

SNAPSHOT Curbside Recycling - 25th Anniversary

Where does my recycling go?

Rodd Pemble, Recycling Manager, SSC

With Bellingham's 25th anniversary of curbside recycling coming July 1st, I thought of my parents and grandparents, who lived through the *first* Great Depression and World War II. They were thrifty at home, saving tin cans, glass bottles, and newspapers. During the war, citizens collected scrap metal and cans to make armaments, and newspapers to wrap the ammunition for shipping overseas. As a boy, I remember canning lids and rings screwed to the ceiling above my Grampa's work bench, a jelly jar hanging under each one full of screws, bolts, and nuts. Today, Sanitary Service Company (SSC) and Nooksack Valley Disposal (NVD) provide sorted curbside collection at Whatcom County homes and businesses, churches and schools, government offices, and parks. We divert more of the waste stream each year to recycling, but is the curbside sorting we do at home and work worth the effort, compared to "single-stream" programs in other communities where all recycling goes in one container? Secondly, where do all those materials really go?

I first called Marty Kuljis, general manager of Northwest Recycling (www.nwrecycling.com) in Bellingham. Northwest Recycling started collecting and selling recyclables, mostly metals, in 1923. Today, they process all the curbside recycling materials collected in Whatcom County. They sort the can/glass/plastic mix, and bale all the various commodities, which are then sold to brokers and end users in the United States and beyond. Marty answered my first question, pointing out that local recyclables have less than 1% contamination, while single-stream programs often have 9-15% or higher rates of contamination, which leads to higher customer costs and thousands of tons of usable materials going to the landfill. Your sorting at the curb matters a lot. With Marty's help, I started tracking down the answer to the second question – where does all our recycling go?



We all love fresh fruit from Wenatchee, America's fruit capital. What you may not know is that the soft blue paper tray that kept your apple or peach safe, from the packing plant to your local grocery store, was made from the recycled newspapers we picked up at your house or business weeks before. Josh Weldy, CFO of Keyes Packaging Group in Wenatchee (www.keyespackaging.com), told me, "The contamination levels are significantly lower with Northwest Recycling bales. We see a considerable amount of contaminants in single-stream supplier bales – plastic, metal, and glass. The quality of these Northwest Recycling bales is superior to single-stream grades purchased from other suppliers." In other words, keep up the great sorting job Whatcom County, and Josh might add, eat more apples!

Aluminum cans are an amazing package, with up to 65% recycled content, and saving an estimated 17 million barrels of oil nationally through recycling as recently as 2010. Yet despite American's best recycling efforts, four out of ten cans still end up in the garbage, a tremendous waste of energy and resources. Whatcom County aluminum cans are baled and sold to Anheuser-Busch Corporation (www.anheuser-busch.com) to be made back into new beverage cans. Denise Burrell of Anheuser-Busch told me that our cans go to Muscle Shoals, Alabama where Wise Alloys melts them into aluminum sheet to be made back into new cans, filled and back on grocery shelves in just 60 days.

Glass bottles and jars travel by the truckload to Strategic Materials in Seattle, where the glass is sorted by color – amber (brown), green, and flint (clear). Dennis Hinson of Strategic Materials (www.strategicmaterials.com) explained that his plant is located right next door to Saint-Gobain, who smelts glass to make new bottles and jars, minimizing expensive hauling of glass, often an obstacle to glass recycling. Hinson said the most important thing people can do is keep out contaminants like ceramics, plate glass, and broken mirrors. They melt at a different temperature than bottle glass and cause enormous (and expensive) problems at the mill.

Bales of corrugated cardboard are hauled to Longview, the home of KapStone Paper & Packaging Corporation (www.KapStonePaper.com). Jan Cleiland is the Recycled Fiber Manager at KapStone and she really likes our boxes – “Marty’s material is pretty much guaranteed a home here, it’s so clean and dependable.” KapStone makes new containerboard, which is then used to manufacture new cardboard boxes, and kraft paper for making paper grocery sacks. When I asked what residents and businesses could do to help cardboard recycling, Jan mentioned removing tape and any plastic or foam packing from the boxes.

