

When your green bin is collected by your Local Authority, (in either Herefordshire or Worcestershire) it makes its way to EnviroSort. EnviroSort is a Commingled Materials Reclamation Facility. Here, your recycling is sorted into the key material types such as glass bottles and jars; paper, card and cartons; steel tins, aluminium cans and aerosols; and plastic bottles, trays, tubs, punnets and pots. In this series of articles, we'll look at how these four material types are separated before they are baled and sent for reprocessing across the U.K.



Sorted and baled materials being loaded to be despatched to a reprocessor

Recycling started in Herefordshire and Worcestershire in the early 2000's when the first Commingled Materials Reclamation Facilities (CMRFs) were built. As wheelie bins were introduced across Herefordshire and Worcestershire, we moved to the commingled (mixed) green bin collection that we all know today. The EnviroSort CMRF at Norton, Worcestershire, was built in 2009 to process the commingled collections.

In this first article/section, we look at green bin contamination. EnviroSort separates over 75,000 tonnes of green bin recycling every year and 13% of that, that's around 10,000 tonnes, is contamination. These rejected items cannot be recycled.

Once the recycling arrives at EnviroSort and is loaded onto the conveyor belts, its first destination is pre-sort, before it is then separated into the different material types.

Pre-sort consists of two conveyor belts where operatives remove items by hand that have been incorrectly placed in the green bin. These items include general (black bin) waste, wood, food waste, garden waste, electrical items, textiles, clothing, shoes and nappies. These items cannot be sorted for recycling at EnviroSort and are rejected.

Food waste and garden waste are received daily. These items will contaminate the surrounding recycling and result in it all being rejected. For more information on preventing food waste please see <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lets-waste-less/foodsavvy>

Garden waste (if it cannot be composted at home or if you do not have a garden waste collection) can be taken to a Household Recycling Centre (HRC).

Wood cannot be recycled via a green bin collection, but can be taken to an HRC. Despite wood being the source material of paper, paper is a completely different product having been processed from wood.

Clothing and textiles are another major source of contamination and should **not be included** in any green bin collection. Besides being soft enough to cause blockages in the machinery, clothing also picks up shards of glass which would make it unrecyclable. EnviroSort receives over 200 items of clothing per week. Clothing and textiles, if clean and dry, can be donated to a charity shop or taken to the clothing bank at an HRC.

Nappies (and sanitary products) cannot be recycled from green bin collections as they are contaminated by organic matter and this will spoil other items in the green bin. They cannot be recycled, even if clean as they are still contaminated by other components such as the

absorbent gel padding and the “paper” isn’t paper, but plastic fabric. Whilst some companies have started to recycle nappies, this is still a specialised process and these companies only deal with this type of product. Around 8 million disposable nappies are thrown away each day in the U.K., that’s over 3 billion every year. For information on reusable nappies see: <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/lets-waste-less/reuse-and-repair/reusable-nappies> or <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/rubbish-recycling/reusable-nappies>

Other items incorrectly placed within green bins include electrical items* (please take to an HRC and place in the Small Appliances container), children’s toys*, (take to a charity shop if usable), ink cartridges* (return to the manufacturer or take to an HRC), loose shredded paper and shredded paper inside a plastic bag. Shredded paper* can only be recycled via a green bin if placed in an envelope, paper bag or cereal-type box, then flattened. (Reasons why items marked with an asterisk* cannot be recycled via a green bin collection will be covered within sections/articles on the different material types.)

Please place clean, dry and loose items into your green bin. Any bagged items (unless from an approved Local Authority bag collection) will be rejected due to Health and Safety as colleagues can’t tell what’s inside bagged items. Dirty items will contaminate other items in the green bin, such as baked beans left in a tin which could spill over other items inside.

Batteries shouldn’t be placed in black or green bins as they may cause fires. These can be recycled in either a supermarket battery collection or at an HRC.

If in doubt, leave it out! We’ve included a link to EnviroSort’s website which lists those items you can place in your green bin for collection:

<https://www.severnwaste.com/envirosort/what-can-i-recycle/>