



Science Center Green Tip: Recycling Pizza Boxes

Does it seem like pizza delivery people are in your office every day? Don't throw those pizza boxes out – they are recyclable – as long as you follow certain procedures.

In and of themselves pizza boxes are recyclable. However, the grease and cheese from pizza that soil the cardboard make the boxes contaminated. So, pizza boxes that are tarnished with food, or any paper that is stained with grease or food, are not recyclable - unless the tainted portions are removed.

You may be tempted to place the tainted box in with your recyclables. Don't. This does more harm than good. Grease from pizza boxes causes oil to form at the top of the slurry, and paper fibers cannot separate from oils during the pulping process. Essentially, this contaminant causes the entire batch to be ruined. This is the reason that other food related items are non-recyclable (used paper plates, used napkins, used paper towels, etc.).

So, what should you do? Simple, cut off or out the tainted portion of the box. For example, you can tear the top of the box off, recycle that and throw away the bottom part containing the grease. If the entire box is grease-free, the whole box can be recycled with a guilt-free conscience.

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