



GreenTip
How Do You Measure Up?



Waste in Your Wallet? Recycle the Plastic!

The United States, along with much of the rest of the world, has made the transition from cash to plastic. Most people carry at least one or two credit cards in their wallets. We use gift cards instead of purchasing specific gifts. We have government-issued identification cards and drivers licenses. We use plastic cards instead of hotel room keys. Most of these cards have one thing in common: they're made out of a type of plastic called polyvinyl chloride – PVC. These little pieces of petroleum-based resin may seem insignificant, but it's been estimated that we throw away more than 75 million pounds of plastic cards every year! Because the properties of PVC remain constant through recycling and processing, it can be recycled virtually forever.

Of course, there are some obstacles to recycling the plastic in our wallets. Some cards are produced with holograms or are made from bioresins or other plastics that cannot be recycled with the PVC. In addition, magnetic strips can be a challenge. However, we are beginning to see recycled content labeling on the backs of gift cards, grocery store consumer cards and credit cards. Producers say that consumers can help by asking their banks and retailers to use 100% recycled PVC credit and gift cards and to recycle the cards they receive back from their customers.

If you'd like to recycle your old cards yourself, you can use a mail-in program that's free (you pay the postage). Check out the program on the web by clicking [here](#).