



### Feature Can we make plastic go away?

*The Plastics Pact, formed to deal with problematic plastic compounds in consumer packaging and products, is addressing this very question.*



As most of us are aware, plastic is a problem. Even if we do our best to recycle, it seems to build up in the environment, on our streets, in our rivers and in the oceans. Technology is racing to find ways to remove it, but at present it can't even stop the increase of proliferation, let alone clean up what is already in the environment. It simply won't go away. Some of the solution to this problem lies in our daily decisions – we can choose alternatives to plastic wherever we can, such as paper cartons and aluminum. But these options are not available yet for most packaging. The regulators, as well as consumers, need help!

Not only that, but materials recovery facilities (where your mixed recyclables go after they come to the Transfer Station) refuse and/or are not required to handle certain types of plastic, and those materials end up in the waste stream.

*Along comes industry to the rescue.....??*

Formed in early 2020 (and based on the Global Plastics Pact model), The Plastics Pact is a consortium of more than 100 major players in plastic packaging production in the United States, and is the initiative of The Recycling Partnership. Corporations volunteer to become participating members (or “activators,” as they are called). Several days ago, the Plastics Pact published its recommendations for ceasing or severely curtailing production of certain plastic packaging, which if adhered to, would focus on source-reduction at the manufacturing level for these materials. Though this is only a “recommendation,” and is voluntary for members, as well as possibly taking years to implement, it is a very encouraging start, considering the wellspring for the initiative comes from those that are in control of the sources of production, the manufacturers! Below is the list of materials recommended for gradual elimination from production, which includes materials made from PVC, PS (polystyrene), and PS foam, or 'styrofoam' as it is commonly called --

- . Cutlery.
- Intentionally added per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).
- Pigments that cannot be detected by optical sorters, such as carbon black.
- Opaque or pigmented PET bottles (any color other than transparent blue or green).
- Oxo-degradable additives, including oxo-biodegradable additives.
- PETG (glycol-modified PET) in rigid packaging.
- Problematic label constructions. This includes adhesives, inks, materials (e.g., PETG, PVC, PLA, paper). The Pact urges stakeholders to avoid formats/materials/features that render a package detrimental or non-recyclable per the [APR Design Guide](#). Labels should meet APR Preferred guidance for coverage and compatibility and be tested in any areas where this is unclear.
- Polystyrene, including expanded polystyrene.
- PVC, including PVDC (polyvinylidene chloride).
- Stirrers.
- Straws.

There is no one solution to the major problem of plastic proliferation, but self-regulation at the source is a start at making plastic “go away.”




## Feature Take the Recycling 'Quizionnaire!'

*In an effort to answer some of your concerns as citizens of New Haven, and to hopefully serve you better, as well as pique your awareness, read on! You can return your answers to [info@nhswra.com](mailto:info@nhswra.com). (Kindly number your responses according to the numbers on the questions, so we can process them!)*

1. Do you find it easy / not that bad / hard to determine what is recyclable?
2. Are you aware that you can recycle certain items at the New Haven Transfer station that aren't allowed in your curbside bin? Do you know what these items are?
3. Are you aware that, as well as placing in your blue toter/bin, you can bring your mixed recyclables (single-stream) to the Transfer Station?
4. Are you uncertain about what is involved in curbside bulk pick-up service, and who provides it?
5. Is recycling required by law in CT?



6. What would you like to see changed/improved in the residential drop-off recycling process?
7. Are you familiar with what household hazardous waste is, and how and where it should be disposed of in our area?
8. Are you confused as to why certain items are considered 'demolition' while others are considered 'bulky waste'?
9. Are you satisfied with the level of service and information provided during your visits to the transfer station? (Yes /no /somewhat)
10. What do you think could be improved in the household recycling process?

 **Dep't.** Did you know....

Only 9% of **plastic** gets recycled, and that much of it is down-cycled either because of shortsighted production standards or improper handling and sorting? This leaves the down-cycled product of use for only 1 or 2 more cycles at the most.

When it comes to **metal**, things look a lot better: Almost 70% of steel is recycled in the U.S. - a much more encouraging figure – and we are actually way above the world average.

**Glass** is more easily recycled than plastic as well, and this is reflected in the percentages: 31% is recycled in the U.S. Although it is acceptable at our materials recovery facilities (where your mixed recycling is destined), it can be a safety hazard in the sorting process and can slow down production. Glass bottles, for one, are much more efficiently recycled (and welcome) at redemption centers and in reverse vending machines.

**Paper** remains a strong contender – 63% is recycled in the United States!

And **cardboard** is the hands-down winner at almost 92% recycled!

Both paper and cardboard are in such high percentages due in part to the fact that they are separated, handled and processed post-MRF relatively easily. It's also a particularly good thing that cardboard recycling rates are consistently this high: During the pandemic, production of cardboard in the U.S. went from 390 billion square feet to 407 billion!

## Calendar:

The New Haven Transfer Station and administrative offices of the New Haven Solid Waste & Recycling Authority will be closed for all business on **Monday, February 21**, in observance of Presidents' Day.

## City of New Haven meeting schedule:

<https://newhaven-ct.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

## New Haven Parks and Public Works info:

### **A message from Parks and Public Works Resident Services:**

Public Works offices will be closed on **Monday, February 21** in observance of Presidents' Day. Garbage collection will be offset by one day that week.

Household hazardous waste such as paints, cleaners, solvents, batteries, chemicals, motor oil, oil-based products and aerosol sprays are not accepted at the Transfer Station. These items can be brought to HazWaste Central at 90 Sargent Drive (currently closed for the season). They will be open from May 21<sup>st</sup> through October 29th. If you have any questions about household hazardous waste, you can call (203) 401-2712 or email [ask.hazwaste@rwater.com](mailto:ask.hazwaste@rwater.com).

Coupons are once a gain available! Free coupons may be obtained with a valid ID at Parks and Public Works Resident Services Office, located at 34 Middleton Avenue. Our hours are Monday-Friday 7am–4pm. Remember: you *must* present a coupon (one per load) in order to drop items at Residential drop-off at the New Haven Transfer Station.

Street sweeping has been suspended for the season.

As always, any questions, give Parks and Public Works Resident Services a call at (203) 946-7700. We have been experiencing heavy call volume but if you leave your name and phone number with a question we will get back to you.

Remember you can always report Public Works issues at **See Click Fix** found on New Haven City website (see “Links,” below).

**Links:**

New Haven Public Works- <https://www.newhavenct.gov/gov/depts/pw/>  
See Click Fix- <https://seeclickfix.com/new-haven>

**NHSWRA contact info and link:**



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