

## Celebrate America Recycles Day by recycling your Big Durable #2 Plastics

Nestled in between Election Day and Thanksgiving is another holiday celebrated every year on November 15<sup>th</sup>. That day is not only the birthday of the City and County of Broomfield, but it is also America Recycles Day, celebrated in communities across America. In Broomfield and Boulder counties, America Recycles Day is honored with the addition of one new material to the list of items accepted at the Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder CHaRM (Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials).

The CHaRM works to develop new markets for unusual materials such as electronics, books, plastic bags and more. This year, starting on America Recycles Day, the CHaRM will add Big Durable #2 Plastics to the list of hard-to-recycle materials it already accepts.

What in the heck does that mean? Big Durable #2 Plastic is the most descriptive term we could think of that covers the diverse group of durable goods made out of high-density polyethylene (HDPE, or #2). Unfortunately many of these plastics don't always have the #2 stamped inside the familiar chasing arrows symbol to reference for verification. So this is where we need your help to read these descriptions carefully before taking over your materials.

### **Your plastic item qualifies if it meets ALL of the following conditions:**

**Opaque** – You can't see through durable #2 plastics.

**Matte finish** – It has a matte finish like a Big Wheel rather than a glossy finish like a CD jewel case.

**Durable** – This plastic is built to last, so it is quite durable and bending it does not cause it to crack.

**Large size with a simple design** – They are usually one large plastic piece made in a plastic mold.

**Has a seam** – You can often find a raised seam dividing the item in half, evidence of the two halves of the mold that were used to form the item.

**Hollow** – Durable #2 plastic is hollow, not solid, on the inside. Its outside is typically no more than 1/8" thick.

**Examples of items that CAN be recycled in this category are:** plastic lawn toys like a slide, plastic lawn furniture, Big Wheels, plastic watering cans with a #2, laundry baskets, #2 plastic buckets, crates, rigid backyard kiddie pools and plastic trash containers. Please remove non-plastic parts; small amounts of metal such as bucket handles or Big Wheel axles are okay, but if you can easily remove any part that clearly is not #2 plastic from the item you want to recycle, you will help us to assure that we'll have a viable market for the long term.

**Some examples of items that would NOT be in this category are:** CD jewel cases, small plastic toys and action figures, flower pots, chaise lounge chairs with a metal frame and plastic webbing, inflatable wading pools, inflatable pool toys or water beds. One-time use #2 plastics, such as motor oil bottles, do not go in this category. Plastic toys with many parts and materials other than plastic also do not qualify.

The #2 Big Durable Plastics we'll accept will be made into long-lasting plastic railroad ties, used in place of virgin hardwood lumber railroad ties injected with creosote. Hardwood lumber, of course, takes a very long time to renew, and creosote contains several toxic and carcinogenic chemicals, which can leach into the environment through contact with soil or water.

Remember, these items will be accepted ONLY at the CHaRM. For a full list of everything accepted at the CHaRM, a map to the facility, hours, and the price list for some of the materials accepted, visit [www.ecocycle.org](http://www.ecocycle.org) or call 303-444-6634. There will be no charge to recycle these plastics.

We're proud of this one-of-a-kind facility and its mission of adding at least one new material each year in celebration of America Recycles Day. We're also proud of our careful recyclers who make it work. Let's make every day a recycling day Broomfield!

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