

# Aluminium & Steel Can Recycling

Many of the food and drink products we buy are packaged in cans made from either aluminium or steel and both of these materials can be easily recycled after we have finished with them to make either new cans or other products.

## The Recycling Journey

### Stage 1:

You put your cans into the appropriate recycling container, or in bring banks, and these are then collected from your kerbside or local recycling centres/points.

### Stage 2:

The cans are taken to a sorting facility where large magnets are used to separate the cans from any other material collected.

### Stage 3:

Steel cans are baled and sent to a steelmaking plant centre where they are then put in a furnace heated to around 1600°C. Molten iron and oxygen is added and after about 30 minutes the impurities are driven out and the mixture becomes molten steel.

Aluminium cans are shredded into small pieces the size of a 50p coin and they then have hot air blown through them to remove decoration. The shreds are melted in a furnace heated to 70°C and this molten metal flows into moulds which are then cooled by water to form a hardened ingot. These ingots are then heated and rolled into aluminium sheets to the exact specification required by the can maker.

### Stage 4:

The molten steel formed from the steel cans is formed into big slabs, which are then rolled into coils. The steel coils are recycled into a variety of steel products, such as cars, train tracks and steel cans. The steel cans are used again by food and drinks manufacturers and sold to supermarkets where you buy them and start the process again.

The aluminium sheets are lubricated and made into cans which are then trimmed, washed and decorated. The cans are then ready for reuse by food and drink manufacturers who sell them to supermarkets, where you buy them and start the process again.

## Did you know?

- The aluminium drink can is the world's most recycled packaging container.
- Steel and aluminium cans are able to be recycled multiple times with no loss in quality.
- Recycling aluminium drink cans saves up to 95% of the energy needed to make aluminium from raw materials.
- Recycling steel means only 25% of the energy needed to make steel from virgin raw materials is used.