What happens to empty cereal boxes and junk mail you recycle? Susan Choi, Regional Vice President for America Chung Nam (www.acni.cnet) smiled at me across the dais at the recent Washington State Recycling Association (WSRA) Conference. “You’re one of the only curb sorted programs left in the state, aren’t you? Your paper is so clean, we wish more programs would think about going back to more curb sorted material.” America Chung Nam is a subsidiary of China’s Nine Dragons Paper, Ltd, the largest recycled paper manufacturer in the world, and one of the most environmentally responsible as well – they buy our mixed paper and reprocess it into linerboard and coated paper products used to make packaging for consumer goods. Susan noted that keeping contaminants like plastic bags and wrappers out of the paper is important to ensuring that what you put in your curbside bin actually **gets** recycled. Speaking of plastic, plastic containers hold everything from shampoo to milk these days, and are made back into many different products from ski wear insulation and carpeting to decking and picnic tables. Currently, Pralumex, Inc. in Walnut, California brokers our curbside plastics to manufacturers of injection molded products – toys, housewares, and parts for small appliances. Luke Loekman of Pralumex echoed a familiar theme when he described Whatcom County recyclables as “better quality, less contamination.” He added, “The (broken) glass mixed in single-stream collection is a serious safety hazard to the mills that process the materials.” One more example of why your careful sorting in Whatcom County results in greater economic benefits and safer workplaces down the line.

Scrap metal has been recycled for millennia, from Bronze Age spear points to the modern steel can of chicken noodle soup or sliced peaches. Your empty cans, stripped of their paper labels (recycle with scrap paper!), and any general scrap metal you set out beside your curbside bin is baled and delivered to Schnitzer Steel in Tacoma (www.schnitzersteel.com), to be shredded. The shredded metals are mixed at the Nucor Steel mill in Seattle (www.nucor.com), where Safety & Environmental Manager Bart Kale described a recipe for rebar – shredded cans, shredded automobiles, some washers and dryers, a “salt & pepper” of alloys on top, and voila – brand new, 100% recycled content rebar for home and business construction.

Last, but not least, we collect used motor oil from residential customers curbside, over 17,652 gallons in 2013 alone. ThermoFluids (www.thermofluids.com) in Sumner picks up the used oil and re-refines it into various products – new spec motor oil, lube oil, and boiler fuel. Used motor oil essentially just gets dirty, and can be re-refined over and over, saving millions of gallons of resources and the pollution required to extract them.

Now that you know the rest of the story, there’s really only one thing left to say – thanks for all your help over the last 25 years to make Whatcom County’s recycling program one of the nation’s best, and keep on sorting!

About Sanitary Service Company (SSC)

Established in 1929, SSC is Whatcom County's largest recycling and garbage collection service provider, serving 45,000 + customers from Bellingham to Blaine and beyond. SSC was named 2012 *Green Business of the Year* by the Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber and is a sustaining member of Sustainable Connections, Toward Zero Waste Founding Pioneer, 100% Green Power Leader, 5-Star EnviroStar business and Whatcom Smart Trips employer.

July 2014

SNAPSHOT Pre-Sorted vs. Single-Stream Recycling

Why does SSC use the Stack 3 Recycling Bin “Pre-Sorted” System?

SSC uses a “pre-sorted” recycling system to reduce material contamination and keep rates as low as possible for customers.

We understand from a customer view that *single-stream (commingled)* recycling programs, where recyclables are collected in one large container, are convenient and easy to use. That convenience, though, comes at a higher cost on your recycling and garbage bill.

In single-stream programs, approximately 25% (by weight) of material collected goes straight to landfill. Recyclable materials that are recovered are lower quality from being commingled with other wet and dry materials and fetch a lower price at market - if they can be marketed at all.

Clean, sorted, high quality recyclables, from programs like SSC’s, consistently get the highest prices at market.

Highest market prices = Lowest overall rate for our customers!

In addition to keeping rates as low as possible for customers, pre-sorted systems, where recyclables are sorted into open-style bins at home and work, allow recycling drivers to spot non-recyclables and hazardous items prior to loading. This keeps our drivers and equipment safe and material contamination rates low.

In 1989, when curbside recycling began in our community, the Bellingham and Whatcom County councils listed **access** and **low cost** as their highest priorities. Our program was designed with these values in mind—to **provide the same low cost service to EVERY home in our service area**, which includes Bellingham, Ferndale, Birch Bay, Blaine and most of unincorporated Whatcom County.

For nearly 25 years, we have operated a successful curbside recycling program based on providing the **highest quality service at the lowest cost** to our customers. Today, SSC’s award-winning curbside recycling program accepts more items than virtually all other programs in the Pacific Northwest.

For questions or more information, please visit www.ssc-inc.com or contact us.

Thank you for your business—and for recycling!



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August 2015

Recycling & Garbage Collection Information

House | Duplex

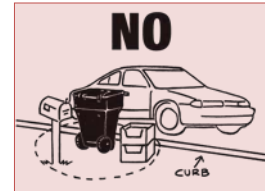
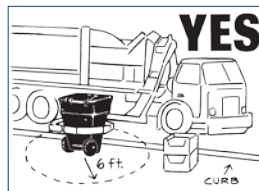
Place **sorted recyclables** in recycling bins. Set out full bins the night before collection or by 6:30AM. Place paper (or top layer of papers) in a paper bag if possible. Lay bag **on side** in bin to prevent windblown litter. If windy, set each bin on the ground. Check out windy day tips [here](#). Max. bin weight 35 lbs. Place extra sorted recyclables in tub/box no larger than bin. **Bagged recyclables will NOT be collected.**

Apartment | Condo

Place **sorted recyclables in marked** recycling Toters®. For other recyclables (scrap metal, etc.) see below.

