

NEWS RELEASE

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Blue cart blues: curbside recycling contamination above the allowable rate

City calls residents to greater care

Summary

Residents of Nanaimo are urged to reduce blue cart contamination. Recycle BC, the provincial authority overseeing recycling across the province, requires recycling collectors such as the City of Nanaimo to maintain contamination rates of less than three per cent to meet contract requirements. Currently, Nanaimo's recycling contamination rate averages more than 10 percent.

Contamination can lead to increased service fees and recycling ending up in the landfill. It can also put workers at risk and damage equipment used in the recycling process. To reduce contamination levels, the City has put together an action plan. It includes increased communications and education, along with curbside inspections of blue carts and firmer stance on collecting. Those who continue to contaminate their recycling will receive a sticker alerting them of the item(s) not accepted. The goal is to never leave a cart behind, but households that continue to contaminate could see their blue carts not being collected.

For assistance with identifying blue cart accepted material use the What Goes Where Waste Wizard tool found on www.nanaimo.ca or download the Nanaimo Recycles App. Those without access to the internet or an app can call the Recycling Hotline at 1-800-732-9253.

Strategic Link: Ensuring we maintain contracts with key partners like Recycle BC to provide cost effective service delivery to residents.

Key Points

- Contamination rates as high as 18 per cent have been recorded in Nanaimo residential curbside recycling loads. Recycle B.C. requires that the City reduce this to three per cent or less to meet contract requirements.
- The City has increased communication and education while undertaking inspections of curbside recycling.
- Recycle B.C. has the ability to fine the City if contamination rates do not reduce.

Quotes

"It's amazing how well we've adapted and become responsible recyclers over the years, but we have to be careful not to become a community of wish-cyclers, tossing items into the blue bin which can't be properly handled at the recycling facility. That just creates more work on the line, undoes the great work other households have done, and ultimately could hit us in the pocketbooks in a big way. When in doubt, just throw it out; recycle the materials you're sure of."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

Continued... Blue cart blues: curbside recycling contamination above the allowable rate

Quick Facts

- The most common contamination found in curbside recycling are: glass, electronics, plastic bags and overwrap, clothing, scrap metal, garbage, construction material, refundables, and hazardous waste. If you cannot take these items to a depot, please place them in your garbage if it is safe to do so.
- Please empty and rinse containers and break down your cardboard. Cardboard must be 2' x 2' maximum. Recycling must be loose, please do not place into bags, boxes or stack items.

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