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## Prosthetic limbs, dirty diapers: Here's what not to recycle, Des Moines

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(Photo: Register file photo)

Prosthetic limbs, shotgun shell, a boat propeller: These are just a few of the items pulled from Des Moines area recycling bins.

Some of the unique items that make their way to the Mid America Recycling center on Des Moines' east side are a result of "wishful" recycling, said Mick Barry, president of the company that processes recyclables for Des Moines and its suburbs.

Others, like the steady stream of soiled diapers, are likely due to laziness.

**More:** [Paper recycled by Des Moines residents was diverted to landfill due to lack of buyers \(/story/news/2018/12/02/des-moines-what-can-cant-recycled-paper-metro-waste-authority-mid-america-china-paper-trash/2148661002/\)](https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2018/12/02/des-moines-what-can-cant-recycled-paper-metro-waste-authority-mid-america-china-paper-trash/2148661002/)

Either way, Des Moines metro residents are putting too much garbage in their recycling bins and it's driving up the cost for customers, officials say.

Overall, about 6 percent of what's put in curbside recycling bins is considered non-recyclable contamination.

Barry has a simple piece of advice for people wondering if an item is recyclable.

[Fullscreen](#)

"When in doubt, throw it out," he said.

Here's a brief collection of the blatantly non-recyclable items Barry's staff has found at its processing plant.

### Photos: Inside Mid America Recycling where poor recycling habits are hurting...

- Bowling balls
- Golf clubs
- Bowling pins
- Softballs, baseballs
- Kiddie pools
- Lawn chairs
- Shovels
- Hoses
- Shovels
- Electric motors
- Church offering plates
- Holiday lights
- Bagels
- Home siding

Have you been recycling wrong? You can visit the city of Des Moines' [website \(https://www.dmgov.org/Departments/PublicWorks/Pages/Recycle.aspx?Tab=Accepted\)](https://www.dmgov.org/Departments/PublicWorks/Pages/Recycle.aspx?Tab=Accepted) and view Metro Waste Authority's [guide \(https://www.mwatoday.com/recycling-guide/\)](https://www.mwatoday.com/recycling-guide/) to make sure you're doing it right.