



CONTAMINATED RECYCLING BIN POLICY

Summary:

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear direction as to how Council will manage residents/businesses who repeatedly contaminate their recycling bin.

Policy Number	(Insert)
File Number	N/A
Document version	Version 1
Adoption Date	26 September 2022
Approved By	Council;
Endorsed By	Executive Management Team
Minute Number	(Insert)
Consultation Period	4 October to 24 November 2022
Review Due Date	September 2025 – 3 years
Department	Water & Waste Management
Policy Custodian	Manager of Water & Waste
Superseded Documents	N/A
Related Legislation	Local Government Act 1993 Local Government Act (Regulations) 2021 Waste Minimisation and Management Act 1995 The Protection of the Environment Operations (POEO) Act 1997 Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001
Delegations of Authority	Chief Executive, Director Infrastructure, Manager Water & Waste, WTS Operators

1. Overview

The policy has been developed to set a standard for intervention with premises that are not putting the correct materials in their co-mingled recycling bins. The purpose is to ensure that the quality of recycling materials collected in the Tenterfield Shire is within the acceptable contamination standards as specified within the contract with the current recycling facility.

The procedures within outline how to deal with Repeat Offenders in order to reduce contamination of the co-mingled recyclables, thereby maximising the effectiveness of the recycling operation.

2. Policy Principles

The principle of this policy is to maximise the effectiveness of the recycling operation by dealing with premises that repeatedly contaminate their co-mingled recycling bins.

3. Policy Objectives

The objective of this policy is:

- Achieve waste minimisation targets and compliance with contractual obligations.
- Minimise recycling bin contamination
- Assist in the provision of an environmentally and financially sustainable Council through efficient and effective recycling

4. Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the steps taken when a resident/business repeatedly contaminates their recycling bin.

5. Scope

The following outlines the advice on how to deal with a resident with contaminated recycling bins. Items which are accepted in the co-mingled recycling bins are outlined on the top of recycling bins and in the recycle right information provided on Council's website at [Recycling | Tenterfield Shire Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://Recycling | Tenterfield Shire Council (nsw.gov.au))

For the purposes of this policy a minimum contamination level in the recycling bin is required before reporting the contamination as an 'offence'.

5.1 Contamination

Contamination of co-mingled recycling includes, but is not limited to:

- Plastic bags; or
- General waste; or
- Nappies; or
- Green waste; or
- Electrical or e-waste; or
- Any large or unacceptable items, such as polystyrene packaging, car batteries, plastic washing baskets; or
- Sharps, including needles; or
- Other medical wastes, including drip bags; or
- Steel pipes, pieces; or
- Dead animals; or
- Clothes, blankets, rugs, carpet; or
- Oil, chemicals, batteries or other hazardous materials.

5.2 Bin Inspections

Random bin inspections will be conducted by Council to check bins for contamination. These inspections may be guided by reports of previous contamination caused by the customer.

Bins that are found to have contamination during a random bin inspection will be tagged for the customer's information and an educational letter sent to the customer by Council, informing them of the correct materials to go into the bin.

Bins that are found to be contaminated during a random bin inspection will be reported in the same manner of bin contamination found during collection and will be recorded as a warning offence.

5.3 Contamination – Visible at the kerbside

Prior to emptying, if a bin is found to contain contamination, the driver will assess the severity of the contamination and collect the bin only when they deem appropriate. An assessment will be made as to whether contamination has been (for example) apparently added to the top of the bin after placement on the kerb, or whether it appears to pervade the bin. If contamination is throughout the bin, immediate feedback will be provided via a contamination notification sticker applied to the bin.

Instances where there is gross contamination of the bin, the driver will not collect the recycling bin. The bin will be collected as general waste, at additional cost to the premises.

In addition, the resident will receive a letter of notification of the contamination incident reinforcing the correct recyclable materials.

Occurrence will be recorded as an official warning.

5.4 Contamination – Visible via camera during collection

Council's collection vehicles are fitted with a camera in the collection hopper, linked to in-cabin monitors that allow the drivers to observe the contents of the bin as it is emptied and identify the specific contamination. Where contamination is not visible at kerbside, contamination will be reviewed using the camera system as the bin is emptied, allowing the driver to conduct a more comprehensive visual audit of the bin contents. An assessment will be made as to whether contamination has been (for example) apparently added to the top of the bin after placement on the kerb, or whether it appears to pervade the bin. If contamination is throughout the bin, immediate feedback will be provided via a contamination notification sticker applied to the bin.

