

Recycling is crucial to running a green home. It's also an easy and effective way to reduce weekly contributions to the local landfill.

Unfortunately, many people either aren't recycling as much as they could be, or are recycling the wrong way. A main reason for this is lack of access to accurate information.

Even if people know the basics, they may have lingering questions.

Covanta, a world leader and expert in sustainable waste management and renewable energy, offers helpful insights into common recycling questions:

- What cardboard is recyclable? All cardboard boxes except waxed can be recycled. In some communities, cardboard includes cereal, pasta or other food boxes. If possible, remove adhesive labels and tape prior to placing it in the recycling bin, as glue can interfere with the pulping process.

Recycle the non-greasy portion of pizza boxes and discard the rest with the trash.

- Is wet newspaper recyclable? Paper fibers can only hold so much moisture. If wet paper arrives at the recycling facility, it may not absorb the chemicals needed to process the paper fibers into new products. Try to keep recycle-ready paper indoors until pick-up day.

- Should plastic bottle caps and wine corks be removed? Corks should be reused or thrown in the trash. Remove plastic caps from plastic bottles so cans can be crushed, making it easy to fit more into the bin.

Some caps are recyclable, but recycling centers often discard non-recyclable caps as trash.

- Can items that contained chemicals be recycled? Yes, as long as they're completely empty. An exception is motor oil, because residual oil can interfere with plastics recycling.

- Is crushing cans necessary? It's not necessary to crush cans in preparation for recycling, but doing so makes room in the recycling bin and the transport truck, which means fewer trips to the recycling facility.

- How to recycle batteries and electronics. Many municipalities are now recycling electronics. And some department stores, such as Best Buy, have take-back programs. Visit www.Call2Recycle.org to find the nearest battery take-back location.

- Where do recyclables go? Recyclables go to an interim processor called a materials recovery facility.

There, they are sorted. Separated recyclables are sent to a processing plant to be made into new products.

- Why recycle? Recycling preserves natural resources and is good for the economy, accounting for about one million manufacturing jobs nationwide, and generating more than \$100 billion in revenue, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

- What happens to waste that's not recycled? While some materials may be sent to landfills, the preferred option is an Energy-from-Waste facility, which offers a safe, technologically advanced means of waste disposal that generates clean, renewable energy, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and recycles metal left over in household waste.

More information about how recycling and Energy-from-Waste go together can be found at www.CovantaEnergy.com/virtualtour.

Environmental stewardship starts at home. Everyone must all take steps to educate themselves on recycling.