

The 10-Minute Home Recycling Made Simple

Find your own local rules, then sort with a short routine.



FIND WHAT YOU NEED

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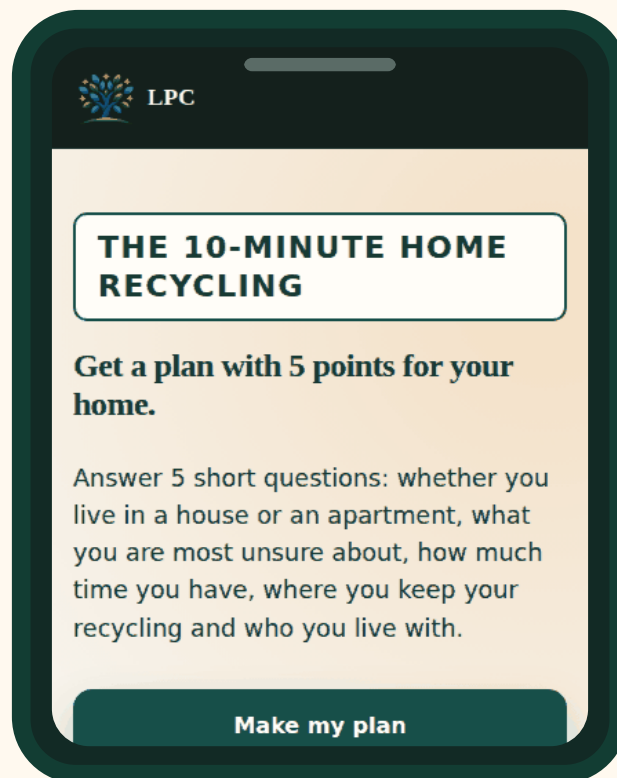
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Quick Route: Start with the Home Recycling Companion App



If you stand at the bin with a bottle in your hand and do not know where it goes, the Home Recycling Companion App can help you start now.

CONTINUED

You answer 5 questions about your home, and the app gives you a plan with 5 points: find your local rule, read the rule sheet, set up a sorting spot, build a kitchen routine and pick a check day.

Save favorites and add personal notes, so your app is tailored to your preferences.

You can create 2 complete personalized plans free.

Read the Important Note About Home Recycling Rules and Safety first. Then use the app for a plan, or keep reading and learn the method at your own pace.

Open the Home Recycling Companion App

<https://recycling.lifeperksclub.com>

A GENTLE NOTE

Important Note About Home Recycling Rules and Safety



This guide gives everyday advice about finding your local recycling rules and setting up a short routine at home. It is general information. It does not replace the rules of your own local program.

CONTINUED

It does not tell you what can be recycled where you live. Recycling rules differ from place to place. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, not all kinds of recyclables may be collected in your community, so you should check your local program.

It does not promise any effect on the environment. It gives no recycling numbers, no deposit amounts and no prices. It gives no rules for any state or city. It gives no advice about hazardous waste, batteries or electronics beyond what the EPA page says, and it tells you to ask your local program.

The 10-minute frame, the order of steps, the sorting spot and the kitchen routine are this guide's own ideas. They are a way to make a small start. They do not come from an official source.

CONTINUED

The guide leans on two pages from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Whenever the guide says what those pages say, it says "according to the EPA". Everything else is the guide's own suggestion, and it says so.

If you are not sure about an item, ask your local program. If an item is sharp, heavy or hard to handle, ask for help.

This guide and the companion app never ask you for a Social Security number, an account number or a password. Please do not type those into either one.

[START HERE](#)

Why Home Recycling Feels Like Guessing



Most people want to do home recycling right. The trouble is that the answer to "does this go in the bin?" is different almost everywhere.

According to the EPA, this confusion is a real problem. The EPA page says that people are

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unclear about what can be recycled, where and how. It says that this leads to recyclables ending up in the trash and trash ending up in the recycling bin.

This guide cannot change your local rules, because it does not know them. What it makes simple is the way you find them. It shows you how to find your own rule, how to read it and how to put it on one page.

THE 3 WAYS TO RECYCLE AT

The 3 Ways to Recycle at Home



According to the EPA, there are three main ways households can recycle. Your local program may use one, two or all three.

