

BIN CONTAMINATION POLICY

Responsible Department: Infrastructure Delivery
Responsible Section: Waste Services
Responsible Officer: Manager Waste Services

Objective

Natural resource consumption reduced and waste well managed.

Introduction

This policy has been developed to standardise the intervention when premises are not putting the correct materials in their food organics, garden organics (FOGO), and co-mingled recycling bins. This is to ensure the quality of collected materials in Narrabri Shire Council is within the acceptable contamination standards as specified by contracts with current service providers.

Consequently, it is important that the following procedures pertaining to repeat offenders are adhered to in order to reduce contamination in the dry recyclables and FOGO recycling streams.

Policy

1. General

- 1.1. Items which are accepted in the co-mingled recycling bin and FOGO waste bin are prescribed as outlined in the Waste Service Guide provided to Narrabri Shire householders. Bin lids are also stamped with acceptable material listed.
- 1.2. For the purposes of this policy a minimum contamination level in any one bin is required before reporting the contamination as an "offense".
- 1.3. The minimum and excessive contamination level are specified below:

MATERIAL	MINIMUM CONTAMINATION	EXCESSIVE CONTAMINATION
Plastic Bags	<3 units	= / > 3 units
General waste	< 10% of the bin	= / > 10% of the bin
Nappies	Not applicable	One or more
Sharps	Not applicable	One or more
Polystyrene packaging, large plastic items	1 unit	= / > 2 units
Large items such as potting mix bags, watering cans, plant pots, garden hoses	1 unit	= / > 2 units
Hazardous Materials: oil, chemicals, batteries, liquid waste	Not applicable	One or more

2. Bin inspections

- 2.1. Random bin inspections conducted by Council and/ or Contract staff compliments the Contamination Management Strategy by checking bins for contamination.
- 2.2. Tags to reward good recycling and organics behavior may be used by Council and/or Contract staff as well as contamination tags for contaminated bins.
- 2.3. These random inspections may be guided by reports of previous contamination by the customer, or they may be initiated in any other way.
- 2.4. Bins that are found to have contamination during this random bin inspection will be tagged for the customer's information and an educational letter will be sent to the customer by Council and/ or Contract staff informing them of the correct materials to go into the bin.
- 2.5. Bins that are found to have contamination will be reported in the same manner of contamination found during collection. They will be recorded as a warning occurrence when contamination found is higher than minimal.

3. Excessive contamination – visible at the kerbside

- 3.1. Should excessive contamination be observed during collection, Council will refuse to collect the bin and contamination offences will be recorded by the driver on a daily sheet.
- 3.2. The driver will then provide the resident with immediate feedback on the non-collection event via a contamination notification sticker in fluorescent colors applied to the bin and will be recorded as a warning.
- 3.3. The sticker will direct the resident to contact the customer service center (hotline).
- 3.4. Once the issue has been rectified, the bin will be collected during the resident's next scheduled collection service.
- 3.5. In addition, the resident will receive a letter of notification of the contamination incident from Council or its contractor reinforcing the acceptable items for recyclable / organics collections.
- 3.6. If a property has received four (4) warnings, the recycling and FOGO services for the property will be suspended until further notice.

4. Minimum contamination – visible at the kerbside

- 4.1. Prior to emptying, if a bin is found to contain contamination (excluding excessive contamination), Council or its contractor's drivers will collect the bin and provide the resident with immediate feedback via a contamination notification sticker in fluorescent colours applied to the bin.
- 4.2. The sticker will direct the resident to contact the customer service centre (hotline).
- 4.3. In addition, the resident will receive a warning letter of notification of the contamination incident from Council or its contractor reinforcing the acceptable items for recyclable /organic collections.
- 4.4. If a property has received four (4) warnings, the recycling and FOGO services for the property will be suspended until further notice.

5. Contamination – visible via camera in hopper

- 5.1. All collection vehicles are fitted with colour cameras in the collection hopper which are linked to in-cabin monitors. These allow the drivers to observe the contents of the bin as it is emptied and identify the specific contamination. Where bins are contaminated and the contamination is not visible at kerbside,

contamination can usually be detected using the camera system as the bin is emptied, allowing the driver to conduct a more comprehensive visual audit of the bin contents.

