

FAQs

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- Where do I get a new Blue Box, Blue Bag and/or Yellow Bag?

Order using our online form, or call Waste Management of Canada, the North Shore's recycling contractor, at 604.929.3416. Bags, boxes and calendars can also be picked up at the North Shore Recycling Drop-off Depot, or at the NSRP office (8:30 to 4:30, Monday thru Friday). Bags and calendars can also be picked up in the Engineering Department of your local municipal hall (click here for contact information for West Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, or City of North Vancouver), or ordered online.

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My recycling wasn't picked up on my regular garbage day - who should I call?

Phone Waste Management of Canada at 604.929.3416 and tell them you have a missed pick-up. Alternatively, you can use the form on our Contact page and include your address, telephone number, what time you had your recycling out for collection, and whether or not it is your home only that was affected, or the entire street. If you have any questions regarding this, or problems contacting Waste Management, contact the NSRP directly by phone at 604.984.9730 or via email .

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What do I do with used paint and other hazardous substances?

If it's paint, see if someone else can use it. If not, or if it's another substance you think may be hazardous, take it to the Household Hazardous Waste Drop-off site at the North Shore Transfer Station at 30 Riverside Drive in North Vancouver. If you're not sure what the substance is and/or if it's recyclable, call the BC Recycling Hotline at 604.732.9253. Never dump chemicals in storm drains, creeks, on the road, or in your yard.

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Why can't we recycle more plastics?

The North Shore's new recycling contract was designed to collect only #1 (PET), #2 (HDPE), #4 (LDPE) and #5 (PP) rigid plastic containers, mostly due to market conditions - there just simply are not stable local markets for other types of plastics (e.g., plastic bags). That said, many grocery stores are collecting them for recycling through private collectors. Visit our Recycle This page, or call the BC Recycling Hotline at 604.732.9253 for more information.

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Where can I refund my refundable beverage containers?

There are now three (3) full refund Return-it Centres on the North Shore: The North Shore Bottle Depot (235 Donaghy Street, North Vancouver, just south of Capilano Mall, one block west of Fell Avenue); the Lonsdale Bottle & Return-it Depot (142 West 3rd Street, North Vancouver); and North Vancouver Bottle & Return-It-Depot (310 Brooksbank Avenue, North Vancouver) - there are no depots in West Vancouver at this time. For locations, phone numbers and hours of operation, click here.

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What kinds of containers are returnable for refund?

Call Encorp Pacific at 1.800.330.9767 or 604.473.2400 or visit their website.

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Do I need to wash and squash the plastics and metal containers I put in my Blue Box?

Rinsing or washing the containers before recycling them will help reduce odour and pests, which makes recycling more pleasant for everyone. Squashing the containers frees up more space in the truck, enabling more houses to be serviced

before unloading, thereby saving the municipality money, fuel, truck maintenance costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

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What does 'contamination' mean?

This is when unacceptable material is placed in a recycling container or bin. For example, window glass placed with glass bottles. The window glass is a different type of glass and is considered a contaminant resulting in contamination that increases the program cost and ultimately the cost to the taxpayer. If you get one of our 'Non-compliance' notices on your Blue Box, it's usually because there is an issue with contamination in your Blue Box. If you have any questions about this, please give us a call at 604.984.9730.

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What does 'commingled' mean?

'Commingled' means that recyclables are placed together in the Blue Box or Blue Cart. The contents are either separated at the curb by the recycling truck operator or sorted at the processing plant.

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Is it true that all of the recyclables collected are just thrown in the landfill?

Absolutely not. All loads of recyclables collected through your municipal program on the North Shore are sorted and only the contaminants (materials not accepted for recycling in that program) are removed and sent to landfill (about 2% by weight). The NSRP and the GVRD make every effort to ensure that recyclable materials are not landfilled or incinerated. This is carried out through disposal bans, assistance and endorsement of local recycling markets and an integrated approach to solid waste management (reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, etc.).

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Why are the materials collected in my Blue Box not the same across other municipalities in the Lower Mainland?

