



Recycling Tips During COVID-19

Please note: COVID-19 is reported to live on surfaces for an extended period of time*.

- As an aerosol, for up to 3 hours (e.g. sneezing, coughing, etc.)
- Clothing – several hours up to a day
- Up to 4 hours on copper
- Up to 24 hours on cardboard
- Up to 2-3 days on plastic and stainless steel
- Up to 4 days on glass surfaces like a Smartphone

General health and safety:

1. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, and before eating or preparing food. (CDC)
2. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. (CDC)
3. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. (CDC)

Regulations may be shifting in communities due to the COVID-19 pandemic and CDC guidelines. Many communities have temporarily suspended recycling programs because of worker safety and other limitations. As always – look up what you can recycle locally.

1. If you or someone in your home has tested positive for the coronavirus, do not recycle your recyclables; place them in a bag that is securely closed and discard them in your trash container. This also applies to any used cleaning supplies, paper towels, tissues, or personal protective equipment (PPE) generated within a home or business with someone who has tested positive.
2. “Workers and employers should manage municipal (e.g., household, business) solid waste with potential or known COVID-19 contamination like any other non-contaminated municipal waste.” (OHSa guidance)
3. Most cleaning supplies can be recycled. Generally, it is advised to remove the pumps and spray heads before recycling. For lotion bottles and other toiletry items with pumps, empty the contents, discard the pump, and recycle the bottle. For no-pump containers, simply empty the contents, re-screw the cap to keep it all together, and recycle. Check locally for any specific instructions.
4. Recyclables need to be dry and free of food. Be sure to reduce waste by using all the product in the container, then lightly rinse and recycle it. For plastic beverage containers – empty them, leave the cap on (in most situations), and recycle them. Empty aerosol cans (deodorant, hairspray, and sunscreen) can be recycled with other aluminum or steel cans.
5. Home items that can be recycled: toilet paper rolls, paper towel rolls, empty cleaning supply containers, kitchen plastics, clean and dry cardboard, and paper goods (cereal boxes, Amazon boxes, etc.).

Keep America Beautiful® is not advising the general public to use PPE to pick up litter or manage their recyclables or waste in their homes given they are in short supply and desperately needed by the medical community.

When you take out the trash, make sure it all goes in the can and the lid is tight.

*According to a new study from National Institutes of Health, CDC, UCLA and Princeton University scientists in The New England Journal of Medicine. <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/new-coronavirus-stable-hours-surfaces>