Automated Collection Truck—Customer Tips

- Please place Toter(s)® at the curb, with **handle toward the house**.
- Keep at least **6 feet of clear space around all sides**.
- Do not place near other containers, trees/shrubs, utility poles, mailboxes, vehicles, overhead lines, portable b-ball hoops, etc.



Bottles, Cans & Plastic Containers

Aluminum Cans/Foil/Tin Cans—Remove tin can labels (recycle with scrap paper). Flatten tin cans, foil. *No oil filters or air filters.*



Glass Bottles/Jars—All colors, labels, lids OK. Avoid breaking glass. Rinse. Remove metal lids and bottles from 6-pak/case boxes, etc. and place loose in container. *No window glass, windshields, Pyrex, light bulbs, mirrors or ceramics.*

Plastic Containers—Bottles/Jugs/Caps/Cups/Lids/Jars/Tubs/Pails/Buckets (max. bucket size - 3 gal. Remove metal handles.) All colors/numbers/labels OK.

Rinse and nest together if possible. Please **FLATTEN** all bottles and put plastic caps/lids back on. *No plastic pumps, Styrofoam™, packaging, tableware/utensils, pipe, foam rubber, insulation or plastic containers that held potentially hazardous products such as motor oil, antifreeze, solvents, paint, pesticides, etc.*



Scrap Paper & Newspaper



Mail, magazines, catalogs, newsprint, shoe/gift boxes, paper bags, photos, labels, phone books, paperboard cartons (ex. cereal/mac'n'cheese/egg). Discard plastic liners/packing material. Flatten. **Envelopes, stationery, computer/copy/notebook/poster/carbonless paper, file folders, paperback books, guides, manuals. Staples, paper clips, file folder clips OK. Shredded paper.** Place in paper bag and tape shut with masking tape. **Masking paper/tape, floor protection paper (ex. Ram Board).** Fold and flatten. Place paper (or top layer of papers) in a paper bag if possible. Lay bag **on side** in bin to prevent windblown litter.

No foil, plastics, plastic bags, including delivery bags, rubber bands and strapping tape, aseptic (non-refrigerated, shelf-stable) cartons or boxes (ex. soy milk, broth, etc.) or paper with foil or plastic (ex. foil gift wrap, (TYVEK) postal envelopes), paper plates, napkins, towels, tissue, polycoated paper (refrigerator/freezer) cartons or boxes (ex. dairy/juice/frozen food containers). *These items are accepted in our **FoodPlus! program**. To sign up [contact us](#).*

Other Recyclables—set next to containers

Cardboard—Corrugated cardboard and brown paper bags. Remove packing materials. Flatten ALL boxes. Do not stuff cardboard into boxes or bins. Leave flat on ground or bundle. Max. stack size 2'Wx4'Lx6"H per pick-up. If windy, bundle or tape to prevent blowing. For pick-up of larger stacks, [contact us](#) or call (360) 734-3490. *No Styrofoam®, plastic packing or wax-coated boxes (ie. fruit boxes).*

Motor Oil—Used motor oil only. Store in a one gallon or smaller, sealed, non-breakable container (ie milk jug or water bottle). *No bleach/detergent bottles.* Mark container "Oil." Do not mix with water, brake fluid, antifreeze, debris, paint thinner, solvents, etc.

Scrap Metal/Aerosol Cans—Steel/copper/aluminum/brass. Max. 35 lbs./pick up. Max. 2 feet long. Coil cords/wiring. Non-hazardous, aerosol cans ONLY. Aerosol cans must be EMPTY. No pressure or contents left in can. Leave cap on (if possible). Set out in box. Contact [Disposal of Toxics](#) 360-380-4640 to dispose of hazardous product aerosol cans.

Batteries: Vehicle (Lead Acid)—Car/truck/motorcycle/boat batteries + **Sealed Lead Acid (SLA)**—security, emergency, backup, mobile medical devices, etc. *No cracked or leaking batteries.* Leave battery caps on. Set out in a box. Household (alkaline & carbon zinc): dispose of with regular household garbage. Rechargeable: Contact [Disposal of Toxics](#) 360-380-4640 for options. 11/19

We cannot accept the following:

Any kind of hazardous, toxic, radioactive or dangerous waste(s), ammunition, explosives, dead animals, CFL/Fluorescent lights, old gasoline, asbestos, pesticides, liquid paint, chemicals, or hot ashes. Contact [Disposal of Toxics](#) 360-380-4640 for options.