In February, 1996 GVRD municipalities committed to the same minimum recycling collection standards in implementing the GVRD Solid Waste Management Plan (i.e., list of recyclable materials to be collected in blue box programs) but in order to meet the needs of local residents and work with differing tax bases, municipalities have required some autonomy in how they provided those services. Exact service duplication across all municipalities is not always practical. If you have specific questions regarding this issue, please give us a call at 604.984.9730.

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Why are some of the materials I can drop off at the North Shore Recycling Drop-off Depot not collected through the curbside Blue Box/Blue Bag/Yellow Bag/Blue Cart?

The NSRP's recycling drop-off depot provides the opportunity for the collection of additional materials due to more space and access to compacting equipment to compact the materials. Due to truck capacity, time constraints, logistics and volume, it is not realistic to collect the same materials at curbside as are collected at the recycling depot.

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Do I need to remove the label from metal cans?

Yes, please. Paper labels on metal cans are relatively easy to remove. If paper is included in the metal stream, it is considered a contaminant. The problem is that during the recycling process, the metal is melted at high temperatures, and if enough paper is present, flash fires can erupt in the furnace, endangering the workers and producing impurities in the end product. These impurities cause the metal to be downgraded, thereby reducing the revenue received for the material by the program.

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Do I need to remove the label from glass bottles?

No, you do not need to remove the label from glass bottles. First, the labels are often very difficult to remove. Second, the process for recycling the glass bottles has developed to enable the label to be removed prior to the heating phase. The recycling process for glass bottles involves smashing the glass into particles and then screening the pieces. The

screens remove metal and paper.

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Why can't I recycle light bulbs, window panes and Pyrex with my glass?

These glass products all have different physical properties and therefore different melting points, making it impossible to make glass bottles or other glass products from the recycled material without imperfections.

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Can I put broken glass bottles and jars in my Blue Box?

No. Broken glass is a handling hazard for the recycling truck operators. As well, once glass is broken it is very difficult to determine what type of glass it is, thereby creating the possibility of contamination and necessitating its disposal as garbage.

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Do I need to remove the windows from my envelopes in order to recycle them?

Not at all. Most window envelope windows are now made of water soluble paper fibre instead of the plastic that was used in the past. Now isn't that a relief?

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Do I need to remove staples before recycling paper?

It is preferable but not mandatory. During the paper recycling process, the pulp passes through numerous screens to remove staples and other contaminants (many of which are then recycled). You should definitely remove large metal fasteners from corrugated cardboard boxes, as well as bulldog and paper clips from files and papers.

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Can I include Post-It Notes with my mixed paper for recycling?

If you are a resident using the curbside, multi-family or depot program, Post-It Notes can be included with your mixed paper. If you are a business, you need to check with your recycling service company to ensure that their end market/mill will accept Post-It Notes.

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Can I recycle Styrofoam (polystyrene)?

Styrofoam is a trade name for the material made from polystyrene, a type of plastic (#6). In order for this material to be recycled, it needs to be clean and in sufficient quantity. Polystyrene used for take out foods, etc. is contaminated with food waste and is therefore not recyclable. Other polystyrene used for packing and so forth is not generated in sufficient quantity to warrant an official recycling program at this time. For the reasons listed above, the NSRP has made the decision not to recycle polystyrene. There are a number of alternatives to polystyrene, including moulded paper or nothing at all! Let the companies who make the products you buy know that you would like for them to package their products in recyclable packaging. If you are a business generating large amounts of polystyrene, contact the BC Recycling Hotline at 604.732.9253.

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What kinds of plastics can I recycle?

In theory, all plastics are recyclable. The difficulty is that in order for plastics to be recycled, there must be an end market for the materials and they must be separated into the same resin type. Each different type of plastic is indicated with a number stamped on the bottom of the container (inside a triangle). As of July 1, 2004, plastic containers with the numbers 1, 2, 4 & 5 on the bottom have the strongest markets and have been recycled at depots, through private recyclers and in municipal curbside collection programs throughout the GVRD. A broader range of plastic types may be accepted in some municipal and business recycling programs. Residents should check our Recycling pages to confirm the types of plastics accepted in the North Shore's program - businesses should check with their recycling contractors.

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Why can't I use clear bags for curbside yard trimmings collection?

