

Understanding recycling symbols

We use a wide range of packaging for different products. For example, trays help to protect food from damage while it's being moved around. And flexible packaging is great at keeping food fresher for longer and preventing food waste. There are a lot of recycling symbols out there, depending on what the packaging is made of. This guide shows you what every recycling symbol means.

Since recycling facilities can vary between local authorities, it can be tricky knowing what you can or can't recycle in your area. Use this handy [recycling locator](#) to find out what you can recycle where.



Recycle

This symbol appears on packaging which is collected by 75% or more local authorities across the UK. Check the [recycling locator](#) to see if yours is one of them.



Don't recycle

This symbol means that the packaging can't currently be recycled. You should throw it away as part of your general bin collection.



Check home collections

This is used for packaging collected by 20–75% of local authorities. Use the [recycling locator](#) to check whether your local authority recycles it.



Recycle at coffee shop or recycling point

This symbol is used on single-use, single-side coated paper cups. You can recycle these across a network of [recycling collection points](#).



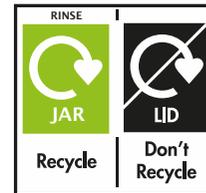
Recycle at recycling point – check home collections

This symbol means over 75% of councils don't collect the packaging for recycling, but you can take it to [recycling points](#) in your local area.



Multiple symbols

Some packaging is made with different materials that need to be recycled or disposed of separately. The first example would be on a bottle. It shows that the bottle should be recycled with the cap on, but the sleeve should be removed and put in your rubbish bin collection.



Example 2 highlights that the jar needs to be rinsed before being recycled and the lid, again, should be put in your rubbish bin.



Recycle with bags at large supermarkets – don't recycle at home

A lot of packaging can't be recycled at home. This symbol shows that the packaging can be recycled at large supermarkets.



Compostable logo

Compostable packaging can't be recycled, as it's designed to be broken down, not reused. Put the packaging in your compost bin or garden waste collection. If you have neither of these, throw it away in your general rubbish bin collection.



The Green Dot

Confusingly, this symbol doesn't necessarily mean the product is recyclable. It simply means that the product's manufacturer has made a financial contribution towards the recovery and recycling of packaging in Europe.



Recyclable aluminium

This shows that the product is made from recyclable aluminium. However, before trying to recycle it, use the [recycling locator](#) to check whether your local collection service takes foil.

Home composting

Instead of the seedling compostable logo, you may see this symbol to show that the product can be [composted at home](#) or put in your garden waste collection.



Hazardous symbol

Radioactive, biohazardous, flammable or toxic items with this symbol should never be recycled at home. Many recycling centres accept certain types of household hazardous waste. Check with your local council to [see what is accepted](#) in your area.



Forest Stewardship Council

This symbol shows that the product is made with wood that comes from well-managed, FSC-certified forests. It doesn't necessarily mean it's recyclable.



Waste electricals

This symbol relates to electrical items. It means that you shouldn't put them in with your rubbish bin collection. This includes everything from kettles and hairdryers to lawnmowers and phones. Check the [recycling locator](#) to find out where to recycle these items.



Glass recycling

Glass is recyclable in 99.9% of UK households. You can recycle glass containers with this symbol either at your local bottle bank or through your household recycling.



The Mobius Loop

This means the packaging is capable of being recycled. It doesn't mean that it has been recycled or will be accepted in all recycling collection systems. Sometimes this symbol has a percentage number in the middle. This explains that the packaging contains X% of recycled material.

Plastic resin code

A 'Resin Identification Code' shows the type of plastic resin used to make the item. It's represented by a number between 1 and 7 in the centre of a Mobius Loop. Use the [recycling locator](#) to find out which plastics are recycled in your area.



TerraCycle®

TerraCycle is a company that accepts hard-to-recycle materials. Any packaging with this symbol can be taken to the nearest TerraCycle collection point. TerraCycle products should not be put into your home recycling bins. Go to the [TerraCycle site](#) to find out more.



'Keep Britain Tidy' symbol

This isn't related to recycling. It just reminds you not to litter and to throw the packaging or item away properly.