

Garbage & Recycling FAQs

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Box/bin and collection questions

Why was my blue/grey box, green bin or garbage not picked up?

There a number of reasons that a recycling box or green bin would not have been collected.

If a notice has been placed in the box indicating why material was not collected, please remedy the situation and place it out for collection on your next collection day.

If no notice was left, please contact customer service at 613-546-0000 to open a work order. A supervisor will inspect your materials and provide you with information on why your bin/box may have been left.

Common reasons include:

- Recycling – [blue box](#) or [grey box](#) – may not have been collected because:
 - Materials from the incorrect recycling stream were placed out for collection (eg. it may be a blue box pick-up week and you left out your grey box – or had grey box materials in your blue box).
 - The box contained materials that are not recyclable.
- [Green bin](#) may not have been collected because:
 - It was more than 30kg (66lbs) and too heavy for collection.
 - The bin contained excessive liquids that would leak out of the truck.
 - It contained only yard waste.
 - It contained unacceptable items like plastic bags or film, metals, feces, feminine hygiene products and plastics that cannot be composted.
- [Garbage](#) may not have been collected because:
 - It was more than 20kg (44lbs) and too heavy for collection.
 - More than one bag was placed at the curb.
 - It contained sharp items that made it dangerous to collect.
 - It contained yard waste.

The list above offers some of the main reasons that waste items are not collected, but it is not a conclusive list.

When is my collection day?

To determine your collection day, please visit our [collection calendars page](#). You can review your collection day, see special collections, print off a calendar and even sign up for waste collection reminders. The collection app is the City of Kingston's most useful app.

What goes in my blue box, grey box and green bin?

In general:

- [Blue boxes](#) are meant for plastic, metal and glass food and beverage containers and other common household packaging. The blue box is meant for packaging, not products.
- [Grey boxes](#) are for paper, cardboard and other fiber packaging, as well as plastic bags.
- [Green bins](#) are for your food and yard waste.

You can find more detailed information on these boxes/bins on the [household page](#).

Where do I get blue/grey boxes and green bins?

Blue and grey boxes can be picked up at the [Kingston Area Recycling Centre](#) (KARC) at 196 Lappan's Lane or at City Hall Payment Centre, 216 Ontario St. Green bins can only be picked up at KARC.

Can I get my boxes/bin delivered?

No. The City does not deliver recycling boxes or green bins.

My box/bin is broken and collection staff won't pick them up. What do I do?

Broken boxes/bins can be returned to the [Kingston Area Recycling Centre](#), 196 Lappan's Lane, for recycling and replacement free of charge. City Hall does not accept damaged bins for recycling.

The boxes/bin I just bought or have from another municipality weren't picked up. Why weren't they collected?

The City can only collect boxes/bin that are provided by the City or are close in size to City-issued boxes/bins. This is because collection staff sort the materials from your boxes curbside at the truck. Oversized boxes/bins prevent collection staff from being able to properly see its contents and notice hazards such as broken glass, needles, etc. The City will replace any oversized boxes with City-issued bins free of charge.

Why does the City only allow residents to have one [green bin](#)?

The City provides each eligible residential property with one 80 litre green bin for weekly collection. The green bin is intended for food waste, scraps and soiled paper products. However, yard waste is permitted in the green bin as long as the bin is visibly being used for food waste, scraps and soiled paper products at the same time. The 80 litre bin offers lots of capacity for the food waste, scraps and soiled paper products generated in the average household per week. If food waste, scraps and soiled paper products are being generated over the 80 litre capacity residents, are encouraged to consider making use of a backyard composter for food waste.

Garbage questions

I have more than one bag of garbage permitted per week, what do I do?

Residents can purchase a [bag tag](#) to put on any bag of garbage that exceeds the one-bag-per-week limit. Bag tags cost \$2 per tag and are sold in any denomination. Residents can purchase bag tags from the [Kingston Area Recycling Centre](#), City Hall or any of the retailers listed on the [bag tag page](#). There is no limit to the number of bags of garbage that can be set out with bag tags.

I have broken glass or another sharp object, how do I dispose of it?

Broken glass, or other sharp objects pose a safety risk to collection staff if not disposed of correctly. Place any broken glass or sharp materials (with the exception of needles) in a cardboard box, tape it closed and label it with the contents. Place the box beside your garbage can/bag and the material will be collected. Needles and other sharps used for medical purposes should never be placed at the curbside for collection. A full list of locations where you can drop off these materials can be found at www.healthsteward.ca/returns/ontario.

Sharp material disposal boxes do not count toward your container/bag limits.

Where can I get a garbage can?

The City does not provide garbage cans to residents. Residents are not required to use a rigid garbage receptacle. Using a plastic or paper garbage bag that can be tied is acceptable.

Resident-purchased waste containers should:

- Be under 131L in volume and
- Should not have a lid that is connected to the bin.

