

NEWS RELEASE

Distributed October 27, 2016

City asks residents to cut out contamination of curbside recycling

Summary

The City of Nanaimo is asking residents to keep a watchful eye over what ends up in the curbside recycling. The City has recently received a warning letter from Multi Material BC (the province wide organization who pays the City to collect recycling) about high contamination levels.

The letter warned that contamination rates have increased in the last few months. To reduce the levels of contamination the City has put together an "action plan" to tackle the issue. The action plan will see increased communications around the issue of contamination along with curbside inspections of yellow bags and a firmer stance on those regularly contaminating the recycling, resulting in bags being left behind.

Strategic Link: Environmental Responsibility: Protecting and enhancing Nanaimo's environment.

Key Points

- Contamination rates as high as 14% have been recorded in City recycling loads. MMBC requires that the City reduce this to 3% or less.
- MMBC has the ability to fine the City up to \$120,000 a year if contamination rates do not reduce.
- The City will begin undertaking inspections of curbside recycling in November. Residents will receive stickers to let them know they have placed an unacceptable item in the yellow bag. Residents doing a good job will receive a "good job" sticker.
- The recycling collector will begin to leave whole bags of recycling behind where residents repeatedly include contaminants in their curbside recycling.

Quotes

"I think it is clear that there is some confusion about what does and does not go in the yellow bag. We want to clear up this confusion and so residents will notice increased messaging from us about about contamination. We have been advertising on the radio, in newsletters and now we are doing some curbside inspections. We hope to speak with as may people as possible about what to put in the yellow bag. I would encourage residents to pick up the phone and call us or check out our website if they have any questions."

Charlotte Davis
Manager of Sanitation and Recycling
City of Nanaimo

Quick Facts

- The most common types of contamination in curbside recycling are plastic bags, styrofoam, and glass. If you cannot take these items to the depot the City asks that you place them in your garbage.
- Items including books, electronics, chip bags, paint cans, batteries and textiles should not be placed in the yellow bag.
- Contamination of curbside recycling is a big problem because it can mean that whole loads of recycling has to be landfilled. Plastic bags, styrofoam and glass can only be recycled through the depot because they have to be handled separately from other items.
- Please keep your recycling loose in a yellow bag or a rigid container. Do not put your recycling out in tied bags.

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