

Multi-family Recycling Guide

for Building Owners and Managers





Overview

The Waste & Recycling Bylaw requires multi-family complexes to provide on-site recycling for residents.

The bylaw requires that all multifamily owners:

- Provide on-site storage for recyclables.
- Have enough storage to hold all of your complex's recyclables.
- Accept at least the same materials that can go in blue carts.
- Arrange for the material to be collected for recycling.

During stakeholder engagement, you told us that flexibility and choice were important. That's why each building or complex is able to decide how and where to store recyclables and who will collect them.

Waste & Recycling Services will not collect multi-family recyclables (with a very limited exception for some multi-family complexes that receive black cart garbage collection. See page 7 for details). Instead, building owners and managers can either hire a private recycler, or make arrangements to collect the recyclables themselves.

What is multi-family housing?

Waste & Recycling Services defines multi-family housing as any complex with five or more residential units on a single parcel of land. This can include apartments, townhouses, mobile home parks, housing co-operatives, and developments serviced by private roads.

The Waste & Recycling Bylaw applies to all multi-family complexes.

Flexibility and choice

All multi-family complexes are different, and there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution. The bylaw is deliberately written to give you choice and flexibility about how the recyclables are stored and collected. You are able to choose:

- How your recycling will be collected, either by:
 - » Hiring a private recycler, or
 - » Coordinating the collection of material yourself and taking your complex's material to a Community Recycling Depot or directly to a recycling facility (suitable for smaller complexes).
- Where and how your recycling is stored.
- How often your recycling is collected.

What do I need to do?

There are three things to keep in mind for your recycling program:

1. Who will collect your recyclables.
2. What materials you accept.
3. Where and how to store your recyclables.

This guide has details about what you need to be bylaw compliant. You can also visit calgary.ca/multifamilyrecycling for information and resources.

1. Who – Decide who will provide recycling service

There are many private recyclers that service multi-family buildings. Many will also give you support to find adequate storage opportunities and communicate with your residents.

Recycling can significantly reduce garbage from multi-family homes.



Hiring a private recycler

You can hire a private recycler the same way you hire a private garbage hauler, landscaper or any other service provider. You have the flexibility to find a company that can best serve your complex's needs, and the freedom to manage the contract as you see fit.

Costs will vary between multi-family building types, private recyclers and the type of service they offer. Consider getting quotes like you would for other services.

See page 6 for tips on hiring a private recycler.

Hauling your own recycling

You also have the option to take your complex's recyclables directly to a private recycling facility or a Community Recycling Depot yourself. This solution still needs to be coordinated with maintenance staff, residents, or any other individual taking the materials. It is the building owner's responsibility to ensure material collected is taken for recycling. This solution is best suited for smaller complexes.

If you decide to use a Community Recycling Depot, make sure you follow some basic rules:

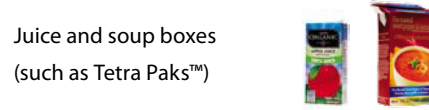
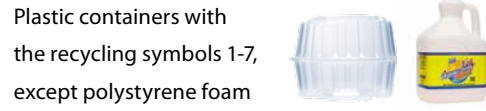
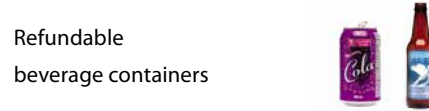
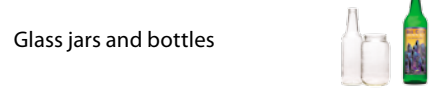
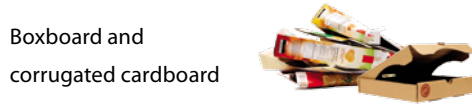
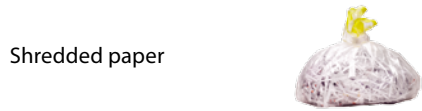
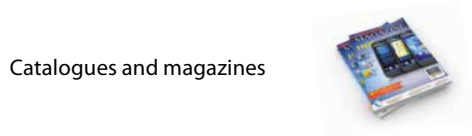
- Acceptable materials are listed under the multi-family recycling rules. (See page 4).
- Material must be loose (except: shredded paper, which should be in tied, clear bags; and plastic bags, which should be bunched together).
- Only place material in the bin deposit slots.
- Do not leave material outside of the bins.
- Do not tamper with or damage the bins in any way.

Note that private recyclers are prohibited from using Community Recycling Depots. The bylaw states:

"Commercial hauler" means a person engaged in the business of collecting waste and recyclable materials from premises for transport to a disposal site or material recovery facility.

