

FAQs About Our Recycling Center

Recycling & Sorting

In 1987, an old steel mill was recycled into one of the nation's earliest Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF). Located just one mile south of downtown Seattle, Republic Services has developed this MRF into a sophisticated recycling and transfer facility. A variety of waste and recycle streams flow through this eleven-acre site each day -- cardboard, newspaper, office waste paper, aluminum, yard-waste and residential and commercial recyclables. In addition, municipal solid waste (MSW) and construction, demolition and land clearing debris (CDL) are handled at the site. Recyclables arrive by large commercial trucks and smaller, private vehicles for processing. Over a million and a half pounds of material are sorted, cleaned and processed every day.

Over 2,000 feet of sort line move a river of recyclables through our 80,000 square foot building. Employees, magnets and specialized equipment capture paper, cardboard, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, glass and plastics from the sort line and prepare them for shipment to the recycling mills.

Our state-of-the-art sorting techniques start with an automatic disc-screening systems that sort the paper and cardboard off the sort line. Employees sort the plastics and magnets capture the tin cans and ferrous metals. An air separator sorts the non-ferrous materials like aluminum cans. This technologically advanced machinery sends the recyclables directly into 3 computer operated balers. A baler compacts the materials into densely compressed cubes and ties the material with metal wires. The balers make over 8,000 tons of bales each month.

The bales are put into shipping containers. Approximately 25 tons (50,000 lbs.) are put into each container. A semi-truck takes the containers to the recycling mills where the recyclable materials are made into new products. For example:

- Paper becomes new paper.
- Cardboard becomes new cardboard.
- Newspaper is made into fruit packing trays and new newspaper.
- Glass gets made into new glass bottles and jars.
- Aluminum cans are made into new aluminum cans.
- Tin cans are made into rebar for construction projects.
- Plastic bottles become new fleece clothing and carpeting.
- Plastic containers are made into shoe inserts, recycling containers, bins and buckets.
- Plastic bags are made into decking and building products.