



A WASTE WISE  
GUIDE FOR

# TOWNHOUSES & APARTMENTS



It's time to get Waste Wise!

A regional bylaw has been adopted whereby all residential, commercial, industrial and institutional properties need to separate recyclables and compostables out of their garbage.

If you live in Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Harrison, Hope, Kent, Mission, or in Fraser Valley Regional District Electoral Areas, this bylaw applies to you.

Being **Waste Wise** reduces the amount of garbage going to our landfills by simply steering it into the correct collection bin. All we have to do is **sort it out!**



**Let's take out the recyclables and compost and help our environment. Everyone needs to be Waste Wise.**

For the purpose of this guide the term **Housing Complexes** includes apartments, condos, townhouse complexes and co-ops, etc.

For more information visit [BeWasteWise.com](http://BeWasteWise.com)



## COMPOSTING FOOD WASTE

Food isn't garbage. It belongs in the compost bin.

- ➔ About 30% of all garbage sent to landfills is compostable, and most of that is food.
- ➔ Food disposed in the landfill generates methane, a powerful greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. This food waste can instead be transformed into compost, and used to grow food locally.

### WHAT'S IN & WHAT'S OUT

A food waste collection program can allow residents to put all food, such as meat, cheese, dairy, bones, fruit, vegetables and coffee grounds into the compost bin. Food-soiled paper towels and napkins can also be composted.

Posters, bin labels and brochures that you can easily print off to aid you in sorting can be found at [BeWasteWise.com](http://BeWasteWise.com). An example of a composting poster is on the following page.

### PLASTIC BAGS WITH THE COMPOST

Most compost processors in the region **do not** accept plastic bags, including those marked biodegradable or compostable. This is because some compostable plastic bags do not break down sufficiently, and can contaminate finished compost.

Some haulers allow the use of certain plastic liners for the compost bins. When negotiating an agreement with your hauler, establish what type of liners can be used and clarify the costs associated. However paper bags are accepted.



# COMPOST

## FOOD PRODUCTS



Baked Goods



Fruit & Vegetable Scraps



Meats & Bones



Pasta & Sauces



Egg Shells & Dairy Products



Plate Scrapings

## FOOD-SOILED PAPER & WOODEN UTENSILS



Coffee Grounds,  
Filters & Tea Bags



Soiled Paper Towel  
& Facial Tissue



Paper Take-out  
Containers



Cooking Oil or Grease  
Absorbed in Paper



Disposable Wooden Utensils  
(Chopsticks, Toothpicks, Skewers etc.)



Paper  
Plates

## PLANT WASTE



Flowers  
& Weeds



Plants & Shrubs  
(No Soil or Rocks)



Small Trimmings  
& Branches



Leaves  
& Moss

## NOT ACCEPTED



Plastic Products  
(Even those labelled  
Biodegradable or Compostable)



Plastic Packaging  
(Including Straws & Utensils)



Sanitary or  
Cleaning Wipes



Diapers



Pet Waste



Glass



Metal



Foam Packaging



## RECYCLING PRODUCTS & PACKAGING

Simply put, recycling transforms old materials into new, avoiding the need to extract raw materials.

### WHAT'S IN & WHAT'S OUT

Here is a list of some items that can be recycled:

- ➔ All paper products and packaging (cardboard, boxboard, paper, magazines, disposable coffee cups)
- ➔ Plastics (beverage cups, clam shell packaging, take out containers, bottles)
- ➔ Metals (beverage cans, clean aluminum foil and foil trays)
- ➔ Glass (beverage containers and jars)

An example of a recycling sorting poster is on the next page. Please ensure any food containers are rinsed before recycling.

### RECYCLING/BOTTLE DEPOT ITEMS

Hazardous waste that ends up in the garbage or mixed recycling can be damaging for the environment and dangerous for collection crews and processors. Some hazardous waste can be dropped off at recycling/bottle depots for free (see below).



For information on the nearest recycling drop off location and items accepted, call the RCBC Recycling Hotline (toll free) at 1-800-667-4321 or visit [www.rcbc.ca.ca](http://www.rcbc.ca.ca).

# MIXED RECYCLING

## ACCEPTED



Milk jugs & Cartons



Clamshell Packaging



Food Tubs & Lids



Plastic Containers



Clear & Coloured Glass Bottles & Jars



Paper Cups



Paper Egg Cartons



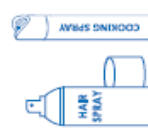
Flattened Boxes & Paper Bags



Newspapers, Phone Books, Magazines & Flyers



Envelopes & Greeting Cards



Aerosol Spray Cans



Tin Cans & Lids



Aluminum Cans & Lids



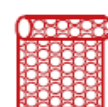
Aluminum Foils & Trays

## NOT ACCEPTED

### TAKE TO THE RECYCLE DEPOT



Soft Stretchy Plastic Bags & Wrap



Crinkly Plastic



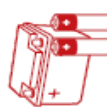
Paint



Foam Packaging



Electronics



Batteries



Light Bulbs



Toxic or Flammable Liquids



Crinkly Wrappers



Small Electrical Appliances





## SETTING UP A WASTE SORTING PROGRAM AT YOUR HOUSING COMPLEX

### STEP 1—IDENTIFY RESPONSIBLE PERSONNEL

Begin by identifying who will be responsible for coordinating and monitoring your building's waste-sorting program.

