

Contamination of Recycling Policy (Revised November 2018)

Policy Name	Contamination of Recycling Policy
Committee Date/Name	Operational Delivery Committee, 6 November 2018
Review Frequency	2 years
Next Review Due	November 2020
Implementation Date	7 November 2018

1.0 Purpose of Policy

To establish a policy that details how contaminated mixed recycling and food/garden waste bins will be dealt with and to define what contamination is.

2.0 Acceptable Materials

2.1 The 240 litre **mixed recycling bin** is only for the items that can be recycled as listed below:

- Steel and aluminium cans, tins and foil
- Glass bottles and jars
- Paper and cardboard
- Plastic bottles, trays, tubs and yoghurt pots (all colours)
- Food and drink cartons (e.g. Tetrapak)

Items should be predominantly clean and free of food waste and plastic bags/film in particular.

2.2 The 240 litre **food/garden waste bin** is for the following materials:

- Garden waste including:
 - Small branches, bark and twigs that readily fit into the bin with the lid closed
 - Grass cuttings
- All cooked and uncooked food waste including:
 - Tea bags and coffee grounds
 - Egg shells and bones

3.0 Defining Contamination

3.1 Collection crews will check bins as they are emptying them for evidence of contaminants.

This will be a visual inspection when they open the lid of the bin. Crews are not expected to wade through the materials.

3.2 Items that cannot be put in the **mixed recycling bin** include:

- food waste
- plastic bags or film
- garden waste
- nappies
- clothing
- other general waste materials that cannot be recycled.

3.4 The following is a guide to help determine whether a **mixed recycling** bin is deemed to be contaminated or not and the action to be take:

<u>Contamination level / Reason</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Action</u>
Severe contamination; or repeat offender of medium contamination	Filled black bags, food waste, nappies, more non-recycling than recycling. Or repeat offender of medium contamination.	1) Do not empty bin 2) Attach Bin Hanger/Sticker 3) Record on Collective 4) Letter sent to householder
Moderate contamination	Obvious misunderstanding of materials accepted – more than two but less than ten wrong items visible when bin lid is opened (there needs to be more recycling than non-recycling)	1) Empty bin 2) Bin Hanger/Sticker 3) Leave wrong items in a bag tied to the bin or remove if possible 4) Record on Collective
Low contamination	Two or less visible wrong items when the bin lid is opened.	1) Empty bin – likely that it is accidental. 2) No requirement to record

3.5 Severely contaminated **mixed recycling** bins will not be emptied and it is the responsibility of the householder to remove any contamination from the recycling bin before it will be emptied on the next scheduled collection day.

3.6 Items that cannot be put in the **food/garden bin** include:

- Household waste or mixed recyclables
- Nappies
- Dog waste, cat litter or other animal waste
- Stones, slabs, rubble or rubber
- Plastic bags
- Plastic flower pots, seed trays or plant labels
- Soil or turf

3.7 Food/garden waste bins containing any of the items listed in paragraph 3.6 may not be emptied. It is the householder’s responsibility to remove any contamination from the **food/garden waste bin** before it will be emptied on the next scheduled collection day

4 Contaminated mixed recycling bins - procedure

4.1 Bin identified as low contamination

- a. Where a household **mixed recycling bin** has been identified as having low contamination by the collection crew, the crew will empty the bin. No further action is required.

4.2 Bin identified as moderate contamination

- a. Where a household **mixed recycling bin** has been identified as having moderate contamination by the collection crew, the crew will log this using their in-cab electronic system. This information is available to the Contact Centre and Waste Team staff in real time.
- b. Crew will notify the householder of the issue by placing the appropriate hanger/sticker on the bin.
- c. If the same household has moderate contamination on a repeated basis (more than twice), this will be deemed as **severely contaminated** and the process followed under 4.3 (bin not emptied, etc).

4.3 Bin identified as severely contaminated

- a. Where a household **mixed recycling bin** has been identified as having severe contamination by the collection crew, the crew will log this using their in-cab electronic system. This information is available to the Contact Centre and Waste Team staff in real time.
- b. Crew will notify the householder (bin hanger/sticker, etc) of the issue - why the bin has not been emptied and that they must remove the offending items prior to the next scheduled collection
- c. A letter will be sent to the householder (standard letter):
 - reminding the householder of the correct items for the bin
 - that they must remove the offending items prior to the next collection
 - to take any excess materials to a Recycling Centre or Point
 - to contact the Waste & Recycling Team for advice if they are having difficulty
 - reminding the householder that their bin should be removed from the kerbside following collection to help prevent contamination by others
- d. If the same household has repeated severe contamination an Officer will visit the householder to discuss and give advice.

4.4 The Council may remove a **mixed recycling bin** where it is demonstrated that the resident persistently presents a contaminated container. This is a last resort and would only happen after all reasonable steps have been taken to provide advice and assistance.

4.5 Where a mixed recycling bin has been removed due to repeated contamination, no additional capacity will be provided for general waste.

5.0 Contaminated food/garden waste bins - procedure

5.1 Where a **Food/garden waste bin** is not emptied because it contains items listed in paragraph 3.6:

- a. The collection crew will log this using their in-cab electronic system. This information is available to the Contact Centre and Waste Team staff in real time.

- b. Crew will notify the householder (bin hanger/sticker, etc) of the issue - why the bin has not been emptied and that they must remove the offending items prior to the next scheduled collection
- c. If the same household has repeated contamination, a letter will be sent to the householder and may be followed up by a visit to provide further assistance
 - reminding the householder of the correct items for the bin
 - that they must remove the offending items prior to the next collection
 - to take any excess materials to a Recycling Centre or Point
 - to contact the Waste & Recycling Team for advice if they are having difficulty
 - reminding the householder that their bin should be removed from the kerbside following collection to help prevent contamination by others
- d. The letter may be followed up by a visit from an Officer to provide further assistance, if necessary.

5.2 The Council may remove a **food/garden waste bin** where it is demonstrated that the resident persistently presents a contaminated container. This is a last resort and would only happen after all reasonable steps have been taken to provide advice and assistance.

5.3 Where a **food/garden waste bin** has been removed due to repeated contamination, no additional capacity will be provided for general waste.

References