

## Questions about Aluminum Can Recycling

### What are the best places to collect used aluminum beverage cans for recycling?

Look for cans where people consume beverages — apartments, stadiums, swimming pools, restaurants, schools, bowling alleys, parks, playgrounds, cafeterias and college campuses. Cans are also found near offices, construction sites and wherever vending machines are located. You can also establish collection routes in your neighborhood or with local merchants and restaurants. Ask merchants to place a box or bag near snack bars or vending machines with a sign reading “Please Recycle Your Aluminum Cans Here” and include your group’s name, your goal and a contact name and telephone number.

### Where do I sell my aluminum cans?

To find a buy-back center or scrap dealer in your area, go to [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org). Type in aluminum cans for what you want to recycle and your zip code. The site will provide you a list of buy-back centers and scarp dealers, convenient to your zip code, who are interested in purchasing your cans.

### How should I store my cans before taking them to a recycling center?

Make sure your cans are clean and dry. Most recycling centers will deduct ten percent from the purchase price for dirty or wet containers. Many recyclers store their collections in plastic bags. Crushing cans by stepping on them will help you save storage space. Also, remember to keep the pull-tabs on your cans because they weigh more and help you earn more. Can tabs are no different to a recycler than the rest of the can—it’s all the same aluminum. Keep your collection in a secure place — indoors, if possible. Used cans are valuable. Don’t transport loose cans in a vehicle open to wind and weather.

### How can I tell if my beverage can is aluminum?

Virtually all of today’s canned beverages are aluminum. However, if you are not sure, place a magnet on the side of the can. Remember, a magnet will not stick to aluminum.

### I’ve heard that I can save my ring pull tabs from beverage cans to help needy youngsters get treatment time on kidney dialysis machines or to purchase guide dogs for blind persons. What’s the story?

Unfortunately, these stories are false. According to the National Kidney Foundation, no such programs have ever existed, although rumors to the contrary have persisted for many years. The needy are not turned away from dialysis. If you would like to collect cans and donate the recycling proceeds to the National Kidney Foundation, the funds will be used to research a cure.

### What if some of my cans are steel, instead of aluminum?

At your recycling center, your cans will be run through a magnetic sorter. You will be paid only for aluminum cans. Virtually all beverage cans are aluminum. However, most food cans are made from steel.



## Questions about Aluminum Can Recycling (continued)

### Where can I get recycling bins or plastic bags?

Contact your city or state's recycling association (link <http://www.cancentral.com/linkDetails.cfm?cat=stateRec&db=no>). Alcoa Inc. has a program where it supplies bins for distribution to state recycling associations with 50,000 bins distributed in 2010. The Aluminum Association provides recycling bins or plastic bag liners to schools or community groups that enroll in its Cans for Causes Program (<http://www.aluminum.org/Content/NavigationMenu/NewsStatistics/CANSforCAUSES/default.htm>). The Coca-Cola Company/Keep America Beautiful (KAB) Bin Grant Program is an opportunity to obtain recycling bins to be used in conjunction with education, sports, culture, and commercial venues. Grants are usually open in the Spring and Fall. To learn more, please go to <http://bingrant.org/home.htm>. Clear 39-55 gallon drum liners can be found at warehouse clubs. Check with the store manager to see if the retailer can assist in a donation or reduction in cost, if you are a non-profit group. Many clubs want to help with local community endeavors that benefit the environment and sometimes are willing to donate their used aluminum cans and/or provide staff who may be interested in volunteering.

### What happens at the recycling center?

At most locations, you may drive directly to the equipment that will process your cans. After you give your used cans to the operator, you can watch him/her place them onto a conveyor system. Stray steel cans or other debris are discarded. The aluminum cans are weighed on a scale and you are paid on the spot. In most cases, your cans are compacted into tight bales called "biscuits" or shredded and then automatically blown by a high pressure air stream into a 40-foot storage trailer.

### Aren't there any charitable groups to whom I could donate my cans?

Absolutely! For instance, Boy and Girl Scout troops have been recycling cans since 1970, when can recycling began nationally. Americans of all ages have recycled cans to buy zoo animals in Dallas, to send handicapped children to summer camp in Wisconsin, to help restore the Statue of Liberty and to help train American athletes for the Olympic games. In a number of cities, fire fighters accept donated cans at firehouses and use the proceeds from recycled cans to fund programs. If your school or organization is entered in one of the GACR contests, please see official rules to make sure the cans you collect and donate are able to be verified for contest eligibility.