**Planner**—Manages waste-sorting program, selects hauler, and coordinates compost and recycling bin delivery and pick-up.

**Monitor**—Checks compost and recycling bins for contamination and makes sure bin area is clean and tidy and bins are secure.

**Resident Liaison**—Lets residents know about waste-sorting program and answers their questions.

### STEP 2—SPEAK TO YOUR HAULER & SET-UP SERVICE

Before you implement a waste-sorting program, ask your hauler how many bins you will need for recyclables and compostables. The bins should be easily accessible with no obstructions that would make disposing of recyclables and compostables difficult or inconvenient.

Costs for waste removal vary; contact your waste hauler for a quote. As residents recycle and compost more, some buildings may switch to smaller garbage bins or less frequent collection.

Things to consider:

- ➔ Record what you see in the garbage. Does it include recyclables and compostables?
- ➔ Ask your waste hauler if they offer a service to assess your waste and note areas for improvements.
- ➔ Does your hauler provide a bin cleaning service?
- ➔ If each unit receives collection at the curb, then ask the hauler what types (size/style) of bin would work for collection or if they will provide containers for the units.

### STEP 3—NOTIFY RESIDENTS ABOUT WASTE-SORTING

Here are some tips to help with getting residents on board with composting and recycling.

- ➔ Involve residents early.



- ➔ Provide at least four to six weeks' notice before the program begins.
- ➔ Promote the program at resident or strata meetings and through informational signs in common areas. Make waste-sorting a standing agenda item at meetings with residents or the strata, or at Annual General Meetings. Ask your waste hauler to participate in these meetings.
- ➔ If you have a Facebook page or website, share news about composting and recycling.
- ➔ Direct residents to **BeWasteWise.com** for information.
- ➔ Share contact information for whom in the building to call with questions.

## STEP 4—IMPLEMENT WASTE-SORTING

Once you have planned your program and notified residents, it's time to launch your program. During the first few weeks of the program launch, you will want to:

- ➔ Communicate to residents that the compost and recycling bins have arrived and to start using them.
- ➔ Ensure the area around the compost and recycling bins are clean and tidy to prevent pests and rodents.
- ➔ Report any problems or issues with the program to residents.

## INDOOR AND OUTDOOR WASTE SORTING STATIONS

If your apartment or strata complex has common use areas, it might be a good opportunity to add some waste diversion stations to those spaces. Here is a list of a few companies that supply indoor and outdoor waste sorting stations. Visit their websites for more information.

- ➔ [Busch Systems](#)
- ➔ [Clean River Recycling Solutions](#)
- ➔ [Clear Stream Recycling Systems](#)







## KITCHEN CATCHERS

A “Kitchen Catcher” is a handy tool used to keep food waste in the kitchen before transferring it to a larger compost storage bin. There are various styles of kitchen catchers available for purchase at retail stores such as Home Depot, Walmart, Rona, Canadian Tire etc. Some kitchen catchers even come with charcoal filters to prevent odours. You could also ask your waste hauler if they would provide the residents with kitchen catchers as part of their contract or advise residents to use any other container that could function as one, such as an empty ice cream pail or coffee tin.



### STEP 5—MONITOR WASTE-SORTING AND RE-EDUCATE

Regular monitoring will let you know if you have too many, or too few, recycling and compost bins.

Perform a visual check throughout the week and estimate the percentage of non-compostable or non-recyclables in your compost bins and recycling bins respectively. You could also:

- Replace posters or labels that are damaged or missing.
- Talk to your waste hauler and make changes to your collection schedule, as needed.
- Talk to your hauler about them having workshops to educate residents at your complex.

Re-educate residents along the way. Address problems quickly and share successes often.



## COMMON WASTE RELATED CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FOR HOUSING COMPLEXES

The table below summarizes some of the common challenges and solutions faced in housing complexes.

COMMON CHALLENGES	COMMON SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Inconvenience—sorting bins that are located in different areas of a building are inconvenient for residents and more likely to result in frustration or improper sorting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Designate a centralized location within the building complex so that there is a one-stop area for all waste materials.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Infrastructure—some buildings have designated waste storage areas that have space constraints and cannot easily accommodate additional sorting bins.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Work with property management/strata council, janitorial staff and your hauler to identify and improve waste storage areas. Perhaps the use of smaller bins and more frequent pick-up could address the issue of the lack of storage space.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ New Residents—apartments and condos often have high turnover and new residents may be unfamiliar with the sorting requirements in this region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ To encourage waste-sorting, consider providing kitchen catchers and recycling bins to each unit with information packages. Suggestions for items to include in the information packages can be found on <a href="http://BeWasteWise.com">BeWasteWise.com</a>.</li> <li>➔ Ensure that the containers provided are included in the security deposit so that the residents do not take them with them when they move out.</li> <li>➔ Remind residents about composting and recycling requirements no later than two weeks after move-in and no less than two weeks prior to move-out.</li> </ul>

Adopted from the *Livegreen Resident Engagement on Sustainability Guide* published by BC Housing.