen food bags, prewashed salad bags, candy wrappers, florist wrapping, chip bags, pet food bags or material that has been painted or glued, because other substances can contaminate the recycled material.

Where to recycle plastic film

Area retailers that have a recycling bin available for plastic film recycling include Cub, Target and Walmart. If you're waste and recycling hauler is Tennis Sanitation, they also accept plastic film through their curbside recycling program, but it MUST be consolidated into one plastic bag so it can be easily separated from other recyclables at the recycling facility. At this time, Waste Management, Highland Sanitation, and Troje's Trash & Recycling do not accept plastic film for recycling in the curbside bin.

The thumb test

To test plastic film for recyclability, press your thumb into the film. If the plastic film easily stretches, then it is recyclable. If your thumb can't stretch the film, or it tears or breaks through, then the film is not recyclable.

For additional information on what can be recycled through the plastic film recycling program, visit: www.plasticfilmrecycling.org