



Waste Sorting Guidelines

New rules and reminders for correct waste sorting at WashU



Sustainability

Washington University in St. Louis



The Problem

Since January 2016:

- Approximately 52% of our recycling loads have been rejected
- Loss of over \$20,000 due to contaminated loads
- 40% of compost totes sent to the landfill due to contamination

Just how bad is it?



RecycleMania:

2015: Diversion rate = 45%.

2016: Diversion rate = 34%.

"Per Capita Classic",

WashU went from ranking 9 out of 232 in 2015 to 110 out of 208 in 2016.

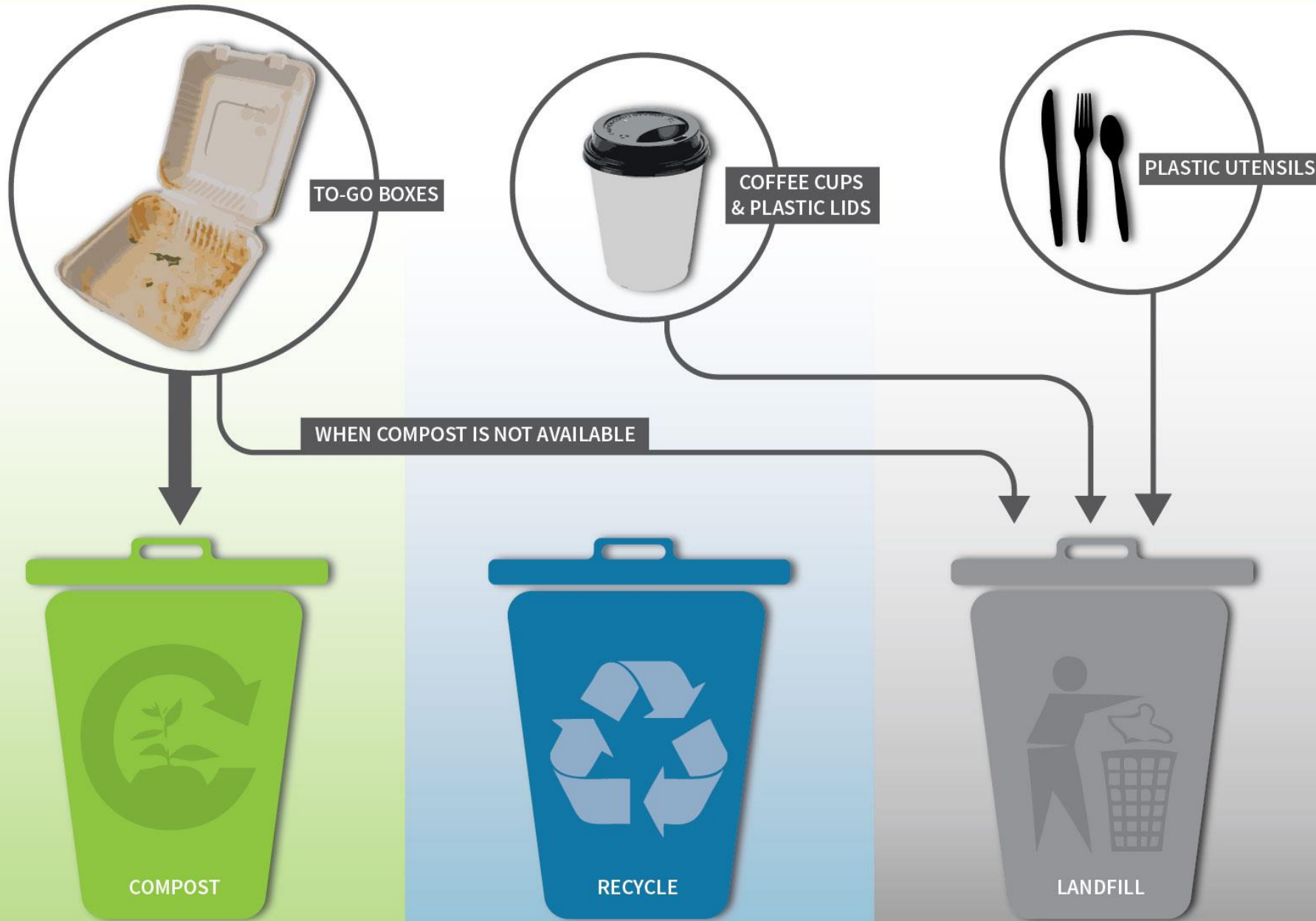
A decorative background featuring a stylized, light blue leaf pattern on the left side, set against a solid dark blue background.

