

just the facts

Glass



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WHAT IS IT?

Glass is made out of silica sand, soda ash and limestone, and has many diverse uses. It can be shaped into containers to protect food and beverages, or it can be made into fibreglass or windows. It is transparent, inert and non-toxic. Glass comes in four colours: flint (clear), amber (brown), green and light blue. Glass is 100% recyclable and can be recycled many times without changing its composition or quality.

WHERE CAN YOU RECYCLE GLASS PRODUCTS?

Different types of glass are recycled through different programs. Glass beverage containers are recycled when returned for deposit refund. Other glass containers (e.g., jars) are accepted in municipal recycling programs. Plate glass can be replaced and recycled by the manufacturer. Be sure to carefully read signs at your local depot to ensure you are recycling acceptable glass.

QUICK FACTS

1 recycled glass container saves enough energy to keep a 100 watt lightbulb turned on for four hours.

In 1998, 32% of a glass container was post-consumer recycled glass. The technology exists to use up to 85% recycled glass!

Since 1980 the average weight of a glass container has been reduced by 10%.

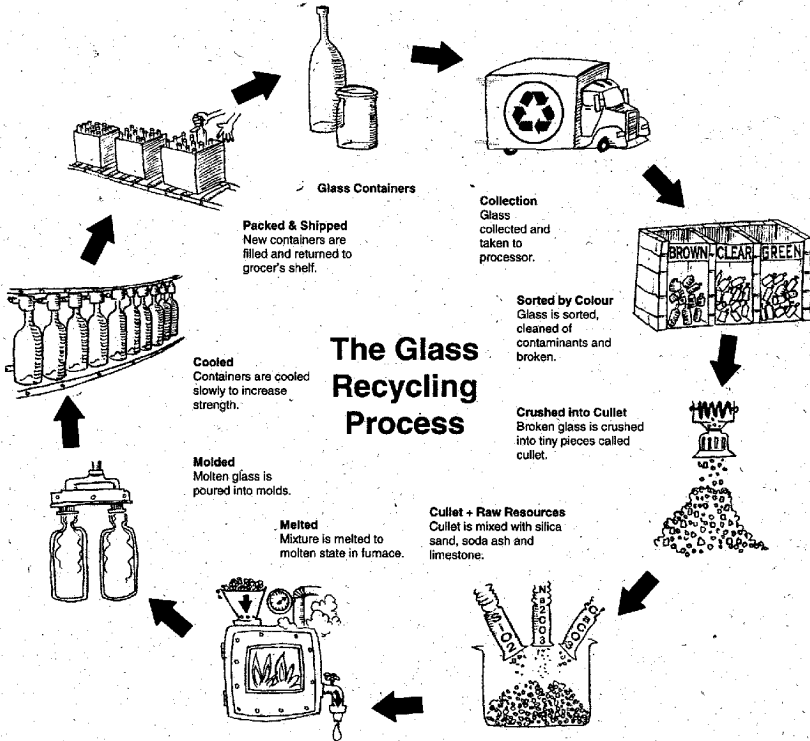
1 million years is the length of time glass takes to break down by natural processes.

8 - 12 weeks is how long it takes for a glass container to be recycled and back on the store shelf.

82% of glass containers consumed in Canada in 1996 were reused or recycled.

1 coffee mug in a truckload of glass is enough contamination to cause the load to be rejected from recycling.

1 beer bottle is refilled an average of 15 times.



just the facts

WHAT ARE THE MARKETS?

The main markets for cullet are manufacturers of recycled glass containers. Most of the glass that is recycled is turned into new bottles or jars.



WHAT GLASS CAN BE RECYCLED?

Different types of glass can be recycled, but only container glass can be turned into furnace-ready cullet – and only container glass is accepted in municipal curbside recycling programs. All types of glass have different chemical make-ups that alter their capability to be recycled. The success of glass recycling depends on good quality glass coming back for processing – free from contamination.

WHERE DO WE FIND GLASS CONTAINERS?

Glass containers are used for all types of food and beverages. When it is shaped into jars or bottles it will keep food preserved. Different colours of glass have different qualities. For example, brown glass absorbs ultraviolet rays and thus protects pharmaceutical products and extends the life of beer.

WHAT CONTAMINATES GLASS?

Contamination alters the chemistry of the glass recycling process. Even the smallest amount of contamination will weaken the final product. Contaminants include:

- ceramics (dinner plates, coffee mugs)
- window glass
- plastic, tin, aluminum lids/tabs
- pyrex glass
- wired glass
- crystal
- mirrors
- light bulbs or tubes
- drinking glasses

WHERE IS GLASS PROCESSED?

Glass is collected from municipal recycling programs (blue boxes and depots), bottle return centres and liquor stores. Containers are taken to a glass processor to be turned into furnace-ready cullet. Cullet is sold from the processor to the manufacturer. The manufacturer mixes cullet with raw resources and creates new glass containers to be sold as packaging.

ETL Recycling Services Inc., are glass processors in Delta, B.C. Consumers Glass operates a manufacturing plant in Lavington, B.C.

There are smaller manufacturers who can recycle other types of glass. Sterling Glass Foundry in Victoria, B.C. recycles more than a quarter of a million kilograms of window glass each year. They create a variety of recycled glass products including dinnerware and custom design pieces.

There are other uses for glass. Glass is an excellent source of aggregate fill for construction sites or roads, because it is relatively inexpensive, provides good drainage capacity and is inert.

Glass can also be used to make fibreglass or used as a sand blasting material.

Revenues for clean glass (flint, amber or green) range according to quality. Mixed and broken glass is marketed at a cost according to quantity and quality.

Tips.....

Reduce:

Look for narrow neck bottles when shopping. The shape of the neck can reduce the amount of packaging used in a bottle by as much as 33%. The container is of the same quality as wider neck varieties, but with less material used.

Reuse:

Reuse and refill milk bottles again and again.

Reuse jars for storage. Keep nails, elastics, jams or candy in jars collected from your kitchen. Baby food jars are terrific for threads, buttons and needles.

Use glass containers for candle holders. Take a jam jar and decorate it with acrylic paint, and use a tea light candle for a stained glass look. Or, wrap thin wire tightly around the body of a jar, twist and turn the wire around the neck and loop into a handle. Again, use a tea light or other small, sturdy candle to light up your life.

Recycle:

Return glass beverage containers for recycling. Leave labels attached.

Put glass containers, such as jars, in your blue box or toter for municipal recycling, or take them to your local recycling depot. Give containers a rinse and remove lids and caps.

Return:

Consumers pay a deposit on all glass beverage containers in B.C. Shoppers should return bottles for a refund. Your local Return-It Centre, Liquor Distribution Branch, bottle depot or retailer will accept your returns.

Recycling Web Sites

Glass
sterlingglassfoundry.com
glassworks.org

Recycling
www.rbc.bc.ca
www.gvrd.bc.ca
www.ancoripinc.com
www.env.gov.bc.ca
www.etcanada.com

Sources

ETL Recycling Services Inc.
Consumers Glass
Care and be Careful video
Glass Containers video
sterlingglassfoundry.com

Recycling Questions?

BC Recycling Hotline
(604) 732-9253
1 800 667-4321

Beverage Container Return Questions
1 800-330-9767

Other Just the Facts available:

Corrugated cardboard
Newspaper
Composting
Plastics
Solid Waste Mgt Plan
Aluminum

Call 437-GVRD for copies.