



Soft Plastics Now Accepted in Recycling Bins

Find out what has changed?



What plastics can go in the recycling bin?

All plastic packaging including soft plastics (that you can scrunch in your hand) and rigid (hard) plastics can go in your recycling bin provided it is Clean, Dry & Loose. This includes all plastic films from your shopping, plastic bottles from milk, water and beverages; plastic tubs, containers and food trays; yogurt pots; soap, shampoo, conditioner and shower gel bottles.

What are soft plastics?

A soft plastic is any type of plastic that you can scrunch in your hand. Soft plastics are now accepted in the recycling bin due to advancements in technologies at recycling facilities in Ireland. There are a wide range of soft plastics including: plastic wrap on products, plastic labels, plastic packaging pillows, bubble wrap, bread wrappers & pasta bags.

Why can we place soft plastics in the recycling bin now? What has changed?

Soft plastics can now be placed in your recycling bin as there have been advancements in packaging design, and investment in recycling technology, allowing segregation of different material types in recycling facilities in Ireland. All plastics can now be placed in the household recycling bin once they are clean, dry and loose.

Do I need to do anything differently when recycling plastic now?

You can continue to recycle your plastic items as before. The difference is you can now place your soft plastic packaging in the recycling bin. By doing this you are helping Ireland to achieve its increased packaging recycling targets set by the EU.

What condition does plastic need to be in before I can place it in the recycling bin?

Plastic items placed in your recycling bin need to be **clean, dry and loose**. This means there should be no food or liquids left on/in your plastic items, and you should place all the items loosely in the bin and not in plastic bags or stuffed into other materials such as boxes.

How do I clean soft plastic?

There is no need to vigorously clean soft plastics. Once the plastic is free from food waste and is dry it can be placed in the recycling bin. Remember to place all items into the recycling bin clean, dry and loose.

Can I put crisp packets in the recycling bin?

Yes, crisp packets are considered soft plastic and are now accepted in your recycling bin.



Can I put sweet wrappers in the recycling bin?

Yes, sweet wrappers are a soft plastic and are now accepted in your household recycling bin.

Can I put plastic wrappers in the recycling bin?

Yes, plastic product wrapping such as the film found on a packet of toilet roll / new mattress is now accepted in your recycling bin.

Where will the soft plastic go after it has been collected?

After collection, soft plastics are brought to material recovery facilities (MRFs) in Ireland to separate the plastics into different polymers. If the plastic types are recyclable they will be sent to specialised, polymer specific recycling facilities. If they are not currently recyclable they will be sent as a Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF) to replace fossil fuels at Cement Kilns.

Do all bin companies and waste collectors accept soft plastic?

Yes, your chosen waste collector will be accepting soft plastics once they are placed in your recycling bin, clean and dry and loose.

Why are soft plastics now allowed to be placed in my recycling bin?

There are two reasons:

- Improvements to facilities along with
- Emergence of new markets

In Ireland we collect all recyclables in the same bin and the sorting of all these materials take place at a recycling facility.

Irish recycling plants are upgrading their mechanised sorting facilities to allow for more sorting of plastic. Until 2020 Irish recycling facilities could only process rigid plastics. Most plastics collected in Ireland are exported for recycling. Over the past year a number of new markets specifically handling soft plastics have emerged and Irish plastic can now be exported to these facilities for recycling. If it cannot currently be recycled it will be sent as Solid Recovered Fuel (SRF) to replace fossil fuels at cement kilns.



Soft plastic items CLEAN DRY AND LOOSE:

- Bread wrappers
- Fruit/veg and salad wraps and bags
- Kitchen/ toilet roll outer wrap
- Breakfast cereal bags
- Plastic shopping/carrier bags
- Dried fruit/seed and nut bags
- Frozen food bags
- Pasta/rice/noodle bags
- Cheese packs outer wrap
- Baked goods/Confectionary outer wrappers
- Crisp/cracker wrappers
- Bubble wrap
- Electrical item/white goods/appliances bags/wrap
- Mattress / pillow wrap
- Wet wipes outer wrap
- Detergent/dishwasher bags
- Garden compost / bark bags

Source: www.mywaste.ie Ireland's Guide to Managing Waste

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