In addition, the resident will receive a letter of notification of the contamination incident reinforcing the correct recyclable materials.

A warning of occurrence will be recorded.

5.5 Multiple occurrences – second occurrence

Should a contamination incident occur of the same bin service, for the second time at a premise within three (3) months of the initial occurrence, the driver will record the address and apply a non-collection notification sticker, if appropriate, or a contamination notification sticker.

A letter will also be issued to the resident outlining the contamination incident, previous contamination history recorded at the property and the dates the previous incident occurred. This letter will also inform the resident that the recycling bin would not be collected and/or removed from the property should one more contamination incident occur. If the property owner has a different address, a copy of the letter will be sent to the Property Owner as well.

All efforts will be made to educate and assist residents in the correct use of their bin and to develop strategies with them to manage contamination, including contamination by others. Only after failure to secure compliance from the customer would the service be altered.

5.6 Multiple occurrences – third occurrence

Should a contamination incident occur for a third time at a premise within four (4) weeks of the second occurrence, the driver will record the address and apply a non-collection notification sticker to the bin.

The driver will contact the Manager Water and Waste regarding the ongoing contamination at the property, providing detailed history of contamination occurrences and provide advice of the removal of the bin.

Arrangement will be made for the bin to be collected as general waste and then removed from the property directly following the collection.

Council will send the resident a letter advising of the non-collection and/or removal of the recycling bin for the duration of six (6) months, contamination history recorded at the property and the dates the previous incidents occurred. If the property owner has a different address, a copy of the letter will be sent to the Property Owner as well.

5.7 Reinstatement of Bins

Ratepayers are expected to continue to pay for the full waste collection/service charge in respect of the six (6) months period during which the recycling bin is not collected and/or such is removed from the property.

After the duration of six (6) months, the bins can be reinstated on application and approval from Council. For the bin to be reinstated, the resident must sign a pledge agreeing not to contaminate their bin and pay a reinstatement fee (see the fees and charges).

If at any time the drivers observe an additional bin at the premises that the bin has been removed, they are to make a record of this fact and report to the Manager of Water and Waste. The additional bin will be investigated and removed if required. Additional bins will not be collected.

In the instance of a tenanted (rental) property where bins have been removed and there is a tenant change, the bin can be reinstated on application if evidence of tenant change is provided and the new residents signs a pledge agreeing not to contaminate their bin. In this instance, a reinstatement fee will not apply.

Additional monitoring and bin inspections of the reinstated bins will be undertaken.

5.8 Further occurrence - recurrence

If the bin needs to be removed a second time, the offending property will not be allowed a replacement unless there is a change of tenant or property owner.

Prevention Notice / Infringement Notice may be applied depending upon the circumstances of contamination.

5.9 Additional bins

If a property has two (2) contamination offences in the previous six (6) months they will not be eligible to request any additional recycling services.

If a property has had the bin removed, they cannot receive any additional bins

6. Accountability, Roles & Responsibility

Elected Council

Adopt and support the Contaminated Recycling Bin Policy.

General Manager, Executive and Management Teams

Adopt and support the Contaminated Recycling Bin Policy.

Management Oversight Group

Continue to support and include system risk as described in the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001.

Manager Water & Waste

Responsible for ensuring compliance with Policy, Regulation and guidelines.

7. Definitions

Contamination: Contamination of the recycling bin is when items that are not able to be recycled according to Council's Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) are placed in the recycling bin.

Repeatedly: In order for a residence to be considered to repeatedly contaminate their recycling bin, they will have placed un-recyclable items in their bin three (3) times within a six (6) month period.

8. Related Documents, Standards & Guidelines

- Waste Minimisation and Management Act 1995
- The Protection of the Environment Operations (POEO) Act 1997
- Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001
- Local Government Act 1993

- Local Government General (Regulations) 2021

9. Version Control & Change History

Version	Date	Modified by	Details
V1.0		Council	Adoption of Original Policy