



Beyond  
Recycling

## MEETING THE ZERO WASTE CHALLENGE

The Regional District of Nanaimo launched its blue box recycling program in 1991, accepting only newspaper and glass and metal food and beverage containers. The program has expanded since then to include cardboard, household paper, rigid plastic containers, aluminum foil and trays and textile clothing and linens.

In 2006, the average household recycled roughly 125 kilograms of material through their blue box program. That means approximately 26% of our household waste is now being diverted from the landfill through curbside recycling. Your efforts have a positive impact on the environment and help control garbage collection and disposal costs. Future expansion of curbside recycling to include food waste could provide even greater benefits.

### OUR GOAL

Reducing the amount of waste generated conserves resources, saves landfill space and minimizes our environmental footprint. That's why the RDN adopted Zero Waste as the region's long-term goal and set an interim target of diverting 75% of the region's waste from the Regional Landfill by 2010. A waste composition study done in 2004 found that as much as 50% of our household garbage consists of materials that could be composted in a composting facility. Finding a way to separate those organic materials from other

household garbage and divert them from the landfill is a key measure in reaching our waste reduction goal.

### ORGANICS DIVERSION LEADS THE WAY

The RDN launched the first phase of its organics diversion program in 2005 and banned commercial food waste from the landfill. Restaurants, grocery stores and other businesses now divert almost 500 tonnes of commercial food waste per month to International Composting Corporation (ICC), the region's only licensed composting facility. Householders on selected

routes in the region are now building on that success by participating in the residential food waste collection pilot project.

In November 2007, 2000 households on three routes in Nanaimo, Qualicum Beach, and Cedar began recycling their food waste, kitchen scraps and food-soiled paper through the curbside food waste collection pilot project. Homes participating in the project are doing a great job of making sure their organic waste goes into their green bins rather than the garbage. In the first two months alone, over 35 tonnes of compostable organics was sent to ICC for processing into compost or fertilizer instead of going to the landfill.

Although it's still early in the pilot project, participating households have so far managed to increase the amount of waste they are diverting from the landfill from 26% to 70% or more. In the next six months, RDN and municipal staff will review feedback from participants. Their input, along with the impact on diversion from the landfill, and the need for new equipment and infrastructure will

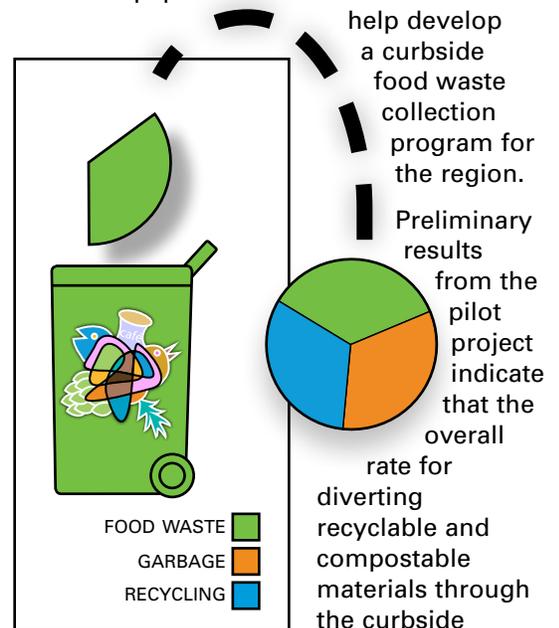
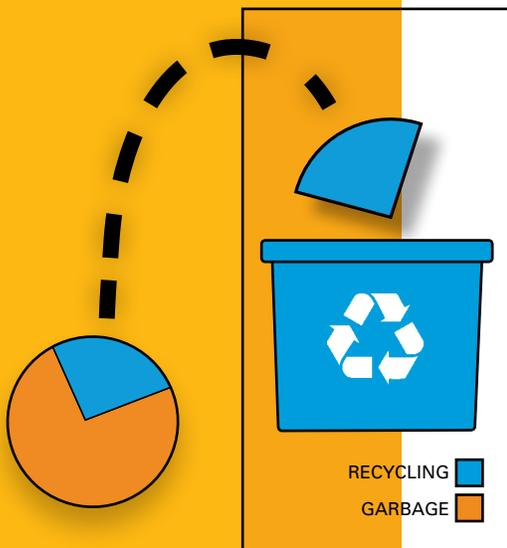
help develop a curbside food waste collection program for the region.

