

PRODUCT LIFECYCLE: SOURCING TO DISPOSAL

Every product has a story that starts long before you buy it and continues long after you use it. This guide breaks down the Front of Life (how it's made) and the End of Life (how it's disposed) to show how conscious choices build a truly circular economy.

FRONT OF LIFE: How a product is made or manufactured



RENEWABLE & SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES

Product is made from organic materials that are used and renewed without depleting or permanently damaging the environment.



RECYCLED MATERIALS (all or part of the product)

- **Post-consumer:** Made from items that have been used once in the general population and collected.
- **Post-industrial:** Made from scraps or excess material made during the manufacturing process.



LIGHTWEIGHT MATERIALS

Utilizing fewer or lower-density materials to reduce production and shipping costs while maintaining or enhancing product performance.



MINIMALLY PROCESSED

Simple manufacturing that skips energy-intensive steps.



CARBON NEUTRAL (OR LESSER)

Achieving a neutral or significantly lower carbon footprint through smarter farming and freight.

END OF LIFE: How a product is disposed of



COMPOSTABLE

Organic items that break down into nutrient-rich soil within a specific time-frame (180 days avg) in a composting environment (NOT a landfill) without leaving toxic residue.

• Commercial or Industrial

(Large Scale/High Heat)

Ideal for paper, corrugated or molded fibers, and bioplastics (PLA/CPLA). *Must compost in 84 days for BPI certification.*

• At-Home

(Small Scale/Low Heat)

Best for uncoated paper, fiber, certain bio-plastics, and food waste.



RECYCLABLE

Product can be washed, processed and reused for the same or other post-consumer products.

• Commonly Recycled Materials

Plastics (PET, PP, HDPE, LDPE), organic materials (paper, fiber, corrugate), glass and aluminum.

• Less Common

Plastic bags and films, Expanded Polystyrene (EPS Foam), small format items like aluminum foil or can tabs.

• Hard to Recycle or Cannot be Recycled

(Thus should not be marketed as "recyclable")
Contaminated organic materials like used paper towels, mixed materials (ex: mineral filled PP, double poly lined paper food containers), rigid bio-plastics, and other items that are difficult to separate or cannot be identified easily.



BIODEGRADABLE

Product can be broken down by within a year or so (not necessarily time dependent) by natural elements (like carbon dioxide, sunlight, water) or microorganisms (bacteria, fungi), leaving something harmless to the environment.



NORTH: 800.234.1460 • SOUTH CENTRAL: 800.330.8508 • SOUTHEAST: 855.578.7783
WEST/MT: 800.449.3848 • NORTHEAST: 800.441.4004
WWW.RJSCHINNER.COM