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Number 1 recycling code

We recently got new recycling bins at the Lifehacker office, and suddenly realized no one knew all the rules about recycling. Can you recycle plastic bags? Do you have to scrub out your containers? What about paper towels?Every major curbside recycling program takes clean paper and cardboard, metal cans, and plastic jugs and bottles. Beyond that, things get complicated. But some general rules apply.First, check your local requirements. Recycle by City has simple visual breakdowns for L.A., Chicago, Houston, Austin, Philadelphia, Flagstaff, Santa Monica, and West Hollywood. Otherwise find your city's sanitation department site. NYC and Phoenix have simple do/don't guides.Don't Recycle:Bubble-padded envelopesWax paperDirty napkins, tissues, toilet paper, or paper towelsGlass that's not a bottle or jarPhoto paper: Usually not recyclable, but it depends on the brand.Containers with a lot of food or liquid in them: Empty and rinse them, but don't stress over it; they're cleaned at the facility.G/O Media may get a commissionDo Recycle:Pizza boxes: Unless they're heavily soaked in oil and solid waste, these are fine. Just throw out the wax liner, and put the tiny plastic table in the plastics bin. When in doubt, rip off the greasy part and throw it out.Paper with clear windows or staplesRecycle Somewhere Else:Plastic bags: They get caught in the recycling machines, and workers have to shut them off and pull out the bags. Most cities only allow "rigid plastics." Instead, find a recycling center, store, or neighborhood program that accepts them. (There are exceptions! L.A. allows clean bags and other soft plastics.Clothing and textiles: Look up drop-off options.Motor oil: Your city might require you to put it on the curb separately from all other trash.Batteries and electronics: Take them to a donation center or a store like Best Buy. If you throw out your batteries, at least tape down the terminals to reduce the risk of fire.Appliances: Best Buy accepts many of these too.Batteries with both terminals on the same side, like a 9V or a 12V battery, aren't too common, but... Read moreCheck Your Local Rules:Including rules from the five biggest U.S. cities as examples.Glass: Houston only takes glass at drop-off centers.Plastics: NYC and L.A. allow all rigid plastics; Chicago only allows bottles. Houston has more complicated rules.Metals: LA takes household metal; Chicago and Houston don't. NYC, L.A., and Chicago take aluminum foil; Houston and Phoenix don't address it online.Paper: No dark paper in Houston.Paper cups, If they're clean and empty, are allowed in NYC, but not L.A., Houston, or Chicago.Hardcover books: Fine in L.A., but not NYC, Chicago, or Houston. Phoenix doesn't even take paperbacks.Styrofoam: LA takes it; Chicago, Houston, and NYC don't.Shredded paper: In Chicago and Houston, you'll need to find a drop-off center.Milk cartons: In NYC, these go with other containers, not paper.Trash bags: NYC takes container recycling in trash bags; Chicago doesn't.Separation: L.A., Houston, Phoenix, and Chicago take all residential recycling in one bin. NYC separates paper from other recyclables.Commercial recycling: This is often handled differently than residential recycling, so it might come with its own rules. Ask your office manager or building manager. Since your recyclables will eventually be sold to manufacturers, they must meet certain standards. They can't have too many impurities, since recycled materials compete with virgin materials for use in manufacturing. So the cleaner the materials you return, the more likely it is they will be recycled.The Minnesota Recycling Program says this means that a pizza box covered in grease and cheese you toss in your recycling bin will end up in a landfill. So, too, will tiny pieces of broken glass, especially when the pieces are different colors (called mixed-glass cullet). And many recycling programs won't take some products that are very difficult to recycle. Chief among them is PVC. This kind of plastic (which can be identified by the 3 inside the recycling symbol these products bear) contains too many additives to be recycled in most cases, since these additives can affect the purity of a batch of recycled plastic.The remnants of the materials that can't be recycled is called residual. The less residual a recycling plant allows, the more money it makes, since residual is simply thrown away at a cost to the recycling outfit.Because of its unparalleled economic growth, China has become the world's largest importer of recycled raw materials. Many of the used items you put on your curb make their way to China: in 2004, China imported \$3.1 billion worth of the United States' scrap materials [source: USC]. But not everything that ends up in China can be used.Because China began buying old printer cartridges in the early 21st century, the cartridges went suddenly from trash to treasure. As a result, stores began accepting used cartridges and consumers began bringing them in.But the most valuable part of the ink cartridge, it turns out, is the ink. After removing the last little drops from