Preliminary results

from the pilot project indicate that the overall

rate for diverting recyclable and compostable materials through the curbside recycling program

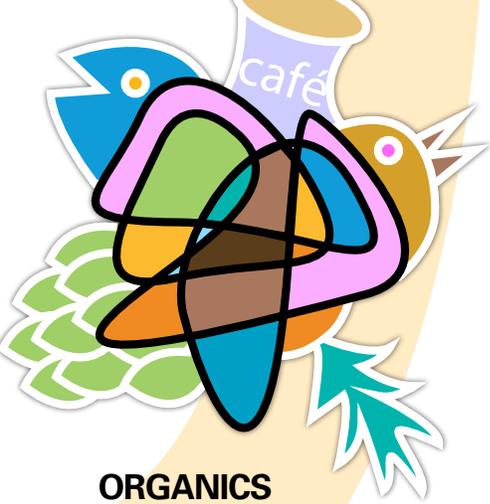
could climb by more than 40%. Introducing a region-wide residential food waste collection would put us well on the way to achieving the Zero Waste Plan target of diverting 75% of our waste from the landfill by 2010.



RDN GARBAGE  
AND RECYCLING  
COLLECTION  
PROGRAM  
NEWSLETTER

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- New Garbage & Recycling Schedules coming
- Where to get garbage tags



## ORGANICS DIVERSION REDUCES GREENHOUSE GASES

Keeping food waste and other compostable waste out of the Regional Landfill doesn't just save landfill space – it significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Landfill gas, comprised of roughly equal amounts of methane and carbon dioxide, is produced when microbes decompose organic matter in a landfill.

In Canada, landfills produce approximately 25% of all methane emissions. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas with 21 times the global warming effect of carbon dioxide. It's estimated that full implementation of a curbside food waste organics collection program in the RDN would offset 1,825 tonnes of methane from the landfill, equivalent to 38,325 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

## NEW GARBAGE AND RECYCLING SCHEDULES COMING IN MARCH

In March 2008, new one-year Garbage and Recycling Schedules will be mailed to all households served by the RDN and its contractor, Waste Services Inc. The new schedule covers the period from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009.

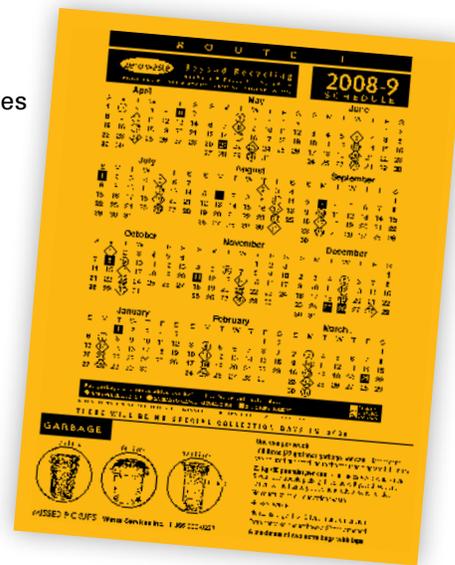
### IF YOU DON'T RECEIVE A SCHEDULE...

#### Get one on-line

Point your Web browser to [rdn.bc.ca](http://rdn.bc.ca) and follow the link to 2008 Garbage and Recycling Schedules to find your route and download and print a new schedule.

#### Call Zero Waste

If you don't have Internet access or can't pick up a schedule, call the Zero Waste hotline at 1-866-999-8227 toll-free to have a schedule mailed to you.



## GARBAGE AND RECYCLING CONTRACT EXTENDED

The RDN is extending its garbage and recycling collection contract with Waste Services Inc. for one year. The extension will ensure the completion of the Residential Food Waste Collection Pilot Project without a change in collection contractor.

## SNOW AND ADVERSE WEATHER SERVICE CANCELLATIONS

During severe winter weather, such as snowy and icy conditions or roads blocked by downed trees or powerlines, the contractor may find it necessary to temporarily cancel garbage and recycling collection. Slippery roads, especially in hilly neighbourhoods, are unsafe for large collection vehicles and workers.

If you live on a **bi-weekly collection route** and your regular collection day is cancelled, every effort will be made to collect your garbage on the following day, weather conditions permitting. If that is not possible, the contractor will monitor conditions and collect your garbage on the first Saturday after the normally scheduled collection day. If adverse conditions persist, collection may be delayed until the next Saturday.

