

# Multi-family Residential Recycling Toolkit for Property Managers

## Purpose of this Toolkit

This toolkit is to inform and assist multi-family property owners, managers, and strata councils about effective strategies for proper waste diversion and recycling within their buildings and properties. The tools provided in this toolkit address common barriers to effective recycling, and offer several free, accessible resources for those seeking to implement a new recycling program, or to improve an existing program.

What you will find in this toolkit:

1. [Recycling Best Practices](#)
2. [Understand the recycling program in place](#)
3. [Store your recycling](#)
4. [Communicate with residents to increase participation](#)
5. [Additional material streams to consider](#)
6. [Monitor and measure progress](#)
7. [Other Resources](#)



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# 1. Recycling Best Practices

To help your residents recycle, make it easy and convenient for them to do so. Reduce confusion by following these two best practices, working with your hauler to obtain any materials necessary.

## Add signage and labels to increase clarity

Ensure residents know what can and cannot go into your bins by providing visual cues in the form of signage (e.g. posters) placed directly above bins, or additional labels (e.g. stickers) placed on the bins. Work with your hauler to request these materials, or check out the RDCO's [printable posters](#).

## Use consistent colour schemes for bins

Recycling can be made simpler by introducing a colour scheme. A colour scheme can help make associations between a bin and a particular waste stream. A colour scheme can be introduced using signage (e.g. posters) and stickers. Where possible, use bins that match the colour scheme.

This is the colour scheme commonly employed in municipal residential collections:

BLUE	GREEN	BLACK
Recycling	Organics	Garbage

For a more comprehensive waste collection system, consider the following colour scheme:

BLUE	GREEN	BLACK	YELLOW	BROWN	GREY	RED
Mixed Containers and/or other hard plastics	Organics	Garbage	Mixed Paper e.g. mail, paper packaging, newsprint, phone books	Cardboard	Glass	Requires safe disposal

## 2. Understand the Recycling Program in Place

### What can your building recycle?

The materials that residents in your building can recycle will depend on the services contracted from your hauler. If you are not sure what materials can be recycled, contact your hauler and ask. While you are speaking with them, why not request some signage for your building's garbage and recycling collection area?

- **Not sure who your hauler is?** Their name will be on your bins or on your bills.

Regardless of hauler, both property owners and haulers should be adhering to your municipality's Solid Waste Management Bylaw, which requires that there are sufficient containers provided to collect garbage and recycling at your building. These bylaws also require that mandatory recyclables be kept out of the garbage.

### Speak with your hauler...

If you have questions about your current recycling program, about expanding your program, or about additional services (e.g. large-item removal, composting), speak with your hauler. When starting a new recycling program or changing haulers, use the questions below to start the conversation.

#### Questions / Requests about your current program

- What can we currently recycle at our building?
- Do you provide educational materials (e.g. signage, labels, etc.) to help residents use these services correctly? What types of materials do you provide?
- Where do you take recyclable material following pick-up?
- Do you receive rebates from the sale of your recyclables?

#### Questions / Requests about updating service or adding new services

- My collection schedule needs to be changed: how will this impact my billing?
- How flexible are your contracts?
- What is the time period on the contracts? How does it get renewed or cancelled?
- What services do you offer, and how much do they cost?
- What type of collection bins do you offer?

### 3. Store your Recycling

It is important to consider where you will store recyclables on-site before they are picked up by your hauler. Here are 10 best practices for selecting a **location**:

1. Select a location that is **convenient and safe** for your residents to recycle. The area should be accessible and in a safe, well-lit area.
2. The haulers' **trucks** need to be able to **access the bins**; work with your hauler to select a location that will give their trucks space to maneuver.
3. **Replace broken bins** and **wash** them regularly to prevent smells; keeping equipment in good condition will foster engagement in your recycling program.
4. Ensure that there is **enough room to contain the recycling** that will be collected between pick-ups; an overflowing bin makes a big mess and discourages your residents from recycling if there is no space for their recyclables.
5. **Place garbage and recycling bins together** to provide residents with a choice; if they need to walk far to dispose of their other materials, chances are everything will end up in the one bin.
6. Consider **removing garbage bins and adding recycling bins** or downsizing large garbage containers to create space for a larger recycling bin.
7. **Use similar-looking bins** (e.g. shape and colour) for storing materials of each stream; this increases visual consistency and helps your residents make associations between the recycling streams and the infrastructure to collect it.
8. Put a **label** on each bin to name the **type of material** collected, and use **signage or posters** to provide additional information about what should go into each bin.
9. Where possible, **work collaboratively with neighbouring buildings** to share waste and recycling receptacles. This may allow you to provide additional programs