

ASK THE GANG!



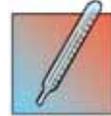
Q: How clean is clean?

A: Good question. Do you really need to scrub every bottle or can with soap and water before recycling it or is a quick rinse enough? It really depends on what was in the container. For most foods and beverages, a quick rinse will suffice, just to remove any residue. We've told you before about how to clean out a tricky peanut butter jar (let it soak overnight full of warm water, then pour half out, replace the lid, and shake vigorously to remove the now-softened peanut butter). This method works for all sorts of bottles and jars and most don't even need the overnight soak. Just fill them halfway with water and shake. One rule of thumb is to clean the container enough so that you'd be willing to store it in your pantry or under the sink for a week.

Containers that held soaps, shampoos, detergents, and similar products should be rinsed so that any residual product is not foaming. One method is to fill halfway with water and shake, then drain. Then fill the container all the way up so that the water pushes the excess foam or bubbles out. This may not be feasible for larger containers but it works well for small bottles. Don't forget that the large-size detergent bottles with the spigot and the handle are also recyclable – just remove the spigot first. To clean these, you can add a little water and shake and then use this for the next few loads of laundry. You'll rinse the container and at the same time, get more product for your money.

Containers that held motor oil, antifreeze, pesticides, or other items that would be considered household hazardous waste should not be recycled. Don't rinse these down your drain! Replace the cap and discard in your trash or, if product remains, take it to one of the household hazardous waste facilities in the area (see page 10).

As for those pizza boxes, if the grease stain is less than the size of one silver half-dollar, throw it into your recycle bin. Any bigger, if there's several, or if there is cheese or toppings stuck to the box, toss it. If the bottom is clean but the top isn't, or vice versa, consider tearing them apart to recycle what you can. And be sure to empty out any napkins, wax paper, or little plastic gizmos that were in the box before you recycle.



Q: How do I dispose of mercury thermometers?

A: Mercury thermometers, as well as other mercury-containing devices, such as thermostats, switches etc., can be taken to Total Reclaim as long as they are intact (i.e., not broken). Total Reclaim does not accept any containerized liquid mercury; it has to be within the original device. The devices are sent to a recycling facility out of state for processing. There is a fee of \$1.95 for these small devices. Call Total Reclaim at 561-0544 for fees and procedures for large quantities or devices that have larger volumes of mercury. Mercury thermometers and other devices also can be taken to one of the household hazardous waste (HHW) facilities in the area for disposal. They are packaged and sent out of state for safe disposal at a regulated HHW disposal facility. This option is free to residents. Consider recycling first!



Q: Can aluminum foil, pie plates/trays, and aluminum pet food cans be recycled?

A: We answered this question in the last issue but received more questions about what was really going on after folks went to the recycling center trying to recycle these aluminum items. Just to clear things up, here's the story:

Foil and pie plates and trays are currently collected in a separate bin at the recycling center. There is a box next to the aluminum can bin.

Aluminum cat food cans also are different than aluminum beverage cans, but the recycling center has not found it worthwhile to collect them separately due to low volumes. These cans may be put into the aluminum can bin at the recycling center and at other aluminum can bins around town. They will be sorted downstream at the processing facility in the lower 48.

Only put aluminum beverage cans and aluminum cat food cans in your roll cart if you have curbside recycling service. Do not put foil, pie plates, and trays in your cart.

A QUICK LOOK: Waste & Recycling Resources

Alaska Waste..... www.alaskawaste.com563-3717	Green Star www.greenstarinc.org278-7827
ALPAR..... www.alparalaska.com274-3266	Hilltop Recycling..... www.hilltoprecycling.com696-2246
Anchorage Recycling Center562-2267	MOA Solid Waste Services..... www.muni.org/sws343-6262
Anchorage School District Recycling..... www.asdk12.org/depts/recycling348-5151	MOA SWS Customer Service (for excess waste and bulky pick-ups)343-6250
Central Recycling Services..... www.centralrecyclingservices.com748-7400	Mobile Metals277-7777
EverGreen Nursery.. www.alaskaevergreen.com344-2588	Recycling Solutions of Alaska (formerly Southside Recycling) www.rsalaska.net sarah@rsalaska.net242-9587
Girdwood Recycling..... girdwoodrecycling2010@gmail.com242-5520	Schnitzer Steel - Anchorage ... www.alaskametalrecycling.com349-4833
Girmscheid Enterprises prodigalson@gci.net770-1720	Total Reclaim www.totalreclaim.com/Alaska.html561-0544
	Valley Community for Recycling Solutions (VCRS)..... www.valleyrecycling.org907-745-5544