

## SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION TO THE “**TERRIBLE TEN**” FLIER

### BEFORE YOU TAKE YOUR ITEMS TO BE **RECYCLED**, PLEASE BE SURE TO REMEMBER YOUR **ABC's**

**A.** Always separate plastic bags from your recyclables. Recycling workers who come across recyclables, still in plastic bags, have to slow down the conveyor belt to rip open the bags. These inefficiencies waste time and money. Bags can also get caught in machinery and loose bags blow away from the recycling station.

**B.** Be sure to recycle plastic bags at your local participating grocery store. Plastic bags take an incredible amount of time to break down and are very harmful to the environment if they make it to the landfill. If recycled, they can be made into more plastic bags.

**C.** Clean out your cans, plastic bottles and containers that have a **recycling number** (plastics without a recycling number are NOT recyclable by Otsego County). If buyers see recyclables that still contain food material, it can cause entire loads to be rejected.

The following items **SHOULD NOT\*** be mixed in with recyclables dropped off at the Otsego County transfer stations or in no-sort recycling picked up by haulers.

*\*Some items that are not recyclable by Otsego County ARE recyclable or reusable elsewhere, and/or are accepted at the county's annual Household Hazardous Waste Day collection.*

**Item #1, Soiled Food Containers:** Food-contaminated materials, including soiled pizza boxes, are not accepted by Otsego County because the oils associated with food waste cannot be separated from the fibers of the cardboard boxes.

Similarly, paperboard boxes that were designed for frozen food – such as frozen pizza, frozen entrees and ice cream containers – have a plastic polymer coating applied to prevent freezer burn. That same coating prevents these boxes from breaking down in the recycling process. These materials are not recyclable or compostable.

**Items #2 and #10, Styrofoam\*:**

**Styrofoam Peanuts:** These peanuts often are used for packaging but are not accepted for recycling by Otsego County. Don't mistake cornstarch packaging peanuts for Styrofoam peanuts. Cornstarch peanuts are compostable in your family's compost pile.

**Styrofoam Containers or Packaging:** Despite coming with electronics and other appliances, Styrofoam (Polystyrene) packaging and containers are difficult to recycle and are not accepted by Otsego County. Be sure to ask retailers for readily-available alternatives to Styrofoam.

***Are there other places you can take your Styrofoam to be reused/recycled? Yes, it is recommended that Styrofoam be reused whenever possible. For example, Styrofoam and cornstarch peanuts can be taken to local mailing houses that accept them for reuse.***

*Also, each April, clean, white Styrofoam and Styrofoam peanuts are collected for recycling at Earth Festival. For more information about Earth Festival, contact the Otsego County Conservation Association at (607) 547-4488.*

**Item #3, Light Bulbs\*:** Since light bulbs are both metal and glass and as some contain toxic substances, light bulbs are not accepted by Otsego County for recycling. For example, compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) contain trace amounts of mercury and must be dealt with carefully. With regard to incandescent light bulbs, the broken glass coming from these light bulbs poses a safety hazard to sorters at recycling facilities.

***Are light bulbs accepted for recycling elsewhere?*** *Many local hardware supply stores and other retailers offer in-store recycling for CFLs. For example, Haggerty ACE Hardware, Lowes and Home Depot all accept CFLs for recycling. Otsego County also provides a collection for CFLs and fluorescent tubes at Household Hazardous Waste Day, usually in early September. Incandescent light bulbs are recyclable with Andela Products, (315) 858-0055.*

**Item #4, Motor Oil Bottles:** Motor oil residue is a major contaminant for plastics markets. The residue seeps into the porous plastic and cannot be removed through the washing process. To responsibly dispose of a motor oil bottle, make sure you let it drip into the engine so it is as empty as possible and tightly reseal the lid before disposing of the container in the garbage.

**Item #5, Plastic Bags\*:** Plastic bags spell BIG problems for recycling facilities. And when placed in a curbside bin, they get wet and dirty and cannot be recycled.

***Are there other places you can take your plastic bags to be reused/recycled?*** *Yes, plastic bags can be recycled at grocery stores in Otsego County, including Price Chopper, Tops, Wal-Mart, Hannaford, P&C and others.*

**Item #6, Ceramic and Metal Ovenware\*:** Ovenware (metal and glass), ceramics, china, dishes, mirrors, Pyrex, and porcelain have different melting points and chemical compositions that will effectively ruin newly-recycled materials. Certain buyers of recycled materials have been known to reject entire loads if they see one of the aforementioned materials in a load of glass.

