

Hard to Recycle Plastics

Last October 2021, you may have noticed a package in your mailbox labeled *Hefty-EnergyBag*, that included a bright orange trash bag inside. These bags are part of an initiative by the Hefty company to find a solution for "hard to recycle plastics." This family of plastics, numbers 4-7, includes items such as plastic dinnerware, foam food containers, and plastic packaging. The Hefty company has identified that these items are untapped resources that can be utilized instead of tossing them in the trash. Some of these uses include replacing coal for cement production and converting them into fuels like diesel through a process called pyrolysis. Other uses included grinding them into small pieces to make new plastic, including building products, construction material, and plastic lumber.

Although this program is new to Cherokee County as of August 2021, it has been around Georgia since 2018. Cobb County was the first in Georgia to participate in this program, but as of August 2021, the City of Atlanta, Cherokee County, Forsyth County, and Gwinnett County are also participating. Georgia is now one of three states nationwide that is participating. Nebraska and Idaho are the other two, and it is just in their metropolitan areas.

"How does this program work?" you may be asking yourself. An international company named Westrock Recycling Solutions has a receiving facility in Marietta that accepts the orange bags and separates them for processing. Getting these bags from your home to this location is where a communication breakdown has occurred. The website instructs the consumer to leave the bags out with your recycling, and your recycling/trash company will pick them up. Unfortunately, this is not the case in Cherokee county; some companies have temporarily discontinued their recycling collection, but they had not agreed to participate even before then. Residents can take their orange bags to the Cherokee County Recycling center at either 470 Blalock Road in Canton or Hobgood Park at 6688 Bells Ferry Road in Woodstock. These orange bags can be put in with the single-stream receptacles and then will be separated back out at the Westrock facility. Troy Brazie, manager of Cherokee County Recycling, gave a helpful tip about the orange bags for residents - "Put hard to recycle items in a good trash bag and then put that bag inside the orange ones." One typical complaint patrons to the recycling center have is that the bags tend to rip easily. There is no limit to the number of bags residents can bring to the center. However, if you are already separating your other recyclables, generating more than a couple of bags per month of these items is not common.

Currently, Kroger is the only retailer listed on Hefty's website as a place you can purchase these orange bags in person. Another option is to buy them online from www.target.com. Luckily Cherokee County has seven locations where you can buy them. To access this list, go to <https://www.hefty.com/products/hefty-energybag/energybag-communities/georgia/greater-atlanta-program>. The cost of 26 bags is \$9.99+ tax, which comes to about \$0.40 per bag.

According to the Hefty website, "The Hefty EnergyBag program is an easy addition to what you are already doing recycling-wise. You can feel good about helping make a difference in the amount of plastic that would otherwise end up in landfills and be a part of a community that cares about preserving our world for future generations. By participating, you are helping reduce dependence on fossil fuels and increasing the efficiency of your recycling facility."

Just to clarify, this program is not intended to replace the recycling you are currently doing. The intention is to supplement the efforts you are already making to protect our community. The CCWSA would like to encourage our customers to participate in this and any other green activities that help make our environment better for future generations.

Hefty ENERGY BAG PROGRAM

Check this list for the many hard-to-recycle plastics that can go in your Hefty® EnergyBag® orange bags. All items must be clean, dry and free of foil lining:



PLASTIC PACKAGING - NO FOIL LINING

- See-through chip bags
- Snack food bags
- Plastic pet food bags
- Fresh/frozen vegetable & fruit bags
- Salad bags
- Shredded cheese packages
- Cheese stick packages
- See-through granola & energy bar wrappers
- See-through candy wrappers
- See-through stand up pouches
- Pudding cups
- Yogurt tubs
- Butter/Margarine tubs
- Sour cream tubs
- Dry mix liners (cake, powder mixes)
- Cereal box liners
- Cookie/cracker box liners



PLASTIC BAGS & WRAPS*

- Plastic air pillow packs
- Plastic bubble wrap
- Plastic grocery bags
- Plastic food wrap
- Food storage bags



FOAM PRODUCTS

- Foam cups, plates & bowls
- Foam to-go boxes
- Foam packing peanuts
- Foam egg cartons
- Foam block packaging



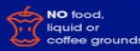
PLASTIC DINNERWARE

- Plastic straws and stirrers
- Plastic utensils
- Plastic colored cups
- Plastic plates and bowls
- Rigid plastic clear glasses



The following items ARE NOT accepted in the orange bags

NO



NO batteries or electronics

NO food, liquid or coffee grounds

NO cans, glass or plastic bottles

NO 1, 2, or 3 plastics

NO paper, cartons or boxes

NO medical products or hazardous waste

NO hoses, tubes or rope

NO foil or aluminum

*Please include plastic bags & wraps if store drop-off recycling programs are not available locally.