

Small Talk – Tales from Tim’s Recycling Bin

Here at the office, I found a bunch of paper from the copier’s hole punch in our recycling. I understand someone’s desire to keep useful things out the trash, but my co-worker didn’t realize that those tiny circles of paper are going to end up in the trash anyway.

That’s because things less than about the size of a credit card fall through the machinery at the sorting facility. They end up on the floor and are swept into the trash. Or worse they end up as a contaminant in the glass. Since glass bottles are heavy the sorting facility relies on gravity to sort them from plastic bottles. They fall down – small things fall down. They get mixed up. And that’s a mess up.

The top contaminant in glass is paper – mainly labels (which we can’t do much about) and shredded paper (which we can do something about). Shredded paper doesn’t go in your cart because it’s too small to capture. Shredded paper can be recycled if it’s done at a public event such as the Special Materials Drop-Off Day where it’s contained in the mobile shredding truck. Anything you shred at home should go in the trash.

But not all is lost on the small side. The caps on plastic bottles can be screwed back on before putting the bottle in the recycling. Plastic bottle manufacturers have a process to separate the two types of plastic. And they send the cap plastic to manufacturers who want that. Remember to empty the bottle before putting the cap back on though.

Until next time, let’s have some more small talk my friends.