1. Curbside collection. Materials are picked up from your home.

CONTINUED

2. Drop-off. You bring materials to a collection place yourself.

3. Deposit or refund programs. Certain items can be returned for a deposit or refund. This guide gives no amounts, because they depend on where you live.

These three ways come from the EPA page. The way you use them is up to you and your local program.

Not every home has every way. A house with curbside pickup may still need a drop-off for some items. An apartment may have shared bins, or none at all.

CONTINUED

Ask yourself three questions. Do I have curbside pickup? Is there a drop-off place I could reach? Do I know of any deposit or refund programs? Write down "yes", "no" or "ask" for each one.

If you do not know the answer, that is fine. The next sections show you how to find it.

The EPA page also lists search tools for finding recycling places. This guide does not name them. You can use any search method that works for you, and the next sections show one.

THE METHOD

Your 10-Minute Home Recycling Task Dump



A task dump means writing down every recycling question you have, without sorting them. Set a timer for 10 minutes. This frame is the guide's own.

Take a piece of paper, or open the notes on your phone. Write one question per line. Do not put

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them in order. Do not worry about whether the question is silly.

Your list may look like this: pizza box, a plastic bag, a glass jar, a pizza box with grease, a battery, an old cable. These are only examples. Your list will be different.

Write who you could ask, too. A line that says "ask my local program" is a complete line.

When the timer rings, stop. You do not have to finish the list. A half list is still better than a list in your head.

THE METHOD

The 10-Minute Home Recycling: Order of Steps



ONE LOCAL RULE - ONE SORTING SPOT - 10 MINUTES

Here is the order this guide suggests. It is the guide's own order. It is not from an official source, and you can change it to fit your home.

CONTINUED

1. **Find your local rule first.** It is the one thing that decides what goes in the bin.

2. **Read the rule sheet second.** Write down what it says on one page.

3. **Set up one sorting spot third.** Put the bins where you will use them.

4. **Build a kitchen routine fourth.** Make one small habit.

CONTINUED

5. **Pick a check day last.** Choose a day to look again.

You do not need to finish one step before you start the next one. But if you are not sure where to start, start at the top.

Take your task dump and look at it again. Next to each question, write the number of the step it belongs to. Then pick 3 questions from step 1 or step 2, and answer one of them today.

If a question cannot be answered by your local rule, write "ask" next to it.

The next sections go through the steps one by one.

THE METHOD

Home Recycling: How to Find Your Local Rule



Your local rule is the list that tells you what your own program accepts. This section is the guide's own method. It does not know your rule. It helps you find it.

CONTINUED

According to the EPA, you should check with your local recycling program, because your local program may have different rules.

Here is one way to look. On your recycling day it takes about 3 minutes (Step 1 of the one-page plan).

1. Write down the name of your city, town or county.

2. Search for that name and the word "recycling". Look for a page from your city, county or waste collection company.

CONTINUED

3. Look at your bill, your mail or the sticker on your bin. It may have a phone number or a web address.

4. If you live in a building, ask your landlord or the person who manages it.

5. If you cannot find a page, call the number you found and ask for the list.

Ask for three things: what goes in the bin, what stays out and where to take the rest.

Write the name of the page or the number in your notes. Add the date. Rules can change, so you will want to check again.

If you cannot find your rule today, write "ask" on your list and go on. A small start counts.

HOME RECYCLING

Home Recycling: Reading Your Local Rule Sheet



Once you find your local rule, put it on one page. This section is the guide's own method. It does not tell you what your rule says.

CONTINUED

Take a blank sheet of paper. Draw a line down the middle. On the left write "In the bin". On the right write "Not in the bin".

Read your local rule. Copy what it says, one item per line. Use your own words, and keep it short. If the rule uses a word you do not know, write the word and put a question mark next to it.

Add a third place at the bottom. Write "Somewhere else". This is for the items that your local rule says to take to a drop-off or another place. Write where, if the rule says.

CONTINUED

Now look at your task dump. Find each question that your sheet can answer. Write the answer next to it.

For each question that your sheet cannot answer, write "ask". You can call or write to your local program later.

Do not guess. If the sheet does not say, the guide does not say either.

Put the sheet where you can see it. A magnet on the refrigerator works. So does a photo on your phone.

Add the date at the top. Next season you can check whether anything changed.

HOME RECYCLING

Home Recycling: Paper and Cardboard



This section is about paper and cardboard. It tells you what the EPA page says. It does not tell you what your local program accepts.

