

EACH YEAR THE UK USES AROUND 600 MILLION AEROSOLS

# You Should be Recycling Your Aerosols

**BAMA**



Each year, the UK uses around **600 million** aerosols. On average that's 10 cans per person, or 27 cans per household.

Aerosols account for **4%** of the metals packaging stream. We estimate that there are about **25,000 tonnes** of tinned steel and **4,500 tonnes** of high grade aluminium available from recycling aerosols in the UK.

Aerosols are **recyclable** – the numbers being recycled in the UK are lower than in other countries such as Germany, France and the US. Collecting empty aerosols along with other metal packaging will help your recycling targets.

Markets exist for the materials recovered, which can add revenue to your recycling schemes (as valuable commodities in their own right) and avoid landfill costs and taxes:



**Steel Aerosols** are accepted by many secondary metals dealers including CanRoute run by Corus Steel Packaging Recycling.

Detinning recovers tin and high grade steel.

Steel scrap is essential in new steel production

Further Information:

[www.corusgroup.com/en/responsibility](http://www.corusgroup.com/en/responsibility) or

tel: 01554 712 632



**Aluminium Aerosols** are now accepted by Novelis and many other secondary metals dealers.

The aluminium used to make aerosols is 99.7% pure and so is of high value.

Further Information: [www.alupro.org.uk](http://www.alupro.org.uk) or

tel:01527 597 757

## So how can you include aerosols in your recycling scheme?

The first thing to remember is that you shouldn't create a special collection scheme. The best and safest way to recycle aerosols is to leave them mixed in with other metal waste – do not segregate or concentrate them.

Educate consumers to put only EMPTY used aerosols in can banks and kerbside collection. Consumers must not pierce or squash the cans and if possible remove plastic parts that come off easily such as the caps.

Ensure that you are taking the usual health and safety precautions for a well run Material Reclamation Facility especially ruling out sources of ignition.

Local Authorities can view further information and download resources from the dedicated section of the BAMA website at [www.recycleaerosols.co.uk](http://www.recycleaerosols.co.uk)

Information on the BAMA website is split into Household, Non-household and Local Authorities sections. You can download newsletters and case studies about aerosol recycling undertaken by Local Authorities or request stickers for your Can Banks encouraging consumers to recycle their aerosols.

For more detailed independent health and safety reports, and to obtain free can bank labels contact the British Aerosol Manufacturers' Association on:

Tel: 020 7828 5111

Fax: 020 7834 8436

E-mail: [enquiries@bama.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@bama.co.uk)  
[www.bama.co.uk](http://www.bama.co.uk)

**No special steps are needed to recycle aerosols from the domestic waste stream but some sensible precautions should be followed:**

- Leave aerosols mixed in with other metal waste – do not segregate and concentrate them.
- Advise consumers to put only empty used aerosols in can banks or kerbside collections.
- Many, many local authorities world-wide are successfully including aerosols in their recycling schemes. In a MRF, waste containing aerosols can be baled, flattened or shredded. As some of the residues may be flammable, it is wise to:
  - Maintain a Zone 2 area within 1m of the baler.
  - Maintain a 2.5m exclusion zone around the baler during operation.
  - Maintain Zone 2 around completed bales for 30 minutes.
  - Maintain adequate ventilation in the MRF.
  - Ensure there are no sparks, flames, naked lights or smoking.
  - Maintain a good standard of housekeeping, especially around and under the baler.
  - Use protective clothing and glasses and make sure that fire extinguishers are available.
  - Draw up a standard operating procedure and train your operators regularly.
- Although a flammable atmosphere could be generated in the baler or within the finished bales, tests show that this dissipates to safe levels very quickly in the surrounding air.

More detailed guidance on the above is available from BAMA in our guide 'Recycling Post-Consumer Aerosols'. This guide is free of charge, e-mail: [enquiries@bama.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@bama.co.uk) or tel: 020 7828 5111 to request a copy.

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