How and where do I dispose/recycle large waste items like furniture, mattresses and appliances?

The City no longer operates a landfill that accepts large items such as mattresses, furniture and appliances. There are a number of privately owned transfer stations in Kingston that will accept such items. More information on these locations and other disposal options can be found on the [other diversion options page](#).

What and when are two-bag weeks?

Two-bag weeks occur three times a year when the garbage bag pick-up limit is increased from one to two bags for the collection week. Two-bag weeks are the collection weeks following:

- New Year's Day (January)
- Victoria Day (May) and
- Labour Day (September).

Refer to your [collection calendar](#) – or sign up for collection reminders – they'll let you know when it's a two-bag week.

Recycling questions

Is this item recyclable?

The City accepts all plastic, metal, glass and plastic food and beverage packaging/containers as well as packaging from regular household consumer goods for recycling.

Please disregard the recycling symbols that can be found on many items as these describe the material used to make the item and not its recyclability. To find out for sure if your material is recyclable, use our [look up tool](#).

Why do plastic bags get placed in the grey box?

Plastic bags are placed in the grey box for a number of reasons. The grey box stream tends to be dryer and cleaner than the blue box stream. Buyers and processors of recyclable plastic bags want them to be clean and dry. It

is also much easier to sort the plastic bags out of the grey box stream than the blue box stream.

Finally, materials can become bent or crushed in the blue box stream. These crushed materials can capture plastic film in the blue box, making the materials unacceptable to buyers/processors and they end up in the waste stream.

Why is coloured Styrofoam not accepted in the blue box anymore?

Coloured Styrofoam (blue, pink, black, etc.) is not accepted in the City's blue box program because there is no end market (i.e., processor that can economically recycle the packaging) available to buy/receive coloured Styrofoam. Nobody wants coloured Styrofoam. If nobody wants it, it is not recyclable.

For the City to collect and process materials there needs to be an end market willing to purchase the material to, at a minimum, offset the processing costs, or take and confirm it is being recycled into a new product. At this time there are no buyers or processors that are economically available.

My waste item has a recycling symbol on it. Why isn't it accepted in Kingston's recycling program?

The recycling symbols found on packaging (most commonly plastics) show that the item inside the packaging is made of recycled material. The use of the symbol does not mean the packaging – or that the item itself is recyclable in Kingston. The City accepts all food and beverage containers and packaging from consumer goods regardless of whether they have a recycling symbol present or not.

What happens to my recyclables after they are picked up at the curb?

Materials that are collected curbside are brought to the [Kingston Area Recycling Centre](#) and dumped on the tipping floors. Materials are then sorted by hand into the various recycling streams that are marketed to end users and brokers. The sorted material is baled and prepared for shipping to end markets. Once a full truck load of material is available, it will be sold

to end markets to be made into new consumer goods. Watch our [Curbside to KARC](#) video for more information.

Water bottles and other jugs over 15 L are not accepted curbside.

What should I do with them?

Large bottles and jugs over 15L are acceptable for recycling at the [Kingston Area Recycling Centre](#), 196 Lappan's Lane, free of charge to residents. These are not accepted curbside because the processing lines at the recycling centre are not configured to flow these large items up and down the conveyor belts. These materials are placed directly into the material ready to be baled as they would clog the system if it needed to be processed and sorted.

My business wants to recycle but the City does not collect recyclables curbside from businesses. What can I do?

Businesses are still able to recycle. There are two options available:

- Use a private contractor to collect and sort the recycling.
- Businesses can set up an account at the [Kingston Area Recycling Centre](#), 196 Lappan's Lane, where they will be able to drop off their recyclable waste. Some materials will incur a tipping fee or a rebate depending on the current market for recyclable materials. However, typically any fees are much lower than the fees that a business would be required to pay if they brought the recyclables as waste to a waste transfer station. The tipping fee/rebate schedule can be obtained by contacting Jason Hollett, disposal supervisor, at jhollett@cityofkingston.ca or 613-546-4291 ext. 2702.

I visited a city that allows residents to place all recyclables into one box or cart. Why does the City require residents to separate recyclables into blue and grey boxes? And why does collection only occur every other week?

Processing single-stream recycling (all items in one box or cart) requires a state-of-the-art-facility where all materials go through one intake line that is equipped with multiple optical sorters that detect specific types of material

and direct them to the proper storage compartments in the recyclable facility. These facilities are costly and require a large incoming feedstock to support the financial investment to build or retrofit.

At this time the Kingston area does not process a large enough quantity of waste to support a single-stream recycling program. The City's recycling centre does not operate as a single-stream facility. The [Kingston Area Recycling Centre](#) currently operates as a four stream facility (cardboard, fibers, containers and glass). Curbside residents are only required to use two boxes, blue and grey, while collection staff separate cardboard and glass at the curb to feed these four streams. Each truck can only handle two streams at a time, so the materials must be collected on opposite weeks to prevent contamination.