- 5.2. When contamination has been detected in a bin, the drivers will record the contaminant and premises address on a daily record sheet. The collection vehicles have the capability to record images of contamination incidences through its GPS and camera recording device.
- 5.3. If the bin contains minimum contamination, Council or its Contractor will provide the resident with immediate feedback via a letter that will contain a notification of the contamination incident and reinforcing the acceptable items for recyclable/organic collections.
- 5.4. Should excessive contamination be observed during collection, Council or its Contractor will record the incident as a contamination offence. Contamination offences will be recorded by the driver on a daily sheet
- 5.5. The driver will then provide the resident with immediate feedback on the non-collection event via a contamination notification sticker in fluorescent colour applied to the bin.
- 5.6. The sticker will direct the resident to contact the customer service centre (hotline). In addition, the resident will receive a warning letter of notification of the contamination incident from Council or its Contractor reinforcing the acceptable items for recyclable/organic collections.
- 5.7. After four (4) warning letters, the recycling and FOGO services for the property will be suspended until further notice.

6. Multiple occurrences – second to fourth occurrence

- 6.1. Should excessive contamination incidents occur for a second or third time at a premise within four (4) Collections of the initial occurrence, Council or its Contractor will record the address on the daily record sheet and apply a contamination notification sticker in fluorescent colours to the bin.
- 6.2. On behalf of Council, Council or its Contractor will then send the resident a contamination letter outlining the contamination incident, previous contamination history recorded at the property and the dates the previous incidences occurred.
- 6.3. If the property is suspected to be a rental, a copy of the letter will also be sent to the Property Owner.
- 6.4. If contamination occurs for a fourth time then the resident will receive a letter stating that this is a final warning and that if contamination occurs again, the service will be suspended until further notice.

7. Multiple occurrences – cessation of service

- 7.1. Should a contamination incident occur for a fifth time at a premise within consecutive collections, Council or its Contractor will record the address on the daily record sheet and apply a non-collection notification sticker.
- 7.2. Council's contractor will then proceed to contact the relevant manager in Council regarding ongoing contamination at the property, providing a detailed history of the contamination occurrences.
- 7.3. Council will send a letter to the resident to notify that their FOGO and recycling bins will not be collected for the next four (4) collections. The letter will include details of the contamination history at the property.

8. Reinstatement of the service

- 8.1. Residents are expected to continue to pay for a regular waste service regardless of whether they are receiving the recycling and FOGO waste services as their general waste bin will still be serviced.
- 8.2. After four (4) collections the bins can be reactivated on application by the resident and approval from Narrabri Shire Council.

- 8.3. Before service will be reinstated the resident must sign a pledge agreeing not to place contaminants in their bins and complete a recycling test to the satisfaction of Council.
- 8.4. In the instance of a tenanted (rental) property where the service has been suspended and there is a tenant change, the services can be reinstated on application if evidence of tenant change is provided.

9. Further occurrence – recurrence

- 9.1. If the service is suspended for a second time, the resident will not be allowed another recycling or FOGO bin.
- 9.2. Council will undertake a personal visit to the contaminating resident's premises to discuss the continuous contaminating offences and at Council's discretion, issue a "Prevention Notice / Infringement Notice fine" depending upon the circumstances.

10. Additional bins

- 10.1. If a property has two (2) or more cessation of services within the previous 12 months, they will not be eligible for any additional recycling or FOGO bins.

11. Review

- 11.1. This policy will be reviewed within 12 months of an Ordinary Council Election or from time-to-time on an as-needs basis.

References

- *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW).
- NSW Government's Better Practice Guide for Waste Management in Multi-Unit Dwellings.
- NSW Government's Preferred Resource Recovery Practices by Local Councils Guide.
- Regional Waste Services Contract.

History

Minute Number	Meeting Date	Description of Change
234/2018	October 30, 2018	New Policy Adopted
	August 31, 2021	Rebranded
336/2022	October 18, 2022	Adopted