

Keep your tops on!

What do you do with lids, tops and caps? If you find yourself asking “Are they recyclable?”, “Which bin do they go in?” and “Am I doing it right?” then read on.

These common questions now have a simple answer – YES! They are all recyclable! Simply give the bottle or jar a rinse, squash plastic bottles, put the top back on and recycle as you normally would – even if it’s a metal lid on a glass jar.

Many people still remember the early days of recycling when plastic lids caused a problem due to being a different kind of plastic or being heavily dyed. Thankfully, technology has improved over the years and we no longer have this problem. Hurrah!

In fact, the recycling industry preference is now for lids to remain attached to bottles and jars. Lids and caps are small and light, so attaching them to larger items keeps them contained during the collection and sorting process and prevents them from jamming machinery. It also helps keep plastic bottles squashed, so reduces volume and creates more space in your recycling bin, bag or box and on the recycling collection vehicle. All in all, keeping your top on gets a big thumbs up all round and helps maintain Devon’s 55.7% recycling rate.

So, what happens to plastic bottles with lids?

Plastics are shredded, cleaned and passed through a Sink-Float tank which separates different types of plastic by density. HDPE plastic, such as lids and caps, will float whereas PET plastic, such as bottles, will sink. So simple, but very effective! The different plastics are then sold on to manufacturers who turn the plastic shreds into new products, such as garden furniture, fencing, polyester clothing and even new bottles.

And glass jars?

Similarly to plastic, glass is crushed and cleaned before it passes through a process to remove any plastic or metal lids and collars. Plastic and metal is recycled into new products and glass is recycled into new bottles and jars.

All local councils in Devon will collect your plastic bottles in your usual household recycling service.

For more information visit recycledevon.org.uk