For a complete list of recyclables accepted, visit ssc-inc.com. Thank you for recycling!

To recycle larger quantities or other materials, please contact us.

ssc@ssc-inc.com | 360-734-3490

Windy Weather Collection Tips

Help prevent wind-blown litter!

More info at: ssc-inc.com



Thank you for helping us keep your neighborhood clean!

Toters™ (Garbage and FoodPlus!)

- Please bag **ALL** garbage - especially Styrofoam™ peanuts/packaging - before placing in Toter™.

If you live in a neighborhood serviced by our automated (sidearm) collection truck...

- Place Toter™ at curb with handle toward the house so lid recloses after pick-up.
- Place Toter™ with at least six (6) feet of clear space around all sides. Do not place Toter™ near other containers, trees/shrubs, utility poles, mailboxes, vehicles, overhead lines, b-ball hoops, etc.

Recycling Bins

If possible, avoid putting bins out on very windy days. Set out at next scheduled pick-up.

If setting out, place each recycling bin on the ground.

BOTTLES, CANS, GLASS & PLASTIC CONTAINERS — Place heavier items on top (like glass bottles and jars) to prevent lighter plastics from blowing. If stacking, place this bin at the bottom of the stack.

SCRAP PAPER — Place scrap paper in a paper bag and lay bag sideways in bin. If stacking, place this bin in the middle.

NEWSPAPER — Place top layer of newspaper in a paper bag. If stacking, place this bin on top.

CARDBOARD — Place empty, flattened boxes between recycling bins or on ground with a bin on top to weigh down.

Please mark your address on Toter™(s) and recycling bins!

This can help in locating your containers should they get blown away.

Connect with us on Facebook @sscinc and Twitter /sscintweets

P.O. Box 1702 • 21 Bellwether Way, Suite 404, Bellingham, WA 98227
(360) 734-3490 • Fax: (360) 671-0239 • 24-Hour Dispatch (360) 734-2051

ssc@ssc-inc.com • www.ssc-inc.com

Serving Whatcom County since 1929 • Locally-owned and operated

03/17/16

FoodPlus! Compostables Collection Information

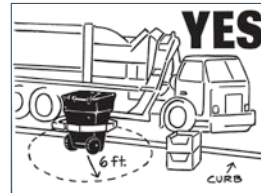
Food scraps, papers, food-soiled papers, approved compostable packaging and yard debris are all composted into a rich soil amendment through our award-winning program.

Composting is a cost-effective way to reduce waste, trim your garbage bill and support local businesses creating new products from recycled materials. All materials collected are composted at [Green Earth Technologies \(GET\)](#) in Lynden. Compost from GET is available for sale in Whatcom County.

Place all compostable materials in marked Toter® and set out the night before collection or by 6:30AM.

Automated Collection Truck—Customer Tips

- Please place Toter(s)® at the curb, with **handle toward the house**.
- Keep at least **6 feet of clear space around all sides**.
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FOOD SCRAPS	PAPERS FOOD-SOILED PAPERS APPROVED COMPOSTABLE PACKAGING	YARD DEBRIS
• Fruit/Vegetable Scraps, Peels, Trimmings, Pits • Spoiled/Outdated Foods • Dairy Scraps (such as yogurt, cheese, sour cream, ice cream, milk) • Paper Coffee Filters, Coffee Grounds, Tea Bags • Eggshells • Leftovers / Table Scraps • Dough Scraps (wrap or bag in PAPER) • All Meat, Fish, Shellfish Scraps (including bones and shells). No roadkill.	• Pizza Boxes • Paper Cartons • Ice Cream Cartons • Paper Deli/Take-Out Cartons • Napkins/Paper Towels/Tablecloths • Paper Plates, Bowls, Cups • Parchment/Waxed Paper • Paper Bags • Bakery Boxes / Paper Liners • Wax-coated Cardboard Boxes • Compostable Dishes/Utensils/To-Go Containers (Ex. Corn, Potato, Bamboo) Note: MUST say compostable. Biodegradable NOT accepted. • Tissue Paper • Small Wood Scraps • Corks (real, not plastic)	• Grass Clippings • Garden Trimmings/Weeds • Leaves • Brush/Branches (Max. 7" diameter) • Floral Trimmings, Houseplants • Expired Floral Arrangements (Plant Material ONLY) • Waxed Floral Paper • Seasonal Greens (Pumpkins, Cornstalks, Hay, Gourds, Garlands, Wreaths, Swags, etc.)
NO Plastic(s)/Plastic Bags, Aseptic Cartons/Boxes (non-refrigerated, shelf-stable), Pet/Human Waste, Manure, Diapers, Roadkill, Garbage		

Other Compostables

Woody Debris / Bulky Items—Please [contact us](#) for service options.

9/19

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