



RECYCLING MATTERS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 1—SPRING 2020

Dear Friends,

The COVID-19 novel coronavirus has created challenges within the Waste and Recycling Industry and for our locally owned and operated business. Yet with all the challenges, our TFC Recycling team has shown amazing commitment and resiliency! Waste and Recycling are considered “Essential Services”. We have been coming to work each and every day so thankful and blessed to have a job and be able to continue to serve our community.

We are retaining all of our staff, providing a safe work environment, and continuing to serve our customers. Collecting waste and recyclables is vital for many reasons. Recycling also provides necessary raw materials for manufacturers to make items such as cardboard boxes, paper towels, toilet paper, and masks.

Thank you to our customers and employees for supporting our family-owned business. Let’s keep on recycling as we look forward to the day when things return to “normal”.



Be safe and God Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michael Benedetto'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

“Michael Recycle” Benedetto

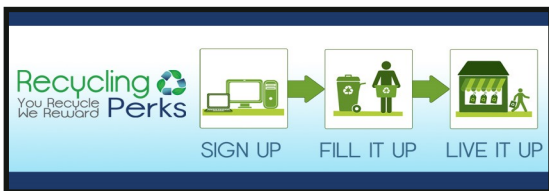
CLOSING THE LOOP

At TFC we're often asked if we REALLY recycle the paper, bottles and cans we collect. WE DO! But we couldn't do it without the companies that "Close the Loop", turning recyclable materials into products consumers can buy.

With COVID-19 causing paper shortages, TFC is highlighting the current efforts of companies such as Georgia-Pacific and Sonoco Recycling.



Georgia Pacific's demand to produce more boxes has increased as much as 40%. Sonoco is producing paper towels and toilet tissue. The simple act of recycling is helping those in need.



OOPS!



Plastic bags are a big recycling OOPS!

Although plastic bags can be recycled, throwing them in with the rest of your recycling has terrible consequences for TFC. These bags can wrap around and jam our recycling equipment!

Our suggestion?

Choose re-usable bags or paper bags. If you must use plastic bags, recycle them by taking them to one of the many grocery, retail, or home improvement stores that recycle plastic bags and film.

Bottom Line: Do not throw plastic bags in your recycling cart.

Recycling Is Deemed “Essential,” and That’s a Big Damn Deal

Kate Bailey | Apr 19, 2020

Last fall, I was presenting on a conference panel and sharing my thoughts about how we were living through history, that we would look back at this time in the recycling movement and say wow, that was a critical time, perhaps a watershed moment. At the time, we were trying to survive the worst recycling markets in 25 years and trying to navigate the tsunami of global backlash against plastic pollution. I wanted to convey the need to pause, to take a collective sigh of relief and acknowledge all that was rapidly changing around us, and to pat ourselves on the back for still showing up every day and remaining committed to recycling.

Of course, while that now seems like a distant memory as our world has been upended by COVID-19, the need to recognize where we are in history stands truer than ever. We, the recycling industry, are still here. Take a moment to acknowledge that this is no small accomplishment. We’ve largely survived the market crash post China National Sword, and, compared to so many industries, we are making it through this crisis. Things may not get better for some time, so while it would have been nice to have a quick breather on the sidelines and a lull in the action, the best I can offer is a quick pep talk and an invitation to find a moment to celebrate what we all do every day.

Rising to the level of essential

To start, the recycling industry has recently been declared an essential industry and service by the Department of Homeland Security. That right there is a Big. Damn. Deal. It’s an honor and a testament to the work we have done over the preceding decades. It wasn’t that long ago that the 2008 recession shook up the recycling industry, and I remember hearing folks reflect at the time that it was a positive sign that recycling had finally grown large enough to be impacted by global macroeconomic trends.


