




INFORMATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	March 25, 2019
SUBJECT:	Multi-Residential Recycling Contamination and Enforcement (ES19010) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Craig Murdoch Director, Environmental Services Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

This information update is to inform the Mayor and Members of City Council of actions being taken to reduce contamination within the Blue Box Recycling program at multi-residential buildings.

Avoiding or reducing contamination in the Blue Box Recycling program has become a major initiative world-wide as end markets become stricter about the amount of contamination in recyclables purchased from material recycling facilities such as the City of Hamilton's.

In January 2019, the City experienced an increase in the amount of blue box recycling loads rejected by the operator of the City's Material Recycling Facility (MRF). The operator attributes the increased rejection rates to the increase in contamination in the City's Blue Box program, but more particularly from multi-residential properties. Possible increases in contamination could be due to factors such as changes in product packaging, wish-cycling (materials that residents believe are recyclable but are not) and program confusion amongst residents.

During the months of January 2019 and February 2019, blue box recycling loads from multi-residential properties had a rejection rate of 52% due to high contamination. For comparison, during the same time period, blue box recycling loads containing material from curbside residential collection had a rejection rate of 3.4% due to contamination.

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OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

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Rejected loads are landfilled due to the nature of the contamination, which leads to decreased overall recycling rates, lost landfill space and an increase in costs to taxpayers by having to double handle waste materials.

In order to improve the quality of the blue box recycling material being collected from multi-residential properties, the City will be increasing multi-residential enforcement to assist with reducing contamination. City staff will be mailing a letter this week to all multi-residential (high-rise) properties to provide notice of the amplified enforcement during collection of blue cart recycling. This enforcement may result in recycling carts being left behind without being emptied. In such a case, an orange "Oops" sticker will be adhered to the cart notifying Superintendents that the blue cart recycling was not collected because it did not meet the criteria outlined in Solid Waste Management By-law #09-067.

If the Collections Operator deems the contents of the blue cart unacceptable, then it is the responsibility of the Superintendent to empty the contaminated carts, clean out the contamination and place it back for collection the following week or dispose of the contents as garbage.

In the letter being issued to building owners, City staff offer additional promotion and education support for the building including one on one education with the superintendent, daytime or evening presentations to tenants, and promotion and education material to better educate residents on what is contamination and why clean recyclables are integral to the blue cart program.

We anticipate that in the short term, there will be an increase in the number of complaints received by building owners or superintendents, however ultimately more materials will be recycled, less landfill space will be used and the cost to City taxpayers will be reduced.

If you require more information please contact Joel McCormick, Manager of Waste Collections, at extension 4770.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not applicable