CONTINUED

According to the EPA, the page lists paper and cardboard as common materials. It also says that your local program may have different rules.

According to the EPA, you should flatten boxes before you place them in the bin. This is on the EPA page, and your local program may have different rules.

According to the EPA, "spatula-clean" is clean enough for a takeout container. That means you scrape out most of the food, and you do not need to scrub it. Again, check your local program.

CONTINUED

Now the guide's own part. Look at your rule sheet. Does it list paper? Does it list cardboard? Does it say anything about boxes with food on them? Write down what it says.

Look in your home for the places where paper and cardboard pile up. This may be the kitchen, the mail table or the front door.

Pick one place for a small box or bag. Write the place on your sheet.

If your sheet does not say, write "ask" next to the question. You can call your local program or look again on its page.

Do not worry about getting every item right. The goal is a clear starting place.

HOME RECYCLING

Home Recycling: Plastic, Glass and Metal Containers



This section is about plastic, glass and metal containers. It tells you what the EPA page says. It does not tell you what your local program accepts.

According to the EPA, you should rinse or scrape out the food, and "spatula-clean" is clean enough

CONTINUED

for plastic containers. According to the EPA, containers that are still contaminated with food cannot be recycled. Your local program may have different rules.

According to the EPA, broken glass should not go in the recycling bin, because glass shards can harm workers and damage equipment. Ask your local program what to do with it.

According to the EPA, aluminum cans should not be crushed in single-stream recycling, though crushing may be fine in other kinds of programs. Check your local program.

CONTINUED

According to the EPA, plastic bags and similar items cannot go in the household recycling bin. The page says that some stores accept them. According to the EPA, very few places accept styrofoam in curbside recycling. Ask your local program.

The EPA page lists search tools for finding drop-off places. This guide does not name them. You can search for your city and the word "recycling" instead.

Now the guide's own part. Look at your rule sheet. Write down what it says about plastic, glass and metal. Mark any item that your sheet does not mention with "ask".

Do not guess. If you are not sure, ask your local program.

HOME RECYCLING

Home Recycling: Items That Need Special Drop-Off



Some items do not belong in the household bin. This section tells you what the EPA page says. It gives no handling steps.

According to the EPA, most batteries should not go in household garbage or recycling bins. According

CONTINUED

to the EPA, you can look for in-store recycling bins or community collection events for these batteries.

According to the EPA, electronics cannot be recycled curbside, but they can be dropped off at specific collection sites. The page also lists items such as household hazardous waste, tires and used oil.

Your local program may have different rules.

CONTINUED

According to the EPA, plastic bags cannot go in your household recycling bin, but retail and grocery stores often accept them for recycling.

This guide gives no steps for handling these items. It gives no advice about hazardous waste, batteries or electronics. If an item is sharp, heavy, leaking or hard to handle, ask your local program or a professional.

Now the guide's own part. Make a short list called "Somewhere else". Look at your task dump. Write

CONTINUED

down every item that may belong on it. This may be a battery, an old cable, a light bulb or a plastic bag.

Next to each one write "ask my local program" or the place your rule sheet names.

Pick one box or bag in the garage or a closet. Label it "Somewhere else". Put only items like an old cable or a plastic bag in it. Keep batteries and hazardous items out of the box. Write them on your list with "ask my local program".

If your sheet does not say, write "ask".

HOME RECYCLING

Home Recycling: Keeping Containers Clean Enough



Many people worry that they have to wash everything. This section tells you what the EPA page says and gives the guide's own way to keep it simple.

CONTINUED

According to the EPA, "spatula-clean" is clean enough for takeout containers and plastic containers. That means you scrape out most of what is left. You do not need to scrub. Your local program may have different rules.

According to the EPA, you can rinse or scrape out the food. According to the EPA, containers that are still contaminated with food cannot be recycled. If you cannot get a container clean enough, check your local program.

Now the guide's own part. Pick a place near the sink for a spatula, a scraper or a spoon that you use only for this. Keep it where you can reach it.

When you finish a container, scrape it, set it aside and go on. Do not make it a project.

CONTINUED

If your rule sheet says something different, follow your sheet. It comes first.

If you are not sure whether a container is clean enough, ask your local program. You can also look at your sheet to see whether it says anything about food on containers.

Do not try to be perfect. A small habit that you keep is better than a big effort that you drop.

