



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

Attitudes and Beliefs About Recycling in Michigan

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) commissioned a statewide survey in fall 2018 to understand Michiganders' current actions, beliefs and knowledge related to recycling. The research informed the creation of a statewide education campaign to improve Michigan's recycling.

KEY FINDING #1

Amount Recycled Not Related to Any Demographic Criteria

All demographic groupings – gender, age, race/ethnicity, income, educational attainment or political affiliation – reported a similar likelihood to recycle in Michigan.

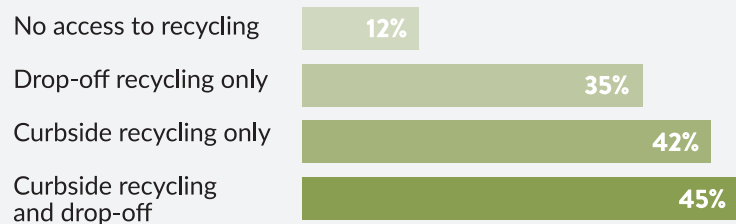


KEY FINDING #2

Access to Convenient Recycling Drives Participation

Michiganders with easy access to both curbside recycling and drop-off locations reported recycling 10% more of their household waste than those with only access to drop-off recycling.

SELF-REPORTED HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING RATE (Mean)



KEY FINDING #3

Michiganders Believe Recycling is Personally Important and Good for the State's Economy and Environment

The people of Michigan do not need to be convinced that recycling is a good thing. Statements about the value and importance of recycling resonate strongly throughout the state.

RECYCLING ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS

(Mean score on 100-point scale where 100 = "describes how I feel perfectly")



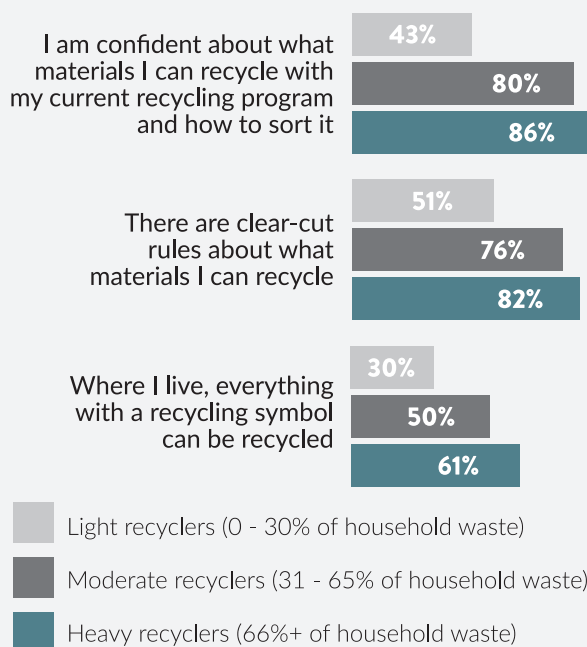
KEY FINDING #4

Confidence and Knowledge of Recycling Rules is High but Misplaced for Frequent Recyclers, While Light Recyclers Lack Both

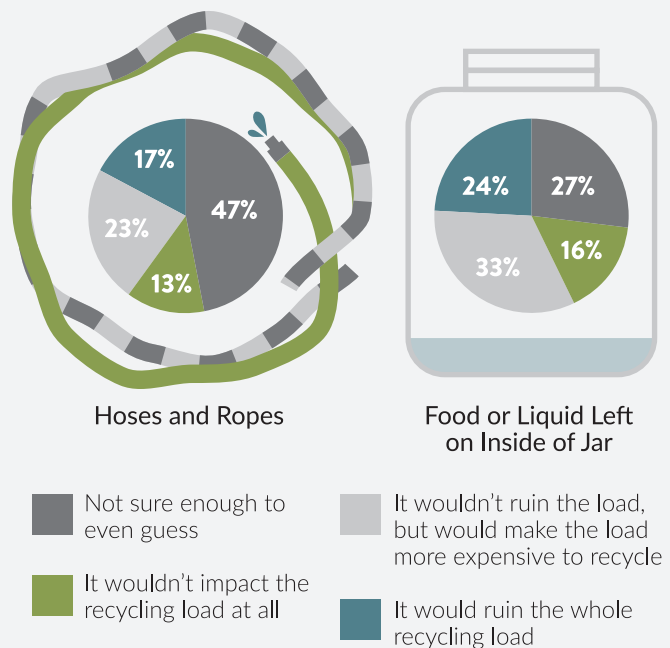
Michiganders, particularly those who claim to recycle more than 30% of their household waste, are very confident on the rules related to recycling. However, a majority incorrectly believes that everything with a recycling symbol is recyclable.

Additionally, fewer than 3 in 10 respondents correctly identified the result of common recycling contaminants, such as food or liquid remaining in a jar, and tangles, like hoses and ropes. More than 1 in 4 people were not sure enough to even guess what the impact of common contaminants would be on a load of recycling.

UNDERSTANDING OF CURRENT RECYCLING PROGRAMS BY RECYCLING GROUP (Percent agreement)



EFFECTS OF RECYCLING LOAD CONTAMINANTS



Putting The Research to Good Use

These research findings formed the basis for the creation of a statewide public education campaign. EGLE has a goal to increase both the quality and quantity of recycling in Michigan via these efforts. Launching statewide in summer 2019, the campaign will broadly educate audiences about statewide recycling rules and direct them to local resources for specific information. Overall, the education campaign will:

- Build energy around getting better at recycling (as an individual, as a household, as a state)
- Encourage people to learn the rules of recycling
- Communicate the consequences of not recycling correctly
- Increase confidence in recycling an item correctly
- Communicate about everyday items that are recyclable
- Direct people to proper authority to learn specific community rules

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