I noticed that the City does not provide recycling containers beside all public garbage cans, why?

Public recycling receptacles are costly, and so is the time City staff must take to collect recyclables and check to see if receptacles are full. From 2017 to 2019 the City is adding recycling receptacles at key public areas to increase diversion and send less to landfill. Residents are encouraged to hold onto recyclables when they can and find the nearest recycling receptacle.

The City recycles batteries, so why can't I place batteries into my blue or grey box?

The City's recycling processing facility is configured to process blue and grey box materials and cannot accept forms of hazardous waste in that facility. As a result, batteries require special collection.

Organics and green bin questions

Do I have to use a liner in my green bin?

We recommend you use a liner. It will keep your green bin fresher longer and help your collector empty the green bin smoothly each time. However, liners are not required to be used in your green bin or your kitchen catcher.

Liners do help in the prevention of smells, help keep your green bins and kitchen catchers cleaner and help with the ease of transporting these materials between the kitchen catcher and green bin.

What is difference between my green bin and a back-yard composter?

Material in the green bin is processed in an industrial facility where temperatures and moisture control is greater and helps in breaking down material quickly and safely. Since the process is more involved, materials such as citrus fruit, dairy, meat and bones can all be composted in the green bin program. These materials will either not break down or will take excessive amounts of time to break down or attract rodents in a back yard composter.

Does the green bin attract bugs and rodents?

A well-maintained green bin (rinsed regularly and used with liners) in a good state of repair, tends not to attract bugs or rodents. It also helps to place your green bin at the curb every week regardless of how much material is in it. Bins that are poorly maintained, that sit for weeks at a time without collection or that are damaged, are more likely to attract rodents and bugs. Damaged green bins can be replaced at the [Kingston Area Recycling Centre](#).

Does the green bin smell?

A well maintained green bin that is collected weekly rarely smells. Smells tend to become an issue when food is placed in an unlined green bin and allowed to sit for a number of weeks without being collected. If these bins are not rinsed after collection, a film or material may begin to form in the bin which can lead to significant odours and a build-up of material in the bottom that – no matter how hard your collector tries – will never come out.

To prevent odours, simply rinse your bin regularly, use liners if desired and place materials out for collection on a weekly basis. This becomes more important in the hot summer months.

How do I prevent material from freezing in my green bin?

Material freezes to the green bin for one reason: moisture. By reducing the amount of moisture present in the green bin you can help reduce the likelihood of materials sticking. Use some of these tips to prevent sticking:

- Use a cooking spray to form an oily barrier between the plastic bin and your Green Bin waste. This helps prevent material from sticking to the sides of your green bin
- Pre freeze your material. Frozen kitchen catcher contents are less likely to stick to your green bin than thawed materials
- Add balled paper or leaves to the bottom of your green bin. This acts as an extra layer to absorb moisture and prevent materials from sticking to the bin.

How do I keep my green bin clean?

There are two simple ways to keep your green bin clean:

- Use a liner, either in the kitchen catcher or the green bin (leaf and yard waste bags work great for this).
- If you chose not to line your bin, rinse the bin out every couple of collections. This prevents the build-up of rotting materials in your bin. Add a bit of dish soap if the bin is very bad.

I filled my green bin with ONLY garden waste. It's compostable so why wasn't it collected?

The City does not collect green bins that contain only garden/yard waste. Food waste must be present and visible to collection staff for a green bin to be collected. The green bin is for food waste first.

Which liners are acceptable in the green bin?

Any paper liners, or liners with the BPI-certified compostable logo, are acceptable liners. You can [make a liner using newspaper](#), paper towels

and microwavable popcorn bags. Biodegradable, oxo-degradable and plastic bags are not acceptable.

My green bin is filled with water and other food waste, why wasn't it collected?

If your green bin is full of water it is likely overweight. There is a weight limit of 66lbs (30kg) on the green bins. If your bin exceeds this weight, it will not be collected. Also, the green bin is not meant for liquids. The trucks used to collect green bins are not water tight and any collected liquids may end spilling out of the truck.

Can I empty my deep-fryer grease into the green bin?

No. No liquids are acceptable in the green bin.

My business wants to use the green bin but the City does not collect organics curbside from businesses. What can I do?

Businesses can contact a private company to set up an organics collection service.

I used a liner that indicated it was biodegradable, so why didn't the City collect my green bin?

The City only accepts paper or BPI-certified compostable bags as liners. Material in your green bin is turned into compost within eight weeks of being collected curbside and biodegradable products take much longer than this to break down (3-6 months for bags).

I placed biodegradable containers in my green bin. Why didn't the City collect my green bin?