Now, as an essential service, there is no doubt that recycling has secured itself as a critical industry and that is a bright spot during these dark days. As with every other essential industry, we have some major challenges facing us right now around protecting workers and maintaining a safe workforce. There are also some temporary challenges with shuttered programs, but most of these closures are just transitional problems. Overall, we are largely operational and still serving the majority of markets.

Our role is deemed essential not just because we are protecting public health through proper and timely discard management. Recycling is now critical to the health of our economy—an essential part of the supply chain. Businesses depend on us every day to supply the feedstock to make new products (yes, including more toilet paper). The glass industry is one example of a coalition of manufacturers that relies on recycled content and is extending their thanks to local community recycling programs and recycling workers who are out collecting and processing materials every day to supply them with recycled glass for food and beverage packaging.

Rebuilding a more resilient, sustainable economy

COVID-19 has forced us to rapidly change our very fabric of being. It is hard and sad and frightening, even on the best days. But it also has shown a tremendous capacity for us to come together as a global collective and make personal and societal changes in support of the global good. There is a lot of movement afoot to harness that collective energy and use this opportunity to rebuild a more sustainable, resilient and just economy, and we in the recycling industry will play a big role in those efforts.

It has truly been an extraordinary past few years and there are no indications of calmer waters in the near term, but I have yet to meet someone in the recycling industry who got into this because it seemed easy. Recycling is complex and challenging because it is ever evolving and connected in so many ways to many deeper economic and social issues. But most importantly, recycling is essential, so all this to say thank you for all you do for our environment and our health. And, lastly, as we pause to reflect, please also give thanks to all those on the frontlines of managing this global pandemic. I am truly humbled by their service to their fellow humans and profoundly grateful for so many wonderful people in this world.

Article courtesy of  Waste 360

Kate Bailey is the Policy & Research Director at Eco-Cycle, one of the oldest recycling organizations in the U.S.

Notes on data calculation: Composting data only through 1988. GHG and energy savings calculated through WARM v15 assumed mixed organics and mixed recyclables, compared to landfilling.

RECYCLE RIGHT

PAPER



Flattened Cardboard,
Newspaper, Magazines
& Mail

BOTTLES



Kitchen, Laundry,
Plastic Bottles & Jugs
(empty, rinse, and remove cap)

CANS



Aluminum and Steel
Food & Beverage Cans
(empty and rinse)

GLASS



Bottles & Jars
(empty, rinse, and remove lid)

CARTONS



Food & Beverage Cartons
(empty, rinse, and remove cap)

NO!



No Plastic Bags
or Plastic Wrap



Do Not Bag
Recyclables
(keep them loose)



No Tangles, Cords,
Hoses, or Ropes



No Flammables,
Gas Tanks,
Batteries, Propane
Tanks, Paint,
or Aerosol Cans



No Food, Liquid,
or Pizza Boxes
(empty all containers)



No Styrofoam™
(carryout or
packing material)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do You Really Recycle? YES! This year, TFC Recycling will process more than 200,000 tons of recyclable materials.

Can I put yard waste in my recycling cart? NO! Placed inside the recycling cart this waste is considered contamination and the cart will not be emptied. For information on yard waste, call your Public Works Department.

Do I have to remove staples or tape from paper before recycling? NO! Metal staples do not need to be removed from paper. Staples (made of steel) are removed at the paper mill using screens and filters during the pulping process.

Can disposable dishware like plastic utensils and cups made of paper, plastic or foam be recycled? NO! Plastic utensils, cups and foam (a.k.a. polystyrene foam) are materials not recycled at TFC Recycling. Paper plates, cups and napkins cannot be recycled because of contact with food waste. Disposable dishware is just that, disposable.

Why can't I put everything plastic in my recycling bin? These containers all have recycling arrows. While some plastic is recyclable, not all can be recycled in your local or municipal recycling program. A solid market exists for plastics bottles #1 (PET) and #2 (HDPE), and your local materials recovery facility is equipped to sort these plastics. More than 96 percent of plastic bottles are #1 (PET) or #2 (HDPE) plastic.