cartridges, the ink can be repackaged and sold. The cartridges are simply discarded, causing landfills in China to fill with empty plastic printer cartridges. What's worse, an investigation found that in Guiyu, China, dumping or burning of these cartridges resulted in the local drinking supply becoming tainted with 200 times the acceptable levels of acid and 2,400 times the acceptable levels of lead [source: International ITC].There have been plenty of other cases of recycling fraud that have come to light since the recycling movement began. In New Hampshire in 2002, a man was charged with fraud after his fluorescent light bulb recycling firm was found to lack the capability to actually recycle the bulbs. The firm had charged school districts and agencies in several states to accept their light bulbs for recycling. Fluorescent light bulbs contain mercury -- a toxic substance -- but rather than recycle the bulbs, the company stored them in abandoned buildings around the state [source: EPA].And in Illinois, a company that specialized in recycling toxic waste was found to have illegally stored plenty of it in abandoned buildings in poor areas of Chicago. What's more, the company actually marked some toxic waste as harmless and sent it to landfills where it was dumped [source: National Post].But despite stories like this and criticisms of recycling -- that it may actually be environmentally harmful or that it's financially unsound -- Americans appear to prefer sending their waste off to recycling plants than to dumps or to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.For more information on recycling and other related topics, visit the next page. On most plastic, you'll find a number, from one to seven. That number is a resin identification code used to help recycling centers sort materials and tell them how the piece should be processed. Here's a look at what to do with each type of plastic.Plastic is everywhere, from food and beverage packaging to electronics, toys and home improvement materials.Recycle number meaningOn most plastic, you'll find a number, from one to seven. That number is a resin identification code used to help recycling centers sort materials and tell them how the piece should be processed. There are also a number of items that can be recycled that you might not have known about.Plastic 1This type of plastic is used to for popular pantry items such as peanut butter, soda, water and salad dressing. It is the most frequently recycled plastic.Plastic 2Plastic number 2 is used for milk jugs, butter tubs and laundry detergent bottles, and it is recyclable.Plastic 3Plastic number 3, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), is well-known for its use in plumbing pipes and fittings, but it is also used in plastic food wrap, some pet and children's toys and some cooking oil bottles.Products made with PVC are rarely recyclable due to a lack of market for recycled PVC. Check with your recycling collection company to see if they accept PVC.Plastic 4Known as low-density polyethylene (LDPE), plastic 4 is found in many condiment bottles, along with toys. It's also used in plastic bags used for dry cleaning, bread and produce bags.This type of plastic isn't always recycled through curbside programs, so check first before tossing it in the bin because they don't take everything.Plastic 5Plastic number 5 is commonly used for syrup bottles, medicine bottles and containers, straws and bottle caps.Most curbside recycling programs accept this type of plastic.Plastic 6You'll find plastic number 6 in items such as packaging peanuts and CD cases. It's also used in some take-out food containers (Styrofoam), disposable cutlery and plates and egg cartons.Check with your recycling program before tossing this plastic in your curbside bin--only some programs accept them. Don't toss any electronics in unless you know more about your city's program for accepting that kind of waste.Plastic 7Plastic number 7 is basically a miscellaneous category. Items such as those bags you can use to bake turkeys and those big water cooler bottles used in offices are plastic 7.While in the past, many recycling programs didn't take plastic number 7, some now accept it.The EPA suggests checking with your local recycling guidelines on all these plastics as not every city accepts all kinds. There are also resources that recycle a number of items that might surprise you. While it might not always seem like it, your local auto parts store is a pretty amazing place. Just think about it: You can walk in, tell them your vehicle's make and model, and walk out with parts that fit. That works quite well, in most cases, but there are times when even the wizards down at the corner store can't figure out which part fits your car. In these cases, you'll need to track down your car's VIN, or vehicle identification number. This 17-digit code contains all sorts of information about your vehicle, from when and where it was made to what kind of engine is under the hood. Unlock its secrets and you'll be in command of your auto parts experience. Finding the VIN should be easy, but over time they can be damaged, lost, or become dirty, which makes