

# Recycling IQ FAQs

## About Recycling IQ

- **What is Recycling IQ?**

- The Recycling IQ Kit was developed to help cities and towns work with materials recycling facilities (MRFs) and haulers to: Better target education and outreach to the public, Give residents direct feedback at curbside or drop-off, and. Track and report the results of these efforts.

- **What is the goal of the Recycling IQ program?**

- The primary goal of the Recycling IQ program is to reduce contamination in our recycling carts. Our current recycling contamination rate is 14.8%, measured by weight. Residents have expressed that there is a great deal of confusion around recycling. We will also provide much needed education and outreach to residents around what is accepted in our curbside recycling carts as part of the Recycling IQ program.

- **What does recycling contamination mean?**

Contamination in the recycling typically comes in two forms:

- **Materials that belong in the recycling cart but are not prepared correctly.** For example, when there is food remaining in a plastic container or a half-filled bottle of juice. Containers should be clean and empty. (Just a quick rinse is fine.)
- **Materials that do not belong in the recycling cart.** Our top issue is plastic bags and other film plastics. Other contaminants include: tanglers (like cords and hoses), aseptic cartons (like broth and some milk/juice), scrap metal & wood, textiles and electronics.

- What are Tyngsborough's biggest recycling contaminants?

- The top contaminants are:
  - Plastic bags and other flexible plastic films.
    - **Do NOT bag your recyclables.**
      - Plastic bags and films are a major problem at Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs). This material jams the equipment, which slows the process down and drives up labor costs. Plastic bags are also missorted, becoming a contaminant in the finished bales, decreasing their commodity value. If collecting recyclables in a bag, please

empty the bag into your recycling cart prior to placing it at the curb.

- Plastic Bags and Films (made of #2 and #4 plastic resin) should be returned to retailers for recycling or brought to the special collection box at Town Hall or the Senior Center. Learn more about plastic film recycling at <https://www.plasticfilmrecycling.org>
- Scrap metal
  - Use the MassDEP Beyond the Bin Recycling directory to find a scrap metal recycler near you. <https://recyclesearch.com/profile/ma>
- Scrap wood
  - Use the MassDEP Beyond the Bin Recycling directory to find a C&D recycler near you <https://recyclesearch.com/profile/ma>
- Plastic toys
  - Simple Recycling will gladly accept children's toys for reuse. Place these items in the Pink Simple Recycling bags curbside near your recycling cart on your recycling day. Additional bags are available at Town Hall or by contacting Simple Recycling at [www.simplerecycling.com](http://www.simplerecycling.com). Damaged or unusable toys should be placed in the trash.
- Textiles
  - Simple Recycling accepts all textiles, including those for reuse as well as unusable fabrics for recycling. Place these items in the Pink Simple Recycling bags curbside near your recycling cart on your recycling day. Additional bags are available at Town Hall or by contacting Simple Recycling at [www.simplerecycling.com](http://www.simplerecycling.com).
- Why did the Town choose to implement this program?

We chose to implement the RecyclingIQ program for three reasons:

  1. We heard from residents that there is a great deal of confusion around what belongs in the recycling cart. This program will provide direct mail and other targeted communication to residents to help us be better recyclers.
  2. Recycling Contamination costs everyone money. When the wrong items arrive at the sorting facility, it is very costly and time consuming for the processor to deal with. These costs are passed on to the town and ultimately to the residents who pay taxes. We can all do our part to keep these costs down by making sure only clean recyclables are being sent for processing.
  3. Contamination endangers the health and safety of recycling workers. Plastic bags and films get caught in the sorting equipment, which requires an employee to cut them free from the line.
- Where can I get more information?

- Please visit [www.recyclesmartMA.org](http://www.recyclesmartMA.org), the Town Website or contact the Sustainability Committee with any questions you have about the program.
- What are the benefits to the town?
  - Benefits include:
    - Resident Education - Residents have expressed that there is a great deal of confusion around recycling. The Recycling IQ program provides the funding for much needed education and outreach to residents around what is accepted in our curbside recycling carts as part of the Recycling IQ program.
    - Cost Savings - Recycling Contamination costs everyone money. When the wrong materials are placed in the curbside carts, it's more expensive to sort the trash from the usable recyclable materials. Some of this material also ends up in the finished bales of recyclables, lowering their value in a commodity market. These costs are passed on to Town residents, via their taxes.

## Recycling

- Where can I check if something is recyclable?
  - Use the new “Recyclopedia” search tool at the top the Town Trash & Recycling page. You can also visit [www.recyclesmartMA.org](http://www.recyclesmartMA.org).
- Isn't everything with a recycling symbol recyclable?
  - The chasing arrows logo indicates the resin that the plastic material is made out of and/or that it is recyclable *somewhere*. By law, packaging manufacturers can use this symbol if 60% of product users have access to recycling facilities that accept the material they produce. It does not mean that it is accepted in our curbside recycling program.
- Can Tyngsborough's recycling program be expanded to include more items?
  - In Massachusetts, all the Recycling Processors (MRFs) accept the same materials for recycling and follow the Recycle Smart rules. MRFs will only accept those materials that can be reliably resold in a commodities market for use in manufacturing new things. If there is no buyer for a certain type of processed material at the price that reflects the costs of sorting that material, it is not financially feasible for the MRF to sort and process these other items.
- My item has the recycling symbol but Recycle Smart says it's not recyclable?
  - If your item is not recyclable in our curbside program
    - consider reusing for another purpose
    - Use the MassDEP Beyond the Bin recycling tool for alternate recycling options, <https://recyclesearch.com/profile/ma>

- Consider changing your purchasing habits the next time you buy that item (example: buy orange juice in a plastic bottle instead of a non-recyclable aseptic carton)

## What do I do if?

- My recycling cart had an Oops Tag?
  - Once the issue listed on the Oops Tag has been corrected, the cart will be collected during the following pick up.
  - Please visit the Town Trash & Recycling website or [www.recyclesmartMA.org](http://www.recyclesmartMA.org) if you are unsure about what materials are accepted in your curbside recycling cart.
- My recycling cart had a Warning Tag?
  - Warning Tags were distributed to all households on the cart checking routes. Your recycling cart(s) will be inspected for contamination on your normal recycling day. If contamination is found, **A tag will be left on the cart handle of contaminated carts and the cart will be rejected by Republic Services.** This tag will include information about what types of contamination were found. Once the issue has been corrected, the cart will be collected during the following pick up. We know it will be difficult for you if we reject your cart. We also know that recycling has become increasingly complex in recent years and we are now strengthening our education efforts to keep up with this growing complexity.
  - Please visit the Town Trash & Recycling website or [www.recyclesmartMA.org](http://www.recyclesmartMA.org) if you are unsure about what materials are accepted in your curbside recycling cart.
- My recycling wasn't picked up due to contamination?
  - Once the issue listed on the Oops Tag has been corrected, the cart will be collected during the following pick up.
  - Please visit the Town Trash & Recycling website or [www.recyclesmartMA.org](http://www.recyclesmartMA.org) if you are unsure about what materials are accepted in your curbside recycling cart.
- How do I get a sticker for overflow trash bags?
  - Overflow Trash Bag stickers are \$5 each. To purchase an overflow sticker, contact the Board of Health staff at (978)649-2300 or at [BoardofHealth@TyngsboroughMA.gov](mailto:BoardofHealth@TyngsboroughMA.gov).