2. What – Make sure you accept the right material

Your program must accept at least the same material as blue carts. This means:



Some private recyclers let you mix all the materials in one bin, and some ask to sort recycling into separate bins. Either option is acceptable. Some private recyclers may accept other recyclable materials, but this is optional.

3. Where – Decide where to store your recyclables

You will need to find an on-site location to store your complex's recyclables. The more convenient the location, the more likely that your residents will use it. The Waste & Recycling Bylaw is intended to make sure that recycling is easy and accessible for multi-family residents. If your containers are kept in good condition and there are enough that they are not overflowing between collection days, you have adequate containers for your complex.

There is a wide range of building layouts, so the look of this space will vary from complex to complex. Here are a few ideas that may work for you:

- If you have more than one garbage container now, consider switching out one or more for recycling containers.
- If you have one garbage container but a little extra space in your garbage area, you may be able to set up some smaller bins to collect recyclables.
- If you have a large waste container you could downsize to create space for a recycling bin.
- Recycling storage doesn't have to be all in one place. It is okay to have several smaller storage areas, such as on each floor of the building, in each building in the complex, or even in each unit.
- If two neighbouring buildings agree to work together, one could use their garbage enclosure for recyclables and the other for waste. All residents would need to be able to easily access both areas.

Development permits

Most complexes should be able to find storage solutions that don't require renovations or permits, such as changing the way the garbage is stored within existing waste storage areas.

If any changes are made to the building, landscaping or parking a new or revised Development Permit is required. If you have any questions, contact 311.

Fire code

When deciding where and how to set up your recycling area, there are a few key fire code considerations you should follow.

Indoors

- Recyclables should not block hallways, stairwells, doorways or any other area needed for a safe exit route from the building.
- Material should not accumulate to the point where it creates a fire hazard. As long as there is regular collection, this should not be an issue.
- Service rooms (furnace, maintenance, sprinkler control, utility rooms) cannot be used to store residential recyclable or waste materials.

Outdoors

- Outdoor storage receptacles, such as dumpsters, should be located so that they do not create an undue fire hazard to surrounding buildings.
- Measures must be taken to ensure that buildings are protected from fires in outdoor receptacles. For example:
 - » Place your bins in a secure area.
 - » Do not position bins under eaves, carports or building overhangs.
 - » Schedule regular pick up and/or call for immediate pick up if the bin is full.

If you have questions about whether your recycling plans adhere to the Alberta Fire Code, contact 311 and ask for a general Fire inquiry.

Safety and traffic flow

Your recycling storage should not pose a safety hazard to users or impede the flow of traffic in or around your parking area.

Access to other containers

All containers should be accessible for collection without interfering with containers for another service. A collector should not have to move recycling containers out of the way to reach other containers or vice versa, and there must be enough space for all containers to be collected safely. This will make collection more efficient.

Talk to a recycler

Private recyclers can be good resources for recycling recommendations and setting up your program. Green Calgary maintains a list of local recyclers, that you can find at greencalgary.org or by calling 403-230-1443. If you are planning to do your own recycling and have questions, contact 311.

Tips – Hiring a private recycler

Under the Waste & Recycling Bylaw, all multi-family complexes are required to have on-site recycling for residents. The City does not collect multi-family recyclables. The City does not collect multi-family recyclables, with a very limited exception for some multi-family complexes that receive black cart garbage collection (see page 7 for details). Instead, building owners and managers must make arrangements to either collect the recyclables themselves, or hire a private company to do it.

Green Calgary maintains a directory of private recyclers that service multi-family complexes at greencalgary.org.

Questions to ask

Here are some questions to consider when talking to a prospective recycler.

About the company

- What kinds of buildings do you service?
- Do you have a standard contract?
- What will the service cost?
- How will I be invoiced?
- Will you help us determine if we have the right number of recycling containers and give an opportunity to adjust if needed?

About the pick-up service

- Do you collect all of the materials that the bylaw requires? (See page 4 for the full list of materials required)
- Do you collect other miscellaneous items?
- What kind of recycling storage options do you offer? Are you able to be flexible about storage locations and container types?
 - » Note, you should invite the potential service provider to see available space at your building and talk about storage solutions.
- Do you provide recycling containers?
- Where do you take your recyclable material after you pick it up?
- Do you need us to sort our own material, or can it be mixed?
- How must the material be prepared?
- How will the material be picked up?
- How often will you collect?

