

These are NOT recycled!

The following packaging formats and materials are sent to landfill because they are either not recyclable or not currently recycled in practice and at scale in South Africa.



On-the-go food containers, sandwich clamshells and various fruit and vegetable packaging



The packaging of snacks such as chocolate and snack bars, chip packets, sweet wrappers, biscuit wrappers – these are all multilayer laminates, in other words, layers of different plastics and foils “glued” together



Paper-based ice-cream tubs, disposable coffee cups and the tubes crisps are sold in – these are usually multilayer laminates containing materials that are not recyclable



Packaging materials contaminated by food waste, like pizza boxes and sandwich containers



Aluminium foil or foil milk bottle tops



Pet-food bags for dry food



Plastic pouches for soups, sauces, olives and refill packs



Clingfilm (usually PVC, which is not recycled)



Yoghurt snap packs and their foil film lids



PET bottles and tubs with edible oil contents, like cooking oil and peanut butter



Baby bottles made of polycarbonate

Currently, most recycling centres only accept the following:

#1 Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic bottles, which can be turned into many new and useful products, like fibre-fill for duvets and pillows, fibre for geotextiles, carpeting and insulation, PET trays for fruit packaging, and even brand-new bottles.

#2 High-density polyethylene (HDPE), which is mostly used to make bottles, crates and drums for a wide range of chemicals or opaque film for packaging.

#4 Low-density polyethylene (LDPE) and linear low-density polyethylene

(LLDPE), which is a tough film used for plastic bags and general packaging and wrapping of consumer goods.

#5 Polypropylene (PP) includes stiff thin-walled packaging items and various kinds of film that are used for applications such as integral lid closures, containers like tablet vials and bottle caps.

The new standardised recycling instructions will inform consumers which packaging types and formats are currently recycled or not recycled in South Africa, with clear instructions on what to do with the recyclable parts after use. The idea is to guide

consumers' recycling behaviour and help us all recycle more material more often, while hopefully also boosting municipal and informal waste collection systems in the process.

Packaging labelled “Recycle” should be placed in a repository (a recycling bin or clear bag for household collection, or at a buy-back centre and so forth) so that it enters the recycling stream again – as these products are collected and recycled at national level. Everything labelled “Not recycled” will go to landfill – and it might come as a shock to find out what’s on that list. (Have a look at some examples above.) >