If you live on a **weekly collection route** and your regular collection day is cancelled, every effort will be made to collect your garbage on the following day, weather conditions permitting. If that is not possible, the contractor will collect your garbage on your next scheduled collection day. The container limit will be doubled for that collection day.

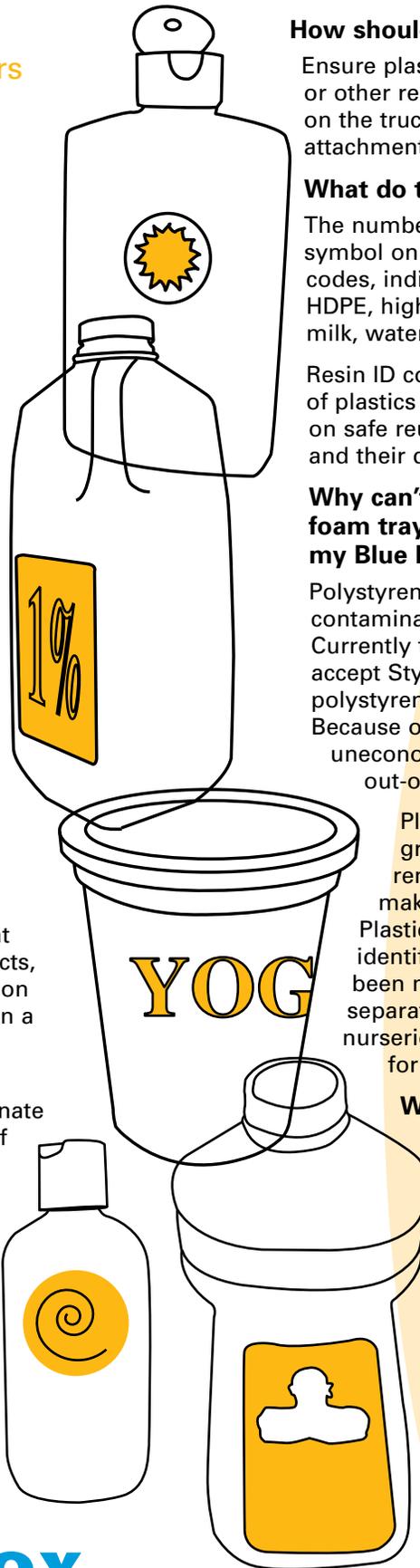
Please note that the priority will be to collect your garbage. The recycling collection service may be delayed until your next scheduled collection day. For information please call Waste Services Inc (WSI) at 248-8109 or toll free at 1-866-999-8227.

For more than five years, household plastic containers have been collected and recycled through the Regional District of Nanaimo's curbside recycling program. But why are some plastics left behind in your Blue Box? What do the numbers on plastic containers mean and what happens to plastics after they are collected? Here are some of the answers to these frequently asked questions.

### What plastics are accepted in the Blue Box?

Rigid plastic containers numbered 1 to 7, such as milk jugs, margarine and yogurt containers and dish soap and laundry detergent bottles are accepted for recycling in your Blue Box. Not accepted are film plastics (plastic bags), Styrofoam and other foam plastic containers, and containers that held chlorine, ammonia-based products, and motor oil. If the recycling collection driver spots an unacceptable plastic in a Blue Box, it will be left behind.

Even a small residue of bleach or ammonia left in a bottle can contaminate and make unusable an entire batch of recyclable plastics. Collection drivers and receiving facilities are unable to check every bottle that contained bleach or ammonia, so it is acceptable to put these containers in the garbage. Motor oil containers require special processing and if mixed in with regular plastics will contaminate the entire batch. They are part of a Product Stewardship program and should be returned to oil retailers for recycling.



### How should plastics be prepared for recycling?

Ensure plastic containers are cleaned to remove any food or other residue. Flatten containers to reduce their volume on the truck. Don't include any metal lids or caps, metal attachments or spray nozzle heads.

### What do the numbers on plastic containers mean?

The numbers found inside the three-arrow recycling symbol on plastic containers are resin identification codes, indicating the type of plastic. For example, #2 HDPE, high-density polyethylene, is commonly used for milk, water and detergent containers.

Resin ID codes are used to help identify different types of plastics for recycling. They do not provide guidance on safe reuse of a product. For a quick list of resin codes and their definitions visit [www.napcor.com/codes.htm](http://www.napcor.com/codes.htm)

### Why can't I recycle Styrofoam packing material, foam trays, plastic bags and plastic plant pots in my Blue Box?

Polystyrene foam used for take-out foods etc. is often contaminated with food waste and is not recyclable. Currently there are no local recycling facilities that accept Styrofoam packing material, which is made from polystyrene and has limited options for being recycled. Because of its bulky and difficult to compact nature, it is uneconomical to ship Styrofoam to lower mainland or out-of-province facilities.

