



## United States Army Reserve 2019 America Recycles Day Message

November 15<sup>th</sup> is America Recycles Day – an opportunity to reflect on the Army Reserve’s commitment to recycling and how we all play a part in combatting challenges which impede our waste diversion and reduction efforts. This year’s focus is on contamination of recyclable items, and how simple changes to your recycling habits can support America’s increased need to process recyclables on the home front.

The U.S. has historically relied heavily on selling recyclable items like waste paper, plastic, and glass to other countries for processing. While this trade can be mutually beneficial, key players, like China, have nearly banned the import of all recyclable materials due to contamination issues resulting in tons of displaced materials.

More and more U.S. companies are rising to the challenge and are processing recyclables themselves, but they can’t do it alone—they need our help. Contaminated recyclable items are sent straight to local landfills or are incinerated in our communities. These, in turn, increase environmental pollution, and pose risks of cancer and respiratory problems.

Do your part and keep the recycling process working! Please consider making a commitment to increase clean recycling and reduce waste at the office and at home. A major way you can contribute to help ensure the Army Reserve Recycling program’s success is to lessen recycling contamination.

You can reduce recycling contamination with a few simple habits:

- Empty liquids and remove food residue or other debris BEFORE recycling the item. Rinse, if necessary.
- Place your recyclable items into the correct RECYCLE bin.
- Check the label on the bin and only deposit those items accepted at your location.
- Place garbage and other non-recyclables in proper TRASH receptacles.
- Recycle plastic bags and plastic film (e.g., produce bags, dry cleaning bags, and packaging wrap) separately by dropping them off at specially labeled bins found at your local supermarket or participating retail store.

According to the National Waste and Recycling Association, the average waste contamination rate is 25%. That means 1 in 4 items placed in a recycle bin should have been tossed in the trash. Those contaminated items put the rest of the bin at risk to head to the landfill, too.

With your help, clean recyclables can be processed appropriately and affordably. Be Diligent and make the small effort to do it right every time. Do your part and recycle right! For more information on the U.S. Army Reserve Solid Waste and Recycling program, visit [www.usar.army.mil/Sustainability](http://www.usar.army.mil/Sustainability).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel L. Cederman".

Daniel L. Cederman  
Colonel, GS  
Director, Army Reserve Installation  
Management Directorate