The good news:

This problem is easily addressed by spreading the word and encouraging individuals to carefully think about sorting their waste.

NEW WASTE SORTING GUIDELINES

ALWAYS EMPTY FOODS AND LIQUIDS BEFORE RECYCLING CONTAINERS



Common Contamination Culprits

- Food and liquids
- Paper to-go containers
- Coffee cups and plastic lids
- Paper cups
- Utensils

Look out for these items – keep them out of the recycling!

RECYCLING

RECYCLE



METAL & GLASS



PLASTICS
NO #6 OR BAGS



PAPER, CARTONS
& CARDBOARD



NO
FOOD/LIQUIDS
TO-GO BOXES
PAPER CUPS

FOOD CONTAMINATES RECYCLING

- **NO FOOD, LIQUIDS or ICE**
- No food-soiled containers, including paper to-go boxes and pizza boxes
- No paper cups or to-go bowls
- No coffee lids or cups
- No #6 plastics or plastic bags (they can't be recycled at our facility)

COMPOST

COMPOST



FOOD & LIQUIDS



COMPOSTABLE
SERVICEWARE



BROWN, UNCOATED
PAPER PRODUCTS

SORT AND EMPTY TO-GO BOXES

When composting is available:

- Food and liquids
- Brown paper products
- Napkins
- Paper to-go boxes (make sure no plastic or other materials is left inside, unsorted)

LANDFILL

LANDFILL



FOOD/LIQUIDS
TO-GO BOXES



PLASTIC UTENSILS



PLASTIC #6
PAPER CUPS
STYROFOAM



SNACK WRAPPERS
SOFT PLASTICS & BAGS

QUESTIONS? [SUSTAINABILITY.WUSTL.EDU](https://sustainability.wustl.edu)

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When composting IS available →

← When composting IS NOT available

LANDFILL



PLASTIC #6
PAPER CUPS
STYROFOAM



PLASTIC UTENSILS



SNACK WRAPPERS
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Reuse first!

When possible, use dine-in or reusable plates and plates and cutlery to avoid disposables, avoid avoid waste, and avoid potential sorting issues:

- Plates and silverware
- Coffee Mug
- Water Bottle
- Eco to-go boxes



Peer to Peer Education



- Spread the word!
- Attend a Recycling Genius Training!
- Volunteer as a Recycling Genius
- Print and post signage for your office and/or work space:
<https://sustainability.wustl.edu/new-waste-sorting-signs-available/>

RECYCLE

WASTE SORTING GUIDE : 3-STREAM

◀ METAL & GLASS



◀ PLASTICS
NO #6 OR BAGS



◀ PAPER, CARTONS
& CARDBOARD



◀ NO
FOOD/LIQUIDS
TO-GO BOXES
PAPER CUPS



FOOD CONTAMINATES RECYCLING

Sustainability
WUSTL

COMPOST SORT AND EMPTY TO-GO BOXES

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Additional Resources

- FAQs:

<https://sustainability.wustl.edu/get-involved/recycling-composting/recycling-guide/>

- Receive updates – sign up for monthly sustainability newsletters

Visit sustainability.wustl.edu

- Reach out if you have recycling questions:

sustainability@wustl.edu