

Waste Disposal 101

November 2021

Submitted by CRD Environmental Services

These days it can seem like you need a college degree to correctly dispose of common household items. Recycle bin, green bin, depot, landfill, flush it? Can I just follow the label on the item? It says its “flushable” or “recyclable” or “compostable”. Unfortunately use of these descriptions is not regulated and can lead us in the wrong direction.

By properly sorting items you help ensure your garbage is managed responsibly and that recyclable and compostable materials can go on to be made into new products. Items that are incorrectly disposed of cause contamination in our waste streams, misdirects material to the landfill and increases the costs of recycling, compost and sewer services. This has become a larger issue recently with the use of disinfecting wipes and items labelled as “flushable”. These items do not break down and then collect with large amounts of fats in our city sewers, resulting in costly blockages or worse: back-ups in to residential homes. **The only items that should be flushed are the 3 P’s: Poo, Pee and (toilet) paper.** Even small amounts of fats, oils and grease should be collected and composted or recycled and not be disposed of down the drain.

While many items are recyclable, not all are suitable for residential collection programs. For example, soft plastics and foam trays (which are bulky and need to be sorted separately) and items like batteries and paint are accepted at recycling depots. Glass also needs to be sorted separately, as when it shatters the shards contaminate other items. Now that many of us have green bin services we have another option to reduce our waste but need to ensure the items included are compostable – only food waste and soiled paper products and in some programs, yard waste. To line our kitchen compost bucket we can use newspaper or certified compostable bags, but not biodegradable bags.

So, what do you do with those wipes? Even though many of us try to reduce our waste as much as possible, some items such as wipes, floss, condoms, sanitary products and dog poo bags, should be disposed of in the garbage.

Below is a handy chart for commonly mistaken items. For more info: www.crd.bc.ca

Recycling		Green bin	Landfill
Residential	Depot		
Glass bottles & jars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (place the lids in your mixed containers bin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft plastics and styrofoam • Chemicals & cleaners • Batteries • Metal items • Paint & motor oil • Glass bottles & jars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solidified fats & grease • Meat, bones • Dairy items • Food soiled paper • If using bags, choose certified compostable, NOT biodegradable or plastic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby wipes • All other wipes • Used tissues • Pet waste • Diapers & liners • Dental floss • Hair
Paper and cardboard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pizza boxes 			
Mixed containers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cartons & paper cups • Aluminum foil & trays 			