

BEFORE READING THIS ARTICLE, PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

SELF ASSESSMENT:

Please look at the attached pictures, do they look familiar? Do you know what this sign and colour coded bins represent?



If you are unable to decode the message in the attached pictures, now is the ideal opportunity to be involved and learn more about waste management and recycling...

FACTS

- ✚ On average, around 16% of the money you spend on a product pays for the packaging, which ultimately ends up as rubbish?
- ✚ Do you know that up to 80% of an average car can be recycled?
- ✚ As much as 50% of the waste thrown in the dustbin could be used as compost?

BACKGROUND

Recycling of average suburban household in South Africa is still lagging behind if compared to other international countries. The infrastructure for collecting recyclable material isn't really in place yet. Households generally have to separate their rubbish and take the recyclables to a municipal drop-off centre or a buy-back centre because there's not much in the way of kerbside collection. There are also many people out there who would recycle if they knew how to.

How good is South Africa at recycling? The recovery rates for various materials are as follows:

- Cans: 67.5 percent

- Paper: 50 – 52 percent
- Glass: 21 – 30 percent
- Plastic: About 17 percent

Informal recyclers recover much of this material from dustbins and landfill sites. This is not ideal, firstly from the point of view of the health and safety of the recyclers. But also because the recyclable material is contaminated with other waste. First prize would be if households (and organisations) sorted their waste, so that “uncontaminated” recyclable material could be collected.

WHY YOU SHOULD RECYCLE

Firstly, the Earth’s resources are not infinite so we shouldn’t waste them. And, you know that sign that reads “Leave this place in the same condition as you’d like to find it”? Well, the same applies to the planet. More specifically, the government wants to reduce the amount of plastic, cans, paper and glass going to landfills by 70 percent in the next decade or so. To meet that target, households need to stop simply throwing away rubbish and start implementing the three Rs: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Reasons to recycle

WHAT CAN BE RECYCLED?

1. METAL

- Colddrink and beer cans
- Food tins, Metal lids of glass jars
- Aluminium foil and foil packaging
- Paint tins and aerosol cans (leave labels on them so recyclers can see whether they contain hazardous material).

2. GLASS

- Beverage bottles
- Food jars such as tomato sauce, jam and mayonnaise bottles

The following **CANNOT** be recycled

- Drinking glasses
- Light bulbs – ordinary and energy-saving compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) – and fluorescent tubes. NB CFLs and fluorescent tubes should not be thrown away with ordinary rubbish. They contain mercury, a toxin that can leach into the soil and groundwater if not disposed of properly. Take your old CFLs to the drop-off points at Pick n Pay and Woolworths stores where they will be disposed of safely. If you don’t have this option, place your old CFLs in a sealed plastic bag before you throw them in the bin.

3. PAPER

- White office paper
- Magazines and books (as long as nothing is laminated)
- Newspaper and Cardboard (boxes and cereal boxes).

The following **CANNOT** be recycled:

- Laminated or waxy paper
- Punch confetti, Carbon paper
- Stickers

4. PLASTICS

Plastics are made from oil, a non-renewable resource, and much of the plastic packaging we use every day is recyclable. Ice cream and milk containers, fabric softener bottles, plastic bags and even cling-wrap can all be recycled. The easiest way to determine whether a plastic product is recyclable is by looking for its recycling logo. There are seven plastic recycling logos and most plastic packaging is imprinted with one of them. The logos tell you what type of plastic a container is made of. Each type has to be recycled separately.

5. TETRAPAK

Fruit juice and milk containers look like they're made out of paper, but they are lined with aluminium foil and plastic so they must be recycled separately. Tetra Pak has opened its first small-scale recycling facility in Germiston, Gauteng, where its packaging is recycled into roof tiles, furniture and stationery.

6. BATTERIES

Disposable batteries are not recycled – this is apparently because the material recovery rate is too small to make recycling economically viable. But they should not be thrown away with ordinary household waste either, because they contain toxic chemicals that can leach into the soil and groundwater.

Rechargeable batteries, on the other hand, are recyclable. Add to this the fact that one rechargeable battery is the equivalent of up to 1,000 disposable batteries and you have a compelling argument to buy rechargeable batteries from now on!

7. OTHER

You **CANNOT** recycle

- Pyrex
- Ceramics (plates).

Pikitup garden sites with recycling facilities

- Ballyclare, corner William Nicol and Hobart streets, Bryanston Ext 7 (cans, tins and other scrap metal, glass, paper and cardboard, plastic)
- Bangalore, Bangalore Drive, Lenasia Ext 11 (glass)
- Bellona, Bellona Street, Mayfair West (glass, plastic)
- Bez Valley, 5th Avenue, Bez Valley (cans, tins and other scrap metal, glass, paper and cardboard, plastic)
- Cedar Road, Kyalami (cans, glass, paper, plastic)
- Club Street, Linksfield (cans, glass, paper, plastic)
- Dale Road, Kyalami (cans, glass, paper, plastic)
- East Road, Klipriviersberg (cans, glass, paper, plastic)
- Fairlands, Smith Street/5th Avenue, Fairlands (scrap metal, tins and cans, glass, paper and cardboard, plastic)
- Mapetla, Khama Road, Mapetla (cans, glass, paper, plastic)
- Mayfield Park, Cnr Impala and Vereeniging roads, Rietvlei (cans, glass, paper, plastic)
- Melrose, Melrose Road, Birdhaven (scrap metal, tins and cans, glass, paper and cardboard, plastic)
- Mondeor, Cnr Columbine Avenue and Royal Park Drive, Mondeor (cans, glass, paper, plastic)
- Norwood, Pine Street, Norwood (scrap metal, tins and cans, glass, paper and cardboard, plastic)
- Orlando, Sofasonte Circle, Orlando, Soweto (cans, glass, paper, plastic)
- Panorama, Jim Fouche Road, Weltevreden Park (scrap metal, glass, paper and cardboard, plastic)
- Protea North, Makhaya Avenue, Protea North, Soweto (cans, glass, paper, plastic)
- Robertsham, Cnr Harry Stree and Rifle Range Road, Robertsham (glass, paper and cardboard, plastic)
- Sophiatown, Johannes Street, Sophiatown (scrap metal and tins, glass, paper)
- Victory Park, Victory Road, Victory Park Estate (scrap metal, tins and cans, glass, paper and cardboard, plastic)
- Woodmead, Woodlands Drive, Woodmead Ext 15 (cans and scrap metal, glass, paper, plastic)