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A Major Step Forward: Plastic To-Go Cups Are Now Widely Recyclable

Industry collaboration unlocks expansion in curbside recycling availability



More communities across the U.S. can now recycle hot and cold to-go cups in their curbside bins at home, thanks to years of industry collaboration and infrastructure investment.

Plastic cold beverage cups - the kind used by many retailers for to-go beverages, including Starbucks - have officially earned the **Widely Recyclable** designation from How2Recycle®, North America's most recognized on-pack recycling label. That means at least 60% of U.S. households now have access to recycling programs that accept these cups.

The cups are made from polypropylene (PP) plastic and carry the #5, making it easy for consumers to identify them and place them in their home recycling. The Widely Recyclable designation matters because it gives clear, consistent guidance and shows there's a solid infrastructure to recycle these cups and a strong demand for these materials.

While WM has been recycling polypropylene for more than a decade, what's new is WM's commitment to ensure that all its single-stream recycling facilities can accept, sort and market plastic cups. Years of WM investment - paired with advancements in optical sorting technology and stronger end-market demand - laid the foundation for this expansion. By mid-2026, every single-stream recycling facility will have this capability.

"Plastic to-go cups becoming recyclable curbside is a major milestone made possible by years of investment, innovation and collaboration," said Tara Hemmer, chief sustainability officer, WM. "As the largest recycler in North America, we're proud to help capture and recycle more of the everyday materials people rely on, and this achievement proves what's possible when communities, companies and industry leaders come together to make recycling more accessible."

WM appreciates the nearly 150 communities that have updated their recycling guidelines.

This milestone reflects years of work by WM, How2Recycle®, Starbucks, the NextGen Consortium (managed by Closed Loop Partners' Center for the Circular Economy), The Recycling Partnership and many others, along with municipalities and materials recovery partners focused on improving access, processing and consistency across the recycling system.

Learn More

Read Starbucks announcement about this industry milestone [here](#).

For local recycling guidelines, visit WM's [Recycle Right®](#).

<https://mediaroom.wm.com/A-Major-Step-Forward-Plastic-To-Go-Cups-Are-Now-Widely-Recyclable>