If you rent or share a kitchen, agree on one place and one rule with the people you live with. Write it on your sheet.

When you are done, wipe your hands and stop. That is the whole step.

THE METHOD

Home Recycling: Setting Up One Sorting Spot



A sorting spot is one place in your home where you put your bins and your rule sheet. This section is the guide's own idea. It is not from an official source.

CONTINUED

Choose the spot. It should be close to where the items start. For many homes that is the kitchen. For some it is the garage or a hallway. Pick one place only.

Put two things there. The first is a bin or a bag for items that your rule sheet says go in the bin. The second is a bin or a bag for items that need another place.

Put your rule sheet on the wall or inside a cabinet door, where you can see it.

CONTINUED

If you rent or live in an apartment, you may have less space. A small box under the sink is enough. A paper bag works too.

If your building has shared bins, find out where they are. Ask your landlord or the person who manages the building. Write it on your sheet.

Label each bin or bag with a word. Use a pen and a piece of paper. Keep it simple.

Do not buy anything new for this step. Use what you have. If you want to buy something later, that is your own choice.

When you are done, stand back and look. Is the spot easy to reach? If not, move it.

THE METHOD

Home Recycling: The Kitchen Routine



A kitchen routine is one small habit that you do each day. This section is the guide's own idea. It is not from an official source.

Here is a simple routine. It has three moves.

CONTINUED

1. **Look.** When you finish with a container, look at your rule sheet if you need to.

2. **Scrape.** Scrape out the food. According to the EPA, "spatula-clean" is clean enough for takeout and plastic containers. Your local program may have different rules.

3. **Place.** Put it in the right bin at your sorting spot.

If you do not know where something goes, put it in a small "ask" box. Look at the box once a week. For each item, check your rule sheet or ask your local program.

CONTINUED

Do not stand at the bin for a long time. If you are not sure, set it aside and go on.

Make the routine fit your kitchen. If you cook a lot, put the bin close to the stove. If you eat out a lot, put it close to the door.

If you share the kitchen, agree on the routine with the people you live with. Put the three moves on your sheet.

The routine only needs to take a few seconds. Over time, your hands will learn it.

If a day goes wrong, that is fine. Start again with the next container.

HOME RECYCLING WITH KIDS,

Home Recycling With Kids, Pets or a Partner



A recycling routine is easier when everyone knows what is happening. This section is the guide's own set of ideas, and it only covers small, practical things.

CONTINUED

With kids. Give a child one small job. A child can carry a box to the bin or put a paper in the right place. Keep it short and keep it light. Do not ask a child to handle sharp, heavy or broken items.

With pets. Keep bins that hold food scraps out of reach. Close the lid or put the bin in a cabinet. Pick up anything sharp from the floor right away.

With a partner or housemates. Share the rule sheet. Each person can take one step. One person can find the rule, and another can set up the sorting spot.

CONTINUED

Alone. Do one step at a time. Do not try to do all of them in one day.

With someone who needs help. If you are helping a parent or a neighbor, go with them and read the rule sheet together. Do not do anything in their home that is not yours to do.

In every case, say the plan out loud before you start. Say where the spot is and what goes where.

If someone does not want to take part, do not argue. Do your own part. Ask again next week.

HOME RECYCLING IN AN

Home Recycling in an Apartment or a Shared Building



Many people live in an apartment or a shared building. This section is the guide's own set of ideas. It does not tell you the rules of your building.

CONTINUED

You may not have your own bins. You may have a shared room, a chute or a dumpster. The rules may come from your landlord, your building or your city.

Ask the person who manages the building three questions. What goes in the shared bins? Where are they? Is there anything I should take somewhere else?

Write the answers on your rule sheet. Add the date and the name of the person you asked.

If you cannot ask, look for a sign or a notice near the bins. Take a photo of it.

CONTINUED

According to the EPA, not all kinds of recyclables may be collected in your community, so check your local program. The same applies to a shared building.

If there is no recycling in your building, you may need a drop-off. Search for your city and the word "recycling". Write down what you find.

Space may be small. A small box under the sink works. Use what you have.

If a shared bin is full or messy, do not try to fix it yourself. Tell the person who manages it.

When you are done, put your sheet where you can find it.

STEP BY STEP

The Night Before Your Home Recycling Day



The night before is easier when the list is short and the tools are close. This section is the guide's own plan. It only takes a few minutes.