***Are there places I can take my ovenware/ceramic dishes to be reused/recycled?*** *Yes, you can donate gently used ovenware and ceramic dishes to your local Salvation Army, Goodwill or SPCA. The Otsego County Conservation Association accepts donations as well for its annual "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" Garage Sale each April. Call (607) 547-4488 for more information.*

**Item #7, Broken Glass\*:** The combination of ingredients used to make glassware is different from that which goes into container glass for bottles and jars. If these two types of glass are recycled together, the end product may be unsuitable for reuse. Also, broken glass and broken jars can pose a major threat to equipment in a glass recycling plant and are a safety risk as well.

***Are there other places to take broken glass to be reused/recycled?*** Broken glass is not accepted for recycling by Otsego County. However, Andela Products in Richfield Springs accepts nearly all types of broken glass, excluding material that comes from ovenware. For more information, call (315) 858-0055. Broken glass can also be reused in art projects.

**Item #8, Metal Clothes Hangers\*:** In addition to the low percentage of steel reclaimed per hanger, which makes them undesirable for recycling, metal hangers can potentially damage or break the recycling machinery that is used to sort them. It is important to note that plastic and wood hangers are also not recyclable by Otsego County.

***Are there places I can take my metal clothes hangers to be reused/recycled?*** Yes, certain towns (Decatur, Hartwick, Pittsfield/Burlington, Richfield, Springfield, Unadilla, Westford and Worcester) allow clothes hangers to be included with the metal recyclables, which are collected separately from the no-sort bins. Your local dry cleaner may also accept metal hangers in good condition.

**Item #9, Silverware\*:** Oftentimes, silverware (also known as metal tableware) comes in the form of many alloys and this can affect the “recyclability” of certain items. Therefore, silverware is not accepted by Otsego County. It is important to note that plastic tableware is also not recyclable by Otsego County.

***Are there places I can take my silverware to be reused/recycled?*** Silverware in good condition should be donated for reuse. Otsego Auto Crushers, (607) 432-2375, does accept silverware or tableware.

#### **WHAT ELSE IS **NOT**\* ACCEPTED WITH THE NO-SORT RECYCLING?**

**Pellet/Garden Bags\*:** Pellet bags are not accepted with Otsego County’s no-sort recyclables. Pellet bags usually have pellets or dust remaining in the bags that are unacceptable to facilities which accept plastics. Also, there are no set specifications for pellet bag composition, leading them to be made of many different kinds of plastics which in turn make it very difficult for facilities to recycle them.

***Are there places I can take my pellet bags to be reused/recycled?*** Yes, you can bring your pellet bags to Haggerty ACE Hardware in Cooperstown, where they will be picked up by the Otsego County Conservation Association to be recycled with other agricultural plastics (garden bags NOT accepted). Please note the following procedure for recycling pellet bags: 1) Shake out all pellets and residue from bags. 2) Roll empty bags tightly, or stack and fold. 3) Slide rolled or folded bags into another empty wood pellet bag to store. 4) Keep clean and dry. 5) Include no other plastic or garbage. 6) Wood pellet bags only.

**Plastics without a Recycling Number\*:** While Otsego County accepts plastics with code numbers #1 through #7, not all plastic consumer goods are identified by code numbers. Some plastic products simply do not fit into the traditional classification system, due to the different types of resins used in production. For example, materials such as ski boots, cassette players, and walkmans do not have code numbers and thus

are NOT accepted with Otsego County's no-sort recyclables.

***Are there places I can take my hard plastics to be reused/recycled?*** Yes, you can donate old ski boots, cassette players, nalgene bottles, and other usable plastics without a recycling number in good condition to the Salvation Army, your local Goodwill, or the Otsego County Conservation Association's annual "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" Garage Sale. Cassette players, walkmans and other electronics can also be included along with other electronic waste (e-waste) accepted by Otsego County.

**Rubber\*:** Rubber items and rubber tires are not accepted with Otsego County's no-sort recycling. Rubber can be challenging to recycle and, aside from rubber tires, is generally not considered to be an acceptable waste for collection and reimbursement. When rubber is produced, rubber's chemical structure changes through a process called vulcanization. Devulcanizing rubber breaks down the bonds formed during the vulcanization process, allowing it to be remolded and reused. However, the process of devulcanization often utilizes other processes that involve high heat and toxic chemicals, which can make environmentally sound rubber recycling challenging.

***Are there places I can take my rubber to be reused/recycled?*** The transfer stations in Cooperstown and Oneonta accept rubber tires for recycling for a modest fee. The charges are as follow:

- Auto Tires: \$5/tire
- Commercial Tires: \$10/tire
- All Other Tires: \$65/ton



For more information, call the Otsego County Solid Waste Department at (607) 547-4225 or Otsego County Conservation Association at (607) 547-4488.