them much harder to read. Don't panic, though, because there are other ways to find the number and put it to work for you. The Drive's crack team of researchers has the scoop. Let's dive in. Vin Number Basics Estimated Time Needed: Five minutes. Skill Level: Beginner Vehicle System: Documentation What Is a VIN Number? The vehicle identification number, or VIN, is a series of letters and numbers that are unique to your vehicle, much like a fingerprint. Since 1981, VINs have been 17 digits long. Before then, they could be anywhere from 11 to 17 digits long, which can complicate modern tools' ability to track down a vehicle history report. The VIN is usually found in a few spots on a vehicle. The driver's side dash, where it meets the windshield, is the easiest place to find it. There will likely also be a VIN stamped inside the driver's side door jamb. The 17-number VIN isn't just a jumble of numbers and letters. Its digits tell us quite a bit about where a vehicle was made and its origins: The first character designates where a vehicle was built The second and third characters designate the manufacturer The fourth through eighth characters designate the brand, engine size, and type The ninth character is a security code that lets us know that the VIN was authorized by the manufacturer The tenth character designates the car's model year The 11th character indicates which plant manufactured the vehicle The last six characters are the vehicle's serial number Everything You'll Need To Check Engine Size By Vin Number You won't need much for this job. At most, we'd recommend having a flashlight handy and a magnifying glass if you typically have trouble reading small text. The biggest inconvenience here is that the VIN plates, which are usually small pieces of metal, can become dirty or damaged, making it hard to read. Here's what you'll need. Tool List Flashlight Magnifying glass Here's How To Check Engine Size By Vin Number Finding and reading your vehicle's VIN isn't hard, but it can be complicated by dirt or damage to the metal plates where the numbers are printed. Let's do this! Find Your Vehicle's VIN Check the lower driver's side portion of your windshield. Most vehicles have a VIN plate located in a small area in the dash. This should be visible to the naked eye, but you may need a flashlight or a magnifying glass if the plate is dirty, or if it's dark out. If you can't read the VIN plate on the dash, your next best bet is to check the driver's door jamb. This is the area between the inside and the outside of your car that is typically covered by the door when it's shut. Here, you will find another VIN plate, as well as a white and yellow label that tells you the vehicle's optimal cold tire pressure. If both of those options are not available to you, either because the VIN plates are damaged or dirty, your next best bet is to check your documents. Your title, registration, and even your insurance cards have the VIN listed. Now that you understand what your VIN is trying to tell you, you can march into your local auto parts store to get the right parts. To do this without looking foolish, you'll need the eighth character, which is the actual engine code and the tenth character, which is the model year. Give these to your parts person and they'll be able to find what you need in no time. Pro Tips to Check Engine Size By Vin Number You may have eagle eyes, but even the best Waldo-finder in the world sometimes has trouble reading VIN plates. Don't hesitate to use a flashlight or magnifying glass to read the plate. VIN numbers aren't really private like your social security number, but you should keep track of it anyway. Don't leave important information or documents lying around. Don't get caught up in trying to decipher every digit of your VIN. Just keep in mind that it can be helpful to find the exact part you need. FAQs About Checking Engine Size By Vin Number You've got questions. The Drive has answers! Q. My Car Doesn't Have A VIN. What Do I Do? A. Don't be silly. Your car has a VIN. It might not be visible to you, but it's there. If you can't find it on your vehicle, check your documents. If you don't, for some reason, have them, do you even own the car? In all seriousness, though, if your VIN is mangled or not visible, some states won't pass your car for inspection. Be sure you have documentation to go with it. Q. Ok, I Found It. What Else Can I Do With My VIN? A: Well, it's not going to make all of your problems go away, but your VIN can be used to order parts for your specific vehicle and can also help you track down a vehicle history report. Q. Can I Change My VIN? A: It's probably possible to physically remove one number and add another, but the VIN that came with your vehicle is there to stay. Literally, everything that registers the car legally with the government revolves around that number. Let's Talk. Comment Below To Talk With The Drive's Editors! We're here to be expert guides in everything How-To related. Use us, compliment us, yell at us. Comment below and let's talk! You can also shout at us on Twitter or Instagram, here are our profiles. 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