About additional services

- Will you provide signs, flyers or other support to help my residents learn how to use the service?
 - » Note, most private recyclers will do this. If not, you can find templates and other resources to help you at calgary.ca/multifamilyrecycling.

Other topics

Can we get recycling service from The City?

In most cases, no. The multi-family recycling program is primarily a private sector solution designed to offer flexibility and choice. The City will not be providing any front-end-loader bins for multi-family recycling.

However, blue cart recycling service may be provided to multi-family complexes that already receive black cart garbage collection, if they meet certain serviceability criteria. If you own or manage a complex with City black cart garbage collection and you are interested in getting recycling collection as well, contact 311 to see if your complex is eligible. You still have a choice to have service from a private recycler or to take the material yourself.

Ninety-three per cent of multi-family residents are in favour of a city-wide recycling program.



How do I get my residents to use recycling?

Effective recycling tips

Although not mandatory requirements, the following suggestions may help promote recycling in your building, encourage the proper use of bins and prevent contamination issues.

Make your recycling area easy to use for residents

- Place bins in convenient areas for your residents. Work with your recycling provider to find an area that is close to the dwelling units or near a common area where residents frequently travel.
- If the waste and recycling bins are not located in the same area, place a waste container next to the recycling bins. This helps reduce contamination as residents have an opportunity to make proper disposal choices.
- Make the recycling area prominent and visible. Make sure residents can recognize the recycling area at a distance.
- Ensure the area is well lit and tidy.
- Use similar types of bins for storing recyclables. Consistency between the bins reduces confusion about where recyclables belong.

These steps promote residents to actively use the recycling opportunity in your building.

Tell your residents about the recycling program

Provide each unit with an information package that explains the following:

- What items can and cannot be recycled.
- How the items should be prepared and sorted.
- Where the recycling bins are located.
- How to get rid of common items (e.g. furniture, electronics, motor oil, household chemicals) not accepted in your regular collection.

A letter template is available on calgary.ca/multifamilyrecycling. We recommend that you provide this information periodically throughout the year to residents as a reminder.

Use signs, labels and posters

Post labels about what goes in each bin at eye level or on the front of each bin. Residents will immediately see where to put their recyclables and avoid any confusion.

Put up signs in your building's common areas (e.g. lobby, mailbox room, elevators, laundry and recycling rooms). Create posters using pictures to explain what can and cannot be recycled. Pictures are easier to recognize and help residents who may speak different languages. A number of free images are available on calgary.ca/multifamilyrecycling or contact your recycling hauler who may have information to assist you.

Consider laminating or covering signs and posters with plexi-glass to keep them clean.

Encourage new residents to recycle

Provide new residents with an information package and offer a move-in tour to walk them through your collection areas. Show them how your collection system works.

Consider giving residents a reusable tote bag or small recycling container to make recycling convenient and easy to do.

Train your on-site staff about your program

If you have on-site staff such as maintenance staff or a property manager, ensure they are knowledgeable about the recycling program so they can help answer questions from residents and point out problems. Key information to pass along may include:

- Where the recycling bins are located.
- What can and cannot be recycled.
- How residents should prepare materials for recycling.
- How to resolve common problems.
- Contact details for your recycling provider.
- Where to get more information.

Monitor your program

By regularly visiting the recycling area in your building you can identify any issues that need to be addressed.

- Look for contamination inside the recycling bins and identify common items that are unacceptable. Educate tenants about these common mistakes with signage in the recycling area.

- Check that the signs and bin labels are easy to read. Replace signage/labels that are faded or ripped.
- Check that the recycling area is clean and tidy. Clear out any obstacles that make it difficult to access the recycling bins.

Provide regular reminders to residents

Well-informed residents will reduce problems and improve use of the recycling opportunity in your building. Keep residents up to speed by providing them with regular updates.

Ask for feedback from your recycling hauler

Your hauler may be able to give you feedback on how the recycling program is going. Feedback might include tonnes recycled, comments on contamination, damage to bins and reasons for missed collection. Feedback to residents will further support recycling in your building.

Ask your hauler to offer guidance and support. They may also offer additional resource materials that can be given to residents.

How do I reduce illegal dumping?

To reduce the likelihood of illegal dumping, consider:

- Storing your containers inside the building or in an enclosure.
- Locking containers stored outside between collections.
- Storing containers in well lit areas close to your building.

Talk to your service provider about further options they may have.

How do I get more information?

Visit calgary.ca/multifamilyrecycling for the most up-to-date information.

If you have a question that hasn't been answered here, contact 311.

