

The beginning of the year is a time for reflection and resolutions. I am hoping that residents will take a moment to think about how they recycle. And for residents who don't recycle, I hope this is the year they give it a try. Although this may be redundant for some of you, I would like to highlight some fundamental information regarding recycling here in Belmont. Regardless of your current recycling habits, I challenge you and your family to improve your efforts by following the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle mantra.

Don't focus on recycling more. Focus on trashing less.

While this may seem like a crazy statement coming from a recycling coordinator, the goal is to minimize trash. It would be better for a family of four to put out one trash barrel with one bin of recycling materials rather than three trash barrels along with four bins of recyclables. Why? A family of four that produces only one barrel of trash is likely reducing and reusing. They reduce by shopping infrequently and looking for products that have less packaging. They reuse by donating unwanted clothing, books, and toys, reusing mugs, water bottles and bags, and renting or sharing items that are used less frequently. Learning how to reduce and reuse results in having less stuff to throw away. Following these sustainable habits leads to preserving our natural resources and saving the Town money on our disposal contract tipping fees with Wheelabrator.

Belmont is a dual stream community.

This means that Belmont residents need to separate paper and cardboard from plastic, tin, aluminum, and glass. This is accomplished by placing paper in paper bags or setting the paper flat in one bin and by putting plastic, glass, and aluminum containers in a different bin. For residents that have a lot of bulky recyclables, it might be more efficient to use a larger barrel. Remember barrels cannot be larger than 32 gallons and have to be labeled with 2 recycling stickers (available at DPW or Clerk's Office). Also, stacking containers over the rim of the recycling bin or barrel causes litter on windy days!

http://www.belmont-ma.gov/sites/belmontma/files/u346/dual_stream_reminder_5.pdf

Plastic grocery bags or plastic film should not be curbside. Recycle these bags at grocery stores and please don't use them to place recyclables in!

Plastic bags and film are recyclable, but not at the curb. Residents should not use them to hold recyclables either. The bags get caught in the machines where the recyclables are sorted and shut down production. Plastic grocery bags and other plastic film should be recycled at supermarkets. Look for the specific bins located by the front doors of the store. The types of plastic film that can be placed in these bins consist of plastic shopping bags, clean baggies and zip locks, dry-cleaning bags, bread and produce bags, packaging around paper towels, toilet paper and napkins, plastic around cases of single serving beverages, bubble wrap and newspaper sleeves.

<http://www.plasticfilmrecycling.org/s01/s01dropoff.html>

Cardboard!

Most of our calls at the DPW Office about recycling are regarding cardboard. I believe this is from the surge in online shopping. Remember when you shop online you are stuck with ALL of the packaging. Cardboard must be flattened and no larger than 3 feet x 3 feet. This regulation allows the cardboard to fit in the truck. There is no limit to how

much cardboard is put out curbside, but please be considerate and neatly stack for the recycling crew. Stacks can be no larger than 9 inches. **Please don't fold cardboard to fit dimensions.**

http://www.belmont-ma.gov/sites/belmontma/files/u346/belmont_now_recycles_cardboard_2015.pdf

For residents who recycle regularly, it is greatly appreciated! For residents who will give it a try, I hope this information will encourage you to make an effort that benefits everyone! Any questions or suggestions, please contact Mary Beth Calnan/Belmont Recycling Coordinator at mcalan@belmont-ma.gov or 617-993-2689.