



Ontario Extended Producer Responsibility Recycling System

Ontario has completed an update to its blue bin program and who is responsible for waste collection. Ontario Environment Minister Todd McCarthy says the change will make recycling "easier and more consistent" across the province. According to Circular Materials, municipalities are collectively saving more than \$200 million under the new system.

1. Change in the responsibility for collection services to the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Framework

In 2023, Ontario began a transition away from municipal waste collection services to a framework where the private sector is responsible for the recycling of materials they produce.

On January 1, 2026, Ontario completed a three-year transition to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging and paper products. EPR means that the companies that make and sell food, beverage and consumer products are now responsible for collecting and recycling the packaging they sell them in. This means municipalities and taxpayers no longer pay for recycling services as this cost will now be paid by producers.

Holding companies responsible for the cost of recycling this material at end of life encourages them to think more critically about the packaging materials they choose.

Under the Blue Box Regulation, Circular Materials is now the producer responsibility organization (PRO) accountable for residential recycling of packaging material. While Circular Materials coordinates the provincewide system, one of several local contractors manage curbside recycling collection, depending on where you live. There are several private collection companies including GFL, Miller Waste, Waste Management, Waste Connections and Emterra.

The entity that picks up your garbage depends on your specific municipality or local region. You may need to contact a different contractor (appointed by Circular Materials) for recycling inquiries (e.g., missed collections or bin replacements) than the one who picks up your general garbage.

If something goes wrong or you have questions about recycling collection, your municipality likely can't help you anymore. For recycling issues, or questions about your blue bin, missed pickups or what goes where, contact Circular Materials at <https://www.circularmaterials.ca> and find the recycler that operates in your area at <https://www.circularmaterials.ca/resident-provinces/ontario/>.

2. What can be recycled

As of January 1, 2026, a new recycling system is in place. Under the new system, everyone in Ontario can recycle the same materials, and more materials will be diverted from landfill.

Full list of recyclables across Ontario:

Paper & fibre

Cardboard boxes (max 60x60 cm)

Boxboard — cereal boxes, tissue boxes, toilet paper and paper towel rolls, egg cartons

Paper laminate packaging — pet food bags, glossy paper bags, paper plates

Notepads, loose paper, file folders, other printed materials

Newspapers, flyers, magazines, brochures

Paper bags, gift boxes, greeting cards, envelopes

Shredded paper (in a tied clear plastic bag)

Containers

Paper laminate containers — spiral cans, ice cream tubs, hot and cold beverage cups (lids off)

Cartons — for milk, creamer, broth, soup, molasses, etc. (lids on)

Rigid plastics — laundry detergent jugs, shampoo bottles, peanut butter jars, yogurt containers, food trays, black plastic containers (lids on)

Tubes — for toothpaste, deodorant tubes, hand cream, etc. (lids on) (NEW)

Foam packaging — Styrofoam containers, meat trays, takeout cups, packing peanuts (NEW)

Glass — bottles and jars, cosmetic bottles, spice containers (lids off)

Metal — cans, tins, metal lids, aluminum foil (balled up), pie plates, frozen food trays

Aerosol cans — food sprays, hairspray, air fresheners, shaving cream, deodorant (non-toxic only, lids on) (NEW)

Flexible plastic packaging

Plastic bags — for produce, bread, milk, dry cleaning, newspapers, etc. (NEW)

Overwrap — for paper towel, toilet paper, etc. (NEW)

Bubble wrap, plastic gift bags (NEW)

Coffee bags, deli pouches, chip bags, snack wrappers, cereal liner bags (NEW)

As always, all recyclables should be empty and rinsed so that they're free from food and other residues. Cardboard should also be flattened.

You still cannot recycle any alcohol containers in the blue bin.

In most municipalities, your bin stays the same and collection dates have not changed. It may be a different truck coming to collect, and it may come at a different time of day. Garbage, green bin and yard waste collection remain totally unchanged and will still be handled by your local municipality as usual. Ultimately, Ontario's new blue bin system is meant to make recycling easier and consistent.

Concerns for Farm Operations

Several farmers have learned that they no longer have recycling collection. Contact Circular Materials to find the area recycling company at <https://www.circularmaterials.ca/resident-provinces/ontario/>. Ensure the company understands that there is a residency at your location, as identified on your property tax roll, to ensure you receive recycling services, and if this company also manages municipal garbage collection, the same message applies.

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