

## When and Where to Shred

If you think the rules for what can and cannot go in your cart have been changing, you're right. We keep adapting to new types of packaging and to consumer habits. Manufacturers have huge advertising budgets to convince you to bring products into your home. Unfortunately we don't have the same resources to help you figure out how to get items out of your house. So it can get confusing when things change.

So here's my attempt to spread the news on the latest development in recycling. Know when and where to shred. Minnesotans have been shredding a lot more paper lately. Shredding is a great way to help protect against identity theft. When we got a small amount of shredded paper in closed paper bags we could handle it. But now people are putting shredded paper in plastic bags or even loose in the bin and that's causing lots of headaches at the sorting facility.



See that photo on the right? It's shredded paper at the sorting facility. When it gets loose like this it falls through the machinery on to the floor and becomes trash. Even if the paper was in a plastic bag it most likely won't be recycled either. The workers don't have time to open plastic bags and they are trained to throw plastic bags in the trash – even if they may be filled with recyclables.

So what do you do? First – shred only what needs to be shredded. Here's a [link to an infographic](#) from the Federal Trade Commission listing the types of things that should be shredded. If it's not on the list – don't shred it.

Second - bring items for shredding to a free public event such as the upcoming Police Department Open House or the Special Materials Drop Off Day – both in April. Paper from these events bypasses the sorting facility and goes directly to the paper mill.

### Electronics No Longer Free to Recycle

More changes. You may have seen the [article in the newspaper](#) that Best Buy is no longer taking TVs or monitors for recycling for free. Other items such as DVD players are still free to drop off. The electronics recycling industry is changing as items become smaller and lighter. So there are fewer places that recycle those old heavy tube TVs, even though there are still lots of sets in your basement or attic.

So what do you do? Check for options using Hennepin County's Green Disposal Guide <http://www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide> Also we'll take them at the Special Materials Drop Off Day for \$5, although that price may have to change too.