



## HAPPY NEW YEAR! LET'S RESOLVE TO BE TRASH SMART

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What does it mean to be Trash Smart? It means to be more thoughtful and engaged in how you manage solid waste in your everyday life. It is behavior. If you buy that new thing, what will you do with the old thing? How can you stop wasting food? What does “away” mean when we throw stuff away? This Trash Smart series will address different household waste streams, and today we start with recycling.

We make about 30,000 decisions in a day. If we consistently make the *right* decisions about recycling, then recycling *right* becomes a good habit, and your mind can focus on other decisions.

### **How can you recycle right?**

- First, go to your municipal resources or your private recycling hauler and print out the list of acceptable and unacceptable materials for recycling where you live. It may also include the collection schedule. **Post that list in a spot near your recycling container.** Don't know what to do with that plastic takeout box? Look at the list! Done!
- Yes, plastic is confusing. At least know that you should be recycling plastic bottles that have a neck (think water, milk, juice, detergent). It's the other plastic containers that give us a headache. **If in doubt, check it out. Not everything can be recycled!**
- **Universally NOT accepted** in your recycling bins: batteries, food waste, plastic bags, any hangers, wire, diapers, scrap metal. Look at your list! And throw away anything smaller than a credit card; this includes bottle caps.

**Why is it important?** Chester County is a scenic, diverse community of 534,000 people. Some benefits of our collective recycling efforts:

- Municipalities earned nearly \$1M from PA Recycling Performance grant awards in 2021.
- Our two local landfills, Lanchester and SECCRA, have more years to take your trash. More than 310,000 *tons* of recyclables were diverted in 2021.
- That's the equivalent of saving 33M gallons of gas.

**To sum it up,** get your local recycling list and post it up. Focus on what is acceptable. Empty, clean, dry, and loose materials (not bagged; but paper bags for paper are OK). And over and over again. It's not hard – it's Trash Smart!