The rising cost of processing necessitated the move away from clear plastic bags in the spring of 2002. Since the beginning of the yard trimmings program in 1998, the North Shore municipalities were charged a 'debagging' fee for each tonne of material processed - as the number of people participating and the volumes of yard trimmings increased, so did the costs. In order to keep these costs down for residents, and after considerable research, the North Shore decided to eliminate the use of clear bags in favour of reusable containers or compostable kraft bags. As well, it has proven cheaper for the average resident in the long run to purchase two or three reusable containers and use them for a few years than to purchase a continuous stream of clear plastic (or kraft) bags.

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Where can I buy kraft yard bags and how much do they cost?

Your municipal government does not produce kraft paper bags - they are manufactured by private industry just as the previously used plastic bags were. Residents wishing to use kraft yard bags instead of reusable containers can purchase them at most major home and garden retailers. As it is the individual store managers who are responsible for stocking their products, kraft bags may not always be available at all locations.

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What are the benefits of using a reusable can for yard trimmings rather than kraft yard bags?

Reusable yard trimmings cans decal with an official 'Yard Trimmings' decal are an efficient and environmentally responsible way of setting your yard trimmings out for collection - they are inexpensive, they last for years under normal use, and they encourage alternate methods of dealing with yard trimmings (i.e., composting, mulching, grasscycling, etc.). For example, a single can used each week for 5 years and purchased for \$12 will cost you approximately \$0.06 per pick-up - much cheaper than using disposable bags).

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Are kraft bags reliable?

Yes, kraft bags have been proven to work well. Other municipalities, both here in the Lower Mainland and in municipalities such as Seattle, Ottawa, Peterborough and Kitchener-Waterloo are effectively collecting leaves and yard waste in kraft bags. The City of Seattle and the City of Toronto have tested these bags extensively and have found that recent improvements in kraft bag technology cause them to hold up well, with collection crews able to pick up the bags intact. Kraft yard bags are protected with a strength coating that resists water absorption, while still composting (along with your yard trimmings) in the composting facility without harmful residues. Eventually, though, the bags will break down, particularly if they are left in the rain for more than a few weeks. Should you have a problem with the bags decomposing before your collection day, and they haven't been sitting outside for an extended period of time, please notify the store where you purchased the bags, as well as the NSRP at 604.984.9730.

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Where can I buy a composter?

The North Shore Recycling Program sells Garden Gourmet composters for \$45 (tax included) at the Recycling Drop-off Depot (29 Riverside Drive, North Vancouver). Cheque or money order only, please. As this is a partially subsidized program, North Shore residents only (identification may be requested).

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I would like to buy some topsoil and soil amendments for my garden - is there anyone who sells "recycled" soil?

Fraser-Richmond Soil & Fibre is the company that processes all of the material picked up through the North Shore's yard trimmings collection program. They transport it to their composting facility, compost it, then bring it back to the North Shore Transfer Station Yard Trimmings Drop-off in a variety of grades. Call Fraser-Richmond at 604.924.0261.

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I would like to learn more about natural yard care, like grasscycling, organic gardening and biological pest control. Where should I start?

Start by visiting www.gardensmart.ca, or by calling the NSRP at 604.984.9730 and asking for our Community Programs Coordinator. We can provide you with a list of resources to get you on your way. As well, we offer a variety of education programs, including hands-on workshops and discussion groups. You can also visit our Resources page for an updated listing of valuable resources on this topic.

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Why is some of the garbage from the Lower Mainland hauled to Cache Creek?

The Cache Creek Landfill is one of two facilities that currently accepts garbage from the North Shore. The other facility is the Burnaby Waste-to-Energy Facility. In the mid-1980s, there was an identifiable need for additional landfill capacity. A public process was held, stakeholders were consulted and the result was the GVRD Solid Waste Management Plan, approved in 1985. This Plan identified additional landfill capacity as a requirement. A tender was issued and the result was Cache Creek Landfill. In early 2000, the GVRD purchased additional land near Cache Creek for future landfill expansion

- Do the waste hauling trucks come back to the Lower Mainland empty?

The siting of the Cache Creek landfill also included an agreement with another company to construct a wood chip facility in Cache Creek. During normal lumber market conditions, the waste hauling trucks haul the garbage to Cache Creek and then return full of wood chips or other materials.