

COMMON WASTE AND RECYCLING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Question

I use smaller bags to collect waste inside my home and need to dispose of waste in a standard garbage bag for collection. How do I reduce the plastic bags I send to landfill?

Answer

Here are some common strategies that residents can use to reduce their plastic bag use:

Use Reusable Bags: For collecting waste inside the home, use reusable bins or containers instead of small plastic bags. Empty these containers into the required larger plastic bag on collection day.

Compost Organic Waste: Set up a home composting system for organic waste, reducing the amount of waste that needs to be bagged. This diverts waste from the landfill and provides a source of nutrient rich soil.

Recycle: Ensure that recyclables are properly sorted and placed in recycling bins instead of plastic bags. This diverts waste from the landfill.

Reduce Waste Generation: Minimize the amount of waste generated by buying products with minimal packaging, using reusable items, and avoiding single-use products.

Use Biodegradable/Compostable Bags: Use biodegradable or compostable bags for waste disposal, which are more environmentally friendly than traditional plastic bags.

Bulk Disposal: Instead of using multiple small bags, consolidate waste small kitchen and bathroom waste cans into larger bags for disposal.

Repurpose Plastic Bags: Reuse old plastic bags from other sources for waste collection inside the home, reducing the need to buy additional small bags.

Educate Household Members: Inform everyone in the household about the importance of reducing plastic waste and the strategies being implemented to achieve this.

By implementing these strategies, residents can significantly reduce their use of excess plastic bags while still adhering to waste collection requirements.

Question

I have a larger family and I have difficulty meeting the two-bag limit. What can I do?

Answer

Different households produce different amounts of household waste. The taxes of each household account for disposal of two bags at the curbside per week. There are alternatives available for disposal of additional waste but additional disposal comes at an additional cost. This is to ensure that those who meet who are below the two-bag limit don't end up sharing the costs of those who produce significantly more waste. The Town of Blind River tries to ensure that wherever possible, residents are only paying for the services they use. For those who do generate more than two bags per week, below are some strategies that can be employed to reduce your waste generated as much as possible before using the disposal alternatives.

Food Waste Reduction

Meal Planning: Plan meals to use ingredients efficiently and avoid overbuying.

Proper Storage: Store food correctly to extend its freshness and reduce spoilage.

Leftovers: Repurpose leftovers into new meals to minimize waste.

Composting: Set up a home compost bin for organic waste such as fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, and eggshells.

Recycling and Reusing

Recycling: Ensure that all recyclable materials are sorted and placed in the recycling bin.

Upcycling: Find creative ways to repurpose items that might otherwise be thrown away.

Reusable Containers: Use reusable containers for storing food and other items instead of single-use plastics. Use Tupperware instead of Ziploc bags.

Reducing Packaging Waste

Bulk Purchasing: Buy in bulk to reduce the amount of packaging waste.

Reusable Bags: Use reusable bags, containers, and jars for shopping and storing items.

Minimal Packaging: Choose products with minimal packaging or packaging made from recyclable materials.

Sustainable Household Items

Reusable Products: Use cloth napkins, rechargeable batteries, washable containers, and other reusable household items.

Repair and Maintain: Fix broken items instead of replacing them to reduce waste.

Green Purchasing

Eco-friendly Products: Choose products that are environmentally friendly and have a longer lifespan.

Digital Alternatives: Use digital versions of newspapers, magazines, and other paper products to reduce paper waste.

Curbside Disposal Alternatives

Bag tags: Additional bags over the two-bag limit can be purchased at Townhall. Additional bags affixed with a bag tag and in waste can will be collected from the curbside.

Landfill Disposal: Every residence is also entitled to disposal of an additional two bags of waste per week if the waste is brought directly to the landfill.

By implementing these strategies, larger families can effectively reduce their waste generation, contributing to a more sustainable environment and potentially meeting municipal waste disposal limits.

Question

The municipality states that I need to place my waste in a suitable receptacle or garbage can, shouldn't they have to pay for it?

Answer

Some larger municipalities do provide waste receptacles to residents but they are not 'free'. Municipal taxes simplified are the cost of the services being delivered divided by the residents in the community. The purchase of the waste collection bins for all residents would represent a significant cost and would be funded by the tax base. While residents wouldn't pay for their can in the same way they would at a hardware store, they would still bear this cost through the cost of the waste collection. The purchase of waste receptacles for every household presents several concerns that you may not have previously considered:

Financial Burden

High Costs: Providing garbage cans for all residents can be prohibitively expensive, especially in large municipalities. This cost would ultimately be borne by taxpayers.

Maintenance and Replacement: The ongoing costs of maintaining, replacing damaged or stolen cans, and managing the logistics of distribution would add significant financial strain on municipal budgets.

Practical Challenges

Logistical Issues: Distributing garbage cans to all households involves significant logistical challenges, including storage, distribution, and handling complaints or issues related to the cans.

Varied Needs: Different households have different needs and preferences for garbage cans (size, design, etc.), making it difficult to provide a one-size-fits-all solution

Personal Responsibility: Residents are typically expected to take responsibility for their own waste management tools, including purchasing their own garbage cans. This encourages individual accountability and care for the cans.

Equity Concerns

Fairness: Providing garbage cans to all residents could be seen as unfair to those who have already purchased their own cans or who use alternative waste disposal methods.

Taxpayer Impact: Not all taxpayers generate the same amount of waste, and some may feel it is unfair for their taxes to subsidize garbage cans for others.

While the expectation for municipalities to provide garbage cans may stem from a desire for convenience, it overlooks the significant financial, logistical, and practical challenges involved.