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## **What's in Your Recycling Bin? New Regional Initiative Encourages Residents to "Start Smart, Recycle Right"**

(Hampton Roads, Va., Jan. 19, 2021) – Recycling is good for communities. It helps to reduce energy consumption, save natural resources and decrease waste—as long as the right items are placed in the bin. To help residents understand which products can be recycled in their localities, [askHRgreen.org](http://askHRgreen.org) is encouraging residents to “Start Smart, Recycle Right” in 2021 with the launch of a new public awareness initiative.

“Recycling is alive and well in Hampton Roads. But when you place a recyclable item in the bin that’s not clean or empty—or an item that’s not accepted—you may be contaminating the whole lot, causing it all to be sent to the landfill,” said Katie Cullipher, an askHRgreen.org team leader.

For this promotion, askHRgreen.org and the region’s 17 jurisdictions have come together to encourage residents in the 757 to start smart by choosing to purchase products that can be recycled when they are done with them, and to recycle right by only placing locally accepted items that are clean and dry in their recycling bins. A focal point of the campaign is a series of animated videos featured at <https://askhrgreen.org/start-smart/>. Taking viewers through the recycling journey, the videos outline what’s recyclable and what’s not, showing how non-recyclable items can compromise the recycling process.

“Starting smart can be as easy as buying eggs in a cardboard carton instead of a plastic one and avoiding single-use plastic products, such as plastic cutlery, straws and Styrofoam™ plates,” Cullipher said. “Then, only place items in your recycling container that are accepted by your community.”

### **What’s recyclable in the 757?**

So what’s recyclable in Hampton Roads? In short: only paper, plastic bottles and cans. Paper products and empty/flattened cardboard boxes, plastic bottles with a neck or spout and metal cans are accepted for recycling no matter where you live in the region. Then, it’s important to make sure the items are clean and dry. Clean and dry paper products are

accepted, but paper containers with greasy food residue (like pizza boxes and paper takeout containers) are not recyclable.

Although residents might want to recycle them, personal care products such as paper towels, napkins, tissues, wipes and sanitary supplies are on the do-not-recycle list. In addition, plastic clamshell or foam containers, plastic bags, light bulbs and plastic tubs (such as those containing butter, yogurt or sour cream) are not accepted in any local municipal recycling program at this time.

“Start Smart, Recycle Right” is all about getting back to the basics of recycling; you can’t go wrong with paper, plastic bottle and metal cans,” Cullipher said. “If we all tossed in only those three items, empty and clean, we’d all be doing it right. Everything else should be put in your trash container.”

To see a comprehensive list of which items are accepted for recycling in your community, check out the askHRgreen.org Recycling & Disposal Guide at [askHRgreen.org/recycling](https://askhrgreen.org/recycling). The site also features helpful disposal information about items you can drop off at convenience centers, as well as specialty curbside services offered by some localities, such as bulk waste pickup and yard waste composting.

For more information on all things green, visit [askHRgreen.org](https://askhrgreen.org).

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**What's your recycling superhero name?** Take our online quiz at <https://askhrgreen.org/start-smart/> to see how much you know about recycling in Hampton Roads.

**About askHRgreen.org** [askHRgreen.org](https://askhrgreen.org) is your go-to resource for all things green in Hampton Roads – from recycling tips and pointers for keeping local waterways clean to water-saving ideas and simple steps to make local living easy on the environment. Launched in 2011, the region-wide public awareness and education campaign is administered through the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and powered by the following members: The cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg; the counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, Southampton, Surry and York; the town of Smithfield; and HRSD. Like askHRgreen.org on [Facebook](#), follow on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), tune in to [YouTube](#) and catch the “Let’s Talk Green” [blog](#), written by a team of local experts.