

# 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?

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 read signs carefully at your local depot to ensure you are recycling acceptable glass.

### QUICK FACTS

**1 recycled glass container saves enough energy to light a 100 watt bulb for four hours.**

**32% of a glass container is 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%.**

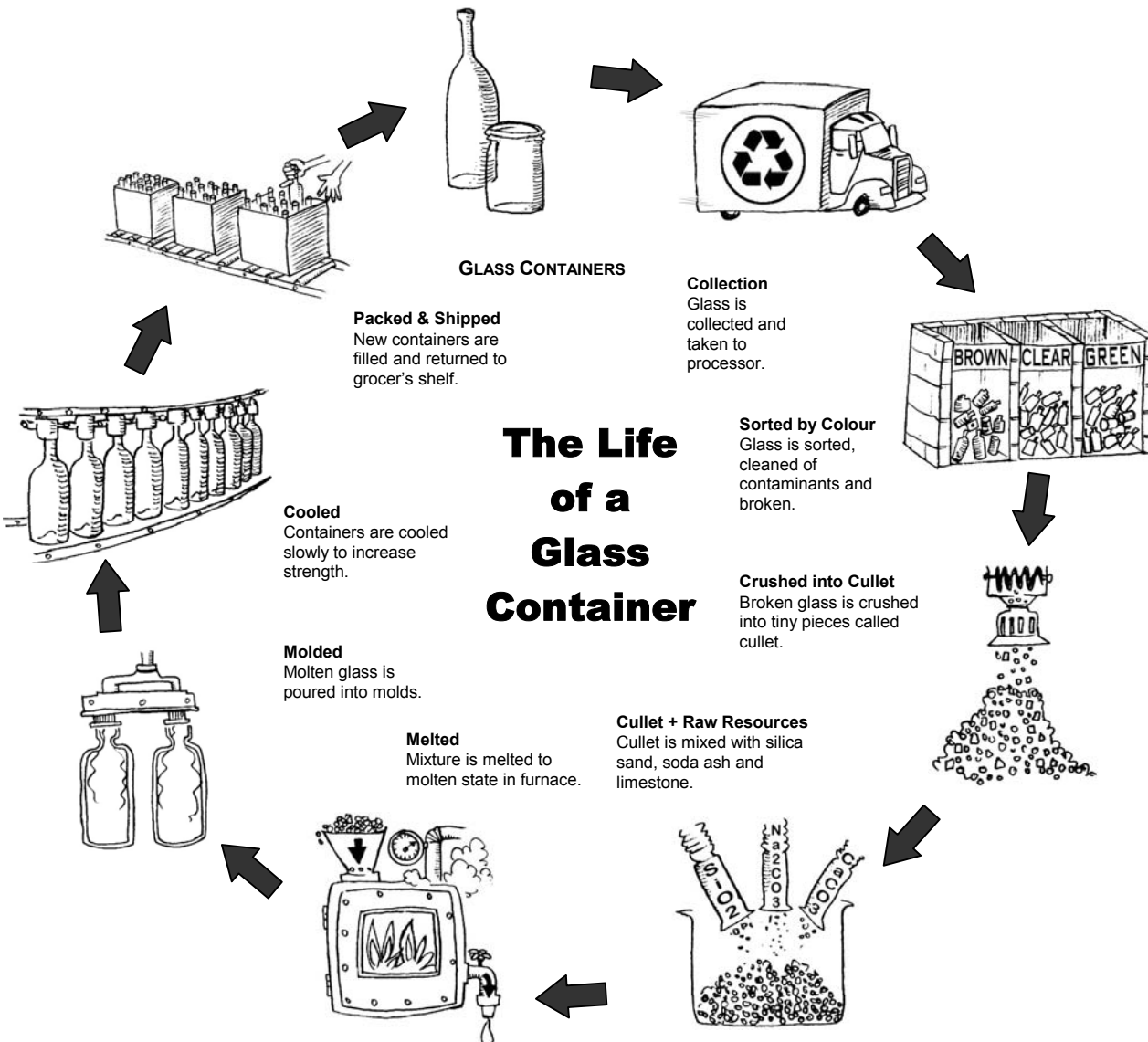
**1 million years is how long glass takes to break down naturally.**

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

**82% of glass containers consumed in Canada every year are reused or recycled.**

**1 coffee mug in a truckload of glass is enough to contaminate the load and cause it to be rejected from recycling.**

**1 beer bottle is refilled an average of 15 times.**



# just the facts



## 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 glass 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 & mirrors
- plastic, tin, aluminum lids/tabs
- pyrex glass
- wired glass
- crystal & drinking glasses
- light bulbs or tubes.

## 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. The processor sells the cullet to the manufacturer. The manufacturer mixes cullet with raw resources and creates new glass containers to be sold as packaging.

ETL Recycling Services Inc. is a glass processor in Delta, B.C. Consumers Glass operates a manufacturing plant in Lavington, B.C. Sterling Glass Foundry in Victoria, B.C., recycles more than a quarter of a million kilograms of window glass each year.

## 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.

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 less material is used.

### REUSE

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.

### RECYCLE

Return glass beverage containers for recycling. Leave labels on. Rinse containers 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

### Recycling

[www.rcbc.bc.ca](http://www.rcbc.bc.ca)  
[www.gvrd.bc.ca](http://www.gvrd.bc.ca)  
[www.encorpinc.com](http://www.encorpinc.com)  
[www.env.gov.bc.ca](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca)  
[www.etcanada.com](http://www.etcanada.com)

## Sources

ETL Recycling Services Inc.

Consumers Glass  
*Care and be Careful*  
video  
*Glass Containers* video

## RECYCLING QUESTIONS?

call the RCBC  
Recycling Hotline  
at 604-732-9253  
or 1 800 667-4321

## Other *Just the Facts* available:

Aluminum  
Composting  
Corrugated Cardboard  
Grasscycling  
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SWMP 2000

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or call  
604-432-6200.