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## Curbside Recycling

There seems to be a lot of trash talk these days, especially in the world of sports and in politics. But let's talk a different kind of trash, the kind that we leave out on the curb every week to be picked up and hauled away. According to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates, the average American will produce nearly six pounds of trash per day. The introduction of curbside recycling in recent years has helped reduce the amount of household trash going to the landfill by an estimated 1.5 pounds per person per day.

The argument for recycling is a compelling one for many reasons. Recycling helps protect the environment, saves energy, and extends the life of landfills. However, there are some hard facts about curbside recycling that everyone should be aware of.

First, the cost of recycling has increased substantially. A few short years ago there was no cost to residents to recycle; in fact, the city made money as most of our recycling materials were sold to China. Economic and political changes in China have closed the doors to their purchase of recycling materials, and the remaining few, small overseas markets cannot absorb the number of materials being produced. A contributing factor to the Chinese market closing was the improper preparation by consumers, or in other words, contaminated recycling.

In the budget year 2019, Murray City's cost to handle recycling materials increased from \$15 per ton to \$60 per ton, a whopping 300% increase! Our overall waste collection fees for the upcoming budget year are projected to increase by over 38%.

The Wasatch Front Waste & Recycling District recently conducted a survey of their customers and found that 70.5% of them would support a fee increase to maintain recycling services. It's important to note that for recycling to be effective in protecting the environment and extending the life of the landfills, it must be done properly.



Contaminated recycling ends up at the landfill and costs more because it must be hauled twice. The Trans-Jordan Landfill estimates that about 19% of recycling in Salt Lake County last year was rejected and sent to the landfill.

At this point, you may be asking “What can we do to improve recycling?” The answer is to become better educated and take the time to recycle properly. Do NOT recycle plastic bags, foam, or glass in the curbside containers. All plastic items such as bottles and containers must be free of food and liquids. Paper and cardboard must be clean and free of greasy residue.

According to Trans-Jordan, the Top 10 Contaminants of Recycling are:

- Plastic Bags
- Needles/Biohazardous Waste
- Wire, hose, cords, rope, & chains
- Propane Tanks
- Yard Waste/Wood
- Motor Oil Containers
- Electronics
- Food Waste
- Clothing/Shoes
- Mercury-Containing Objects

The cost of recycling is an investment in the future. If not done properly, we are wasting our money and our resources. To have a successful recycling program, every resident and business must follow the recommended guidelines. You don't want to meticulously prepare your recycling only to have your neighbor contaminate the load!

For more information on recycling, see <https://transjordan.org/recycle/> or <https://wasatchfrontwaste.org/recycling/>