Look at your calendar and choose a 10-minute slot for tomorrow. Write it down.

CONTINUED

Put a pen and a piece of paper, or your phone, where you will see them. If you have your task dump, put it with them.

Find the name of your city, town or county. Write it at the top of the page.

If you plan to call your local program, check the hours. Write the number and the time you will call.

If you live in a building, write the name of the person you will ask.

Pick one place for your sorting spot. Walk there and look. Is there room for a bin or a bag?

STEP BY STEP

Home Recycling Day: A One-Page Plan



A recycling day is easier with a one-page plan. The plan is the guide's own. Write it on a single sheet and keep it where you can reach it.

At the top. Write the date and the time you will start and stop.

CONTINUED**Step 1: Find your local rule (about 3 minutes).**

Search for your city and the word "recycling". Write the name of the page or the number.

Step 2: Read the rule sheet (about 3 minutes).

Copy what it says into two lists: in the bin and not in the bin.

Step 3: Set up one sorting spot (about 2 minutes). Pick a place. Put a bin or a bag there. Put your sheet where you can see it.

CONTINUED

Step 4: Build a kitchen routine (about 1 minute). Write the three moves: look, scrape, place.

Step 5: Pick a check day (about 1 minute). Choose a day to look again. Put it in your calendar.

At the bottom. Write 3 lines: what I will do this week, what I will ask my local program and what I will take somewhere else.

Put the page in a folder or take a photo of it. Tell someone what you did. Say one sentence. That is the end of the day.

THE METHOD

After Your Home Recycling Reset: Your First 10 Minutes



When you finish the reset, you do not have to be done with everything. This section gives you a short start. The 10-minute frame is the guide's own.

CONTINUED

Look at your sheet. You may see lines that you can act on, lines that say "ask" and lines that say "somewhere else".

Take the first 3 minutes to look at the lines that say "ask". Pick one. Write down who you will ask and how.

Take the next 3 minutes to send one message or make one call, if you can. Keep it short and calm. Say that you want to know what goes in the bin.

Take the next 2 minutes to look at the "somewhere else" box. Write down one place where you could take the items. If you do not know, write "ask".

CONTINUED

Take the last 2 minutes to put your sheet where you can find it. A magnet, a folder or a photo on your phone all work.

Do not try to do all of it today. A short list that you come back to is better than a long list that you drop.

Write the date of your check day on your calendar. Name it clearly: "Home Recycling Check".

Then stop for the day.

HOME RECYCLING ITEMS THAT

Home Recycling Items That Get Forgotten



Some items are easy to forget. This list is the guide's own set of reminders. It is not official, and some may not apply to you.

- The pizza box with grease on it.

CONTINUED

- The plastic bag that you stuff into the bin.

- The glass jar with food still in it.

- The broken glass in the kitchen trash.

- The battery in the drawer.

- The old cable or charger.

CONTINUED

- The takeout container that is not quite clean.
- The small item at the bottom of the bag.
- The item that your local rule does not mention.
- The date on your rule sheet.

Pick one from the list. Add it to your sheet. Check your local rule, or ask your local program.

According to the EPA, most batteries should not go in household garbage or recycling bins, and plastic bags cannot go in the household recycling bin. Your local program may have different rules. For batteries, see Home Recycling: Items That Need Special Drop-Off.

WHERE TO START

When Your Home Recycling Routine Falls Apart



Plans change. A busy week arrives. The bin overflows and you have no time. This section is for those days. The ideas are the guide's own.

You ran out of time. Stop. Write down where you stopped. Do the rest in another 10 minutes.

CONTINUED

You could not find your local rule. Write "ask" and go on. Call or write to your local program when you can.

Your sheet is out of date. Look at your local rule again. Change the sheet. Add the date.

You are not sure about an item. Set it aside. Add it to your "ask" box. Check your sheet or ask your local program.

CONTINUED

The bin is a mess. Do not try to fix it all today. Start with one bag and one rule.

Someone in your home does not follow the routine. Do not argue. Show them the sheet. Ask again next week.

You moved. Your local rule may be different in your new place. Start again from step 1.

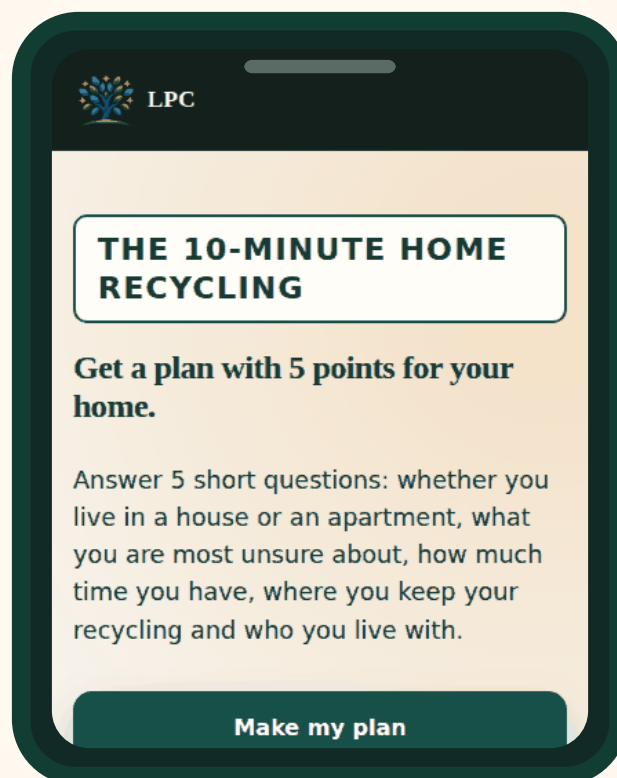
You do not feel like it. Do one thing: look at your sheet. Then stop. A small start counts.

OPTIONAL COMPANION APP

The Home Recycling Companion App

This guide explains the method. The Home Recycling Companion App turns it into a plan for your home.

You answer 5 questions: whether you live in a house or an apartment, what you are most unsure



CONTINUED

about, how much time you have, where you keep your recycling and who you live with. The app gives you a plan with 5 points: find your local rule, read the rule sheet, set up a sorting spot, build a kitchen routine and pick a check day.

The app never sets local rules for you. It gives no recycling numbers and no promise about the environment.

Save favorites and add personal notes, so your app is tailored to your preferences.

CONTINUED

You can add a note that says what your local rule says.

You can create 2 complete personalized plans free. After that, a one-time unlock of \$9 keeps it yours. There is no subscription and no renewal.

The app never asks for a Social Security number, an account number or a password.

Open the Home Recycling Companion App

<https://recycling.lifeperksclub.com>

FINAL CHECKLIST

Final Checklist: The 10-Minute Home Recycling Reset



☐ I wrote down my recycling questions in a 10-minute task dump.

☐ I looked for my local rule and wrote down where I found it.

CONTINUED

- ☐ I put the rule on one page: in the bin, not in the bin and somewhere else.
- ☐ I marked every item I was not sure about with "ask".
- ☐ I set up one sorting spot and put my sheet where I can see it.
- ☐ I wrote down the three moves of my kitchen routine: look, scrape, place.

CONTINUED

☐ I made one call or sent one message, or I wrote down who to ask.

☐ I wrote the date of my check day on my calendar.

☐ I know that this guide does not tell me what can be recycled where I live, and that my local program has the final word.

The phrase home recycling reset means one short sitting in which you find your local rule, set up one sorting spot and write down what goes where, so recycling stops being a guess.

SOURCES

Sources Used for Home Recycling Guidance

The statements about recycling come from two U.S. government pages. They were opened on October 7, 2026. Check the official pages for the latest wording.

Both pages say that local programs may have different rules. This guide therefore gives no rules for any city, county or state. For your rules, check your local program.

The EPA pages also list search tools for finding recycling places. This guide does not name them.

CONTINUED

The way to find the rule, the rule sheet, the sorting spot, the kitchen routine, the 10-minute task dump, the night before, the day and the first minutes after the reset are this guide's own suggestions.

They are not official guidance.

This guide gives no recycling numbers, no deposit amounts, no prices, no promise about the environment and no advice about hazardous waste, batteries or electronics.

CONTINUED

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Recycling Basics and Benefits: three ways to recycle at home, checking your local program and why confusion matters.

<https://www.epa.gov/recycle/recycling-basics-and-benefits>

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, How Do I Recycle Common Recyclables: materials, preparation and items that need special drop-off. <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/how-do-i-recycle-common-recyclables>

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