Plastic grocery bags can be returned to most grocery stores for recycling but make sure to remove receipts or shopping lists. If possible, make use of recyclable bags when shopping.

Plastic plant pots and nursery trays are usually not identified with a resin code, many having already been made from recycled plastics, so they can't be separated and processed at recycling facilities. Some nurseries may accept clean plastic plant containers for reuse. Call your local nursery to check.

### What happens to plastic containers collected in my Blue Box?

Plastic containers are sent to Vancouver Island Recycling Centre's Nanaimo facility for mechanical sorting, and baling. Depending on markets and grades, baled plastics are shipped to Syntal Products Ltd. in Victoria, Merlin Plastics in Delta, or Silverdale Recycling Ltd. in Maple Ridge.

Syntal Products uses mixed plastics to manufacture plastic lumber. Merlin Plastics and Silverdale process different plastic grades into feedstock used by plastic manufacturers to make products such as non-food plastic containers, piping and fibre.

**blue box**  
**acceptable plastics**

## GARBAGE TAGS: A CONVENIENT WAY TO DISPOSE OF EXTRA TRASH

The RDN's residential garbage collection program operates on a user-pay philosophy, making individuals responsible for the garbage they generate. This approach encourages waste reduction and recycling and has greatly contributed to our success in diverting waste from the landfill.

Under basic service, one standard-size container of garbage is collected per week or two standard-size containers for routes on a bi-weekly collection schedule. By maximizing their participation in the curbside recycling program and wanting to reduce their impact on the environment and the landfill, most households easily accommodate the container limits on weekly and bi-weekly garbage collection service.

Occasionally, however, you may need to put out additional containers of garbage. This extended level of service is available by purchasing \$2 garbage tags (\$3 for customers served by the District of Lantzville) and attaching a tag to each additional standard-size container (maximum of two per collection day).

Tipping fees at RDN Solid Waste Facilities increased as of January 1, 2008.

Self-haul loads of garbage are now charged a \$5.00 flat fee for the first 50 kgs and \$100

per tonne rate for the remainder of the load. This increase in disposal fees for self-haul loads makes buying garbage tags a cheaper and more convenient way

to dispose of an extra container or two of trash. You will save on landfill disposal fees, wear and tear on your vehicle, and avoid occasional line-ups at the Church Road Transfer Station and Regional Landfill.



### GARBAGE TAGS SOLD AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS

|                              |   |                               |  |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| MOHAWK/CASSIDY GENERAL STORE | Cassidy                                       | CEDAR GENERAL STORE           | Cedar  |
| MILLWAY MARKET               | Cedar   | REGIONAL LANDFILL SCALE HOUSE | Cedar  |
| TWIN BEACHES GENERAL STORE   | Gabriola Island                               | VILLAGE FOOD MARKET           | Gabriola Island  |
| REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO | Nanaimo                                       | QUALITY FOODS NANOOSE BAY     | Red Gap  |
| WASTE SERVICES INC           | Parksville                                    | CITY OF PARKSVILLE            | Parksville   |
| CHURCH ROAD TRANSFER STATION | Parksville                                    | OCEANSIDE PLACE ARENA         | Parksville   |
| RAVENSONG AQUATIC CENTRE     | Qualicum Beach                                | GEORGIA PARK STORE            | Bowser   |
| TOWN OF QUALICUM BEACH       | Town of Qualicum Beach service customers only | DISTRICT OF LANTZVILLE        | Municipal office for Lantzville service customers only |

### IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Watch for the Spring 2008 edition of Zero Waste. It features articles on where your curbside recyclables go for processing and their end uses, tips for reducing and recycling yard and garden waste, an update on the residential food waste collection pilot project and its impact on reducing greenhouse gases.



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### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Call our Environmental Services Department at 390-6560 (School District 68) or 954-3792 (School District 69). Or visit the Zero Waste pages on our website at: [www.rdn.bc.ca](http://www.rdn.bc.ca)

### BILLING INFORMATION

Call our Finance Department at 390-4111 or Toll Free in BC at 1-877-607-4111

OR

Visit our website at: [www.rdn.bc.ca](http://www.rdn.bc.ca)

