

Energy City Insights – Recycling 101 (January)

Elk River provides curbside recycling for all residential homes, allowing for commingled recycling of paper, plastic, cardboard and metal items. But what about other items that are recyclable but can't be put in your curbside recycling? What items should be put in the trash? It's hard to keep it all straight. *Energy City Insights* is here to help!

Plastic bags should never go in your recycling cart, not even if you use them to collect your recycling. Recyclables should be loose, clean and dry, or in brown paper bags (which are recyclable on their own). Plastic bags slow down the sorting process post pick-up because someone has to open the bags and dump out your items, not to mention the damage they do to sorting machines after becoming tangled in the mechanisms. Many local retailers offer plastic bag recycling free of charge in store.

Household battery recycling and disposal is another topic of confusion. Batteries of any type should never be placed in your curbside recycling. They are dangerous and can cause major issues in the recycling sorting facilities. Sherburne County no longer offers battery recycling at Elk River City Hall due to safety concerns, but there are other places you can recycle your household batteries. Sherburne County collects all batteries (lithium Ion, Ni-Cad, Alkaline, etc.) during their various [Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events](#), each year. Battery disposal is also available locally (for a fee) at [Lake State Recycling](#), and at the [Sherburne County's Household Hazardous Waste Facility](#) in Waite Park year-round.

A few other FAQs related to batteries and recycling:

- What about toys with small batteries? Try to remove them if possible.
- Should you recycle small button batteries? Yes absolutely.
- Is it safe to store batteries at home before recycling? Tape all battery terminal to ensure they don't link together and generate heat/fire.

More information can be found on [the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's](#) website about reducing toxicity at home.