Material in your green bin is turned into compost within eight weeks of being collected curbside and biodegradable products take much longer than this to break down (more than six months).

Where can I get a backyard composter?

Back yard composters can be purchased at the [Kingston Area Recycling Centre](#), 196 Lappans Lane. Composters cost \$43.00 (2017 Rate).

I have been placing meat, poultry and fish bones into my backyard composters and it's attracting pests and doesn't seem to be composting. Why?

Meat, poultry and fish bones do not belong in your backyard composter. These materials do not break down properly in a backyard composter setting, as temperatures are too low. The non-compostable food wastes will attract pests and wildlife as they will feed on these materials.

Meats and bones are acceptable in the green bin as the municipal recycling process attains significantly higher temperatures that allow these materials to compost.

I dug up an area on my lawn for a garden and placed the sod and dirt into my green bin. Why didn't the City collect my green bin?

Dirt, soil, rocks and sand are not acceptable in the green bin. The sod would have been acceptable if all dirt had been removed from the roots.

Leaf and yard-waste questions

When does the City pick up leaves and brush?

The City offers brush and leaf collections every year in the fall. Brush is collected beginning in October and leaves are collected in November into December. More information can be found on the [yard waste page](#).

I set out my Jack-o-Lantern/pumpkin on top/beside my green bin, why wasn't it collected?

Only materials that are placed inside a green bin will be collected. Any materials that are placed beside or on top of the green bin will be left behind.

When is the City's Christmas Tree collection?

The city does not collect Christmas Trees. Christmas Trees can be dropped off at the leaf and yard waste depot at the [Kingston Area Recycling Centre](#), 196 Lappan's Lane, or at Norterra Organics, 2069 Joyceville Rd., free of charge.

I placed my yard waste in paper bags and put it beside my green bin. Why wasn't it collected?

Only material that is placed in your green bin will be collected. Additional bags of yard waste will be left curbside if placed beside your green bin. The City only collects brush and leaves during the fall, more information can be found on the [yard waste page](#).

My neighbourhood is the first to receive leaf collection in the fall, but my leaves have not fallen off the trees yet. Why can't the City collect the entire City later in November when all of the leaves are off the trees?

The City does not have the human and vehicle resources to condense its leaf collection schedule. The City uses the same vehicles used for garbage and green bin collection to collect brush and leaves. Prolonging the collection leaves too long does not provide enough time for the City to visit every household before the winter season begins.

Household hazardous waste questions

Where do I bring my hazardous waste and when?

Hazardous waste can be dropped off at the [Hazardous Waste Depot](#) at the [Kingston Area Recycling Centre](#), 196 Lappan's Lane, on Thursdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., or Saturday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. from April until the end of November.

I have empty paint cans, what do I do with them?

Empty paint cans are not hazardous waste. Empty metal paint cans can be dropped off at any free metal drop-off including the one at the Kingston Area Recycling Centre, 196 Lappan's Lane. Empty plastic paint cans are garbage.

It's winter (December-March). What do I do with my hazardous waste?

Please visit www.makethedrop.ca or www.regeneration.ca to see if the material you are attempting to dispose of has a drop-off location in Kingston. If there are no disposal options available, you will have to store the material until the spring.

How do I dispose of medication or needles?

Medication and needles need to be returned to a pharmacy. The household hazardous waste depot will not accept [medications or needles](#). You can find the location closest to you by visiting www.healthsteward.ca.

Miscellaneous questions

I heard/read an ad for Giveaway Day. What is that?

[Giveaway Days](#) happen three times a year in Kingston. On these days announced by the City, residents are invited to put unwanted but usable items to their curb for free pick-up by their neighbours who might like them. Put a “Free” sign on your Giveaway Day goods. Should items placed out for collection not be picked up, they must be brought in at the end of the day. The City will not dispose of uncollected items.

Where can I take electronics?

Electronics are not accepted at the Kingston Area Recycling Centre. Please visit www.recyclemyelectronics.ca to find the closest electronic waste drop-off location.

Where can I take tires?

Tires can be disposed of at a number of locations in Kingston. Visit www.rethinktires.ca to find the location nearest to you. The Kingston Area Recycling Centre does not accept tires.

Where can I take textiles (clothes and other fabrics) for recycling?

[Textiles](#) can be dropped off at a number of locations for reuse or recycling. Donation bins and community reuse stores are the easiest disposal locations. All materials collected in these bins will either be reused or recycled into new products

Do you accept textiles at KARC?

Yes, the [Kingston Area Recycling Centre](#) (KARC), 196 Lappan’s Lane, has donation bins for both Diabetes Canada and the Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy. All textile materials collected in these bins will either be resold, or turned into rags or other end uses.

Do dropped-off textiles have to be in good condition for another person to wear or use?

No. Materials that are too worn or stained will be repurposed for other end uses such as rags or insulation. Please do not donate used undergarments.