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# NEWS RELEASE

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## City of Abbotsford aims to significantly reduce contaminated recycling by October 2023.

**ABBOTSFORD – January 16, 2023** – As the City of Abbotsford continues to grow and develop, finding ways to reduce waste is an increasingly important part of minimizing the City’s impact on our environment. To meet Recycle BC requirements and divert unnecessary waste from landfills, the City is aiming to significantly reduce the amount of contaminated recycling collected through the City of Abbotsford’s residential curbside pickup program by the end of October of this year.

Recycling contamination is a problem in Abbotsford, and throughout the province. According to Recycle BC, in 2020 20,987 tonnes of collected recycling material was contaminated and sent to the landfill instead of being recycled. In Abbotsford, roughly fourteen per cent of the items residents think they are recycling end up being unacceptable for curbside recycling, and are thrown away instead. This not only leads to extra waste, as mis-sorting items can contaminate a whole bin, making previously acceptable contents now unacceptable, but can also lead to complications and workplace hazards during the sorting process.

“While most residents in Abbotsford actively recycle, many don’t realize that some of the items they place in their blue bin end up contaminating the other items in there,” said City of Abbotsford Mayor, Ross Siemens. “By using tools like the City’s Waste Wizard and learning how to properly sort items and which items aren’t acceptable, residents can become better recyclers, which will in turn help to reduce our contamination rates and create a safer and more sustainable City.”

The City is part of the Recycle BC program, which is a non-profit organization responsible for the collection and recycling of residential packaging and paper products in British Columbia. By participating in the Recycle BC program, the City receives incentive fees in exchange for collecting curbside recycling on their behalf, which helps keep the cost of curbside recycling service low. Recycle BC also takes on the responsibility of selling recyclable commodities on the market and ensuring they are recycled responsibly. To continue participation in the program, Abbotsford must ensure recycling contamination is significantly decreased. Failure to meet this requirement may result in fines to the City, an increase in recycling fees for residents and the possibility of collection refusal and additional fines for offending residents.

For the City to successfully reduce its recycling contamination rate, and to ensure the curbside recycling program remains affordable and sustainable, all residents must do their part to recycle correctly.

To help achieve this, the City is offering tips and enhanced service to teach residents how to properly sort and prepare items for recycling. City staff and recycling ambassadors will be available to help residents gain a better understanding of what goes in their curbside recycling, compost and garbage carts and what items can be dropped off for recycling or disposal and how to properly distinguish between commonly mis-sorted items. They will be out on garbage days, inspecting recycling bins at the curb and at community events throughout the year. Educational information will also be provided to residents in several ways including the curbside collection calendar, utility notices, social media and more.

A waste-sorting guide, the City's Waste wizard and additional recycling information and resources can be found at [www.abbotsford.ca/waste](http://www.abbotsford.ca/waste).

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