



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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EPA Stresses the Importance of Recycling and Proper Disposal of Personal Protective Equipment

WASHINGTON (May 12, 2020) – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is encouraging all Americans to recycle materials from their households and properly dispose of personal protective equipment (PPE), especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recycling isn't just good for the planet by reducing the amount of waste going to landfills and saving energy, it also supports American manufacturing.

“Right now, there is a critical need for raw materials in the manufacturing supply chain, especially paper and cardboard,” said **EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler**. “Business closures and limited operations means less recycled material for American manufactures, and we all must do our part to recycle more and recycle right to fill this immediate need.”

Recycled materials are used to make new products as well as the boxes that these and other essential supplies are shipped in for the everyday needs of hospitals, grocery stores, pharmacies and American homes. Currently, businesses that normally recycle large amounts of paper and cardboard are not able to do that due to the impacts from the coronavirus health crisis. Because of this, household recycling is more essential than ever.

Americans all over the country are staying home, getting more deliveries in cardboard boxes, eating at home, and generating more material than normal, much of which can be recycled.

EPA encourages households to do their part - recycle more and recycle correctly so the right materials are available for U.S. manufacturers. To do so:

- Check with your local recycling hauler to see what materials they accept right now and recycle what you can from your home.
- Break down shipping and food boxes, rinse out containers and cans, keep them dry and clean, and put them in your curbside bin to be recycled.
- Keep disinfectant wipes, gloves, masks, other PPE and medical waste out of recycling bins.

When taking trips to essential businesses like grocery stores and pharmacies, please do not litter disinfectant wipes, masks, gloves or other PPE, instead put them securely in a trash can and follow local trash and Center for Disease Control guidelines.

EPA sends out heartfelt thanks to all of America's recycling workers for providing this essential service. This important work creates jobs and the containers, packaging and products needed, as well as keeping the public safe and healthy.

For more information, visit:

- EPA Administrator Wheeler's video message: <https://youtu.be/BcGonQ3rx3Y>
- Don't recycle Personal Protective Equipment video: <https://youtu.be/S1cERI3lbeY>
- Recycling during health crisis video: https://youtu.be/_ADZ8vH-r4M
- EPA's Recycling During COVID-19 web page: <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/recycling-and-sustainable-management-food-during-coronavirus-covid-19-public-health>
- EPA's Reduce Reuse Recycle web page: www.epa.gov/recycle
- EPA's America Recycles web pages: www.epa.gov/americanrecycles
- CDC guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>



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