
MEMORANDUM

WMPSC-C 24-2019

Subject: “Recycling Matters” Awareness Campaign

Date: Monday, June 24, 2019

To: Waste Management Planning Steering Committee

From: Lucy McGovern, Collection and Diversion Program Manager

The purpose of this memorandum is to advise members of the Waste Management Planning and Steering Committee of an upcoming recycling awareness campaign, titled “Recycling Matters”. This campaign is meant to educate residents on proper sorting and preparation for select materials known to cause problems at the Region’s Recycling Centre. Staff will utilize a variety of tactics to promote proper recycling.

As presented in the WMPSC meeting on April 29, 2019 Niagara Region has developed a video series titled ‘Recycling Matters’. The videos, developed with Improv Niagara, take a light hearted approach to recycling and address how to correctly dispose of these items in order to improve the quality of the recyclable material. The video series was released on social media platforms in May and will continue throughout the summer (link to the video series <https://youtu.be/bfL5ZT9IBLw>). Sample messaging for common sorting and preparation issues observed in recyclable streams can be referred to in Appendix A.

Accompanying communication tactics will include a series of educational social media posts and the implementation of information booths at local community events and festivals, complete with pop-up banners and handout cards. Curbside audits of recyclables will take place at approximately 1,000 low density residential homes across Niagara to look for contaminated and improperly prepared recycling materials. Unacceptable materials and highly contaminated recycling boxes observed during the curbside audits will be tagged as uncollectable. Informational door hangers will be designed to support sorting and preparation practices. If curbside recycling is observed to be completed successfully, residents will be provided with an informative door hanger thanking them for their cooperation. All promotional materials will direct residents to learn more at www.niagararegion.ca/waste, or to contact the Region’s Waste Info-Line should they have any follow up questions.

The key messages of the Recycling Matters campaign are:

- Sorting and preparing your recyclable materials properly matters
- The improper sorting and preparation of recyclables increases costs to you as a taxpayer
- Revenue from the sale of recyclables helps offset costs of Niagara’s waste management programs

- Sorting and preparing recyclables properly ensures materials can be recycled and lengthens the life of our landfills

The campaign schedule is outlined in the table below.

Campaign Components	Proposed Schedule
Social media promotion of Recycling Matter videos	May to July 2019
Social media promotion of Recycling Matters graphic education pieces	August to October 2019
Public engagement at community festivals and events	August to October 2019
Curbside Audits	Late August to mid-October 2019

The Recycling Matters campaign costs for social media advertising and print expenses is expected to fall under \$15,000 and these expenses have been planned for in the 2019 operating budget.

The material placed in recycling boxes across Niagara is often contaminated with materials that are either not recyclable, or not properly prepared for recycling collection and processing. Although these items may be set out for collection with the best of intentions, contaminated or improperly prepared recyclables cause a number of processing challenges which reduce the effectiveness and efficiency of the recycling process. This ultimately decreases the quality of the final products; increases taxpayer costs to manage the material; and reduces the life of our landfills as more residue is generated.

These challenges have recently become more significant since China, a major importer of recyclable material, banned imports of several recyclable commodities and tightened their specifications beyond achievable levels for old newsprint (ONP). Consequently, this has created a flooded market. Alternate international and domestic markets are therefore demanding a much higher quality material and offering minimal value in return. Although there are opportunities to deal with these challenges and improve ONP revenue at the Region's Recycling Centre, this would require significant, costly investments in processing equipment.

The annual average contamination level in Niagara's Blue Box stream in 2018 was 19 per cent, and consisted primarily of garbage and cross-contaminants such as paper and boxboard. Niagara's Grey Box stream in 2018 reflected an annual average contamination level of nine per cent, which was primarily cross-contamination with various Blue Box materials and garbage.

The Recycling Matters campaign and associated audits will support improved education and awareness regarding recycling preparation practices and the reduction of contamination. A summary report of findings will be presented to the Waste

Management Planning Steering Committee by the end of 2019/early 2020. Based on the results, future iterations of the Recycling Matters campaign may include enforcement measures as permitted in the Region's waste management by-law, No. 2017-56.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Lucy McGovern
Collection and Diversion Program Manager
Waste Management Services

Appendices

Appendix A Recycling Matters – Sort it Out

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Recycling Matters – Sort it Out

After your recyclables are collected, they need to be further sorted and baled with other like-materials before they can be sold to the end market. Recycling centres are able to sort materials effectively, but when your household recyclable items are not properly prepared before collection, it causes a variety of processing problems which slow down the effectiveness and efficiency of the recycling process. This ultimately decreases the quality of the final product; increases taxpayer costs to manage the material; and reduces the life of our landfills.

You can do your part and sort it all out. Here are some helpful tips:

1. Empty your recyclable containers and packaging fully before placing them in your recycling box
 - Automated sorting equipment cannot effectively separate plastic bottles containing liquids, or cans containing left over food
2. Recycle empty household containers and rigid plastic packaging in the Blue Box
 - Items like hangers, hoses, toys, filters or lawn edging are not empty containers or rigid plastic packaging and are not recyclable
3. Recycle your stretchy plastic outer-wrap such as dry-cleaner bags, clean bread bags and grocery bags
 - Be sure to *stuff* all your stretchy plastic outer-wrap in one bag, *tie* the handles, then *toss* it in the Grey Box
4. Remove plastic sleeves from newspapers and recycle both the newspaper and the plastic sleeve
 - Place the newspaper in the Grey Box and stuff the sleeve in a plastic bag with other stretchy plastic outer-wrap before tossing the bag in the Grey Box beside the newspaper
5. Separate the plastic outer-wrap from the cardboard tray on pop and water cases.
 - Place the cardboard tray in the Grey Box and stuff the plastic outer-wrap in a plastic bag with other stretchy plastic outer-wrap before tossing the bag in the Grey Box beside the cardboard tray
6. Do NOT place laminated, foil, or multi-layered bags like chip bags, frozen food bags or pet food bags in your recycling boxes
 - Place these laminated, foil, or multi-layered bags in the garbage
7. Do NOT place disposable hot and cold beverage cups in your recycling boxes
 - Place disposable coffee cups and soft drink cups in the garbage
8. Do NOT place household hazardous waste (HHW) in your recycling boxes
 - Take propane cylinders, batteries, and partially full or full aerosol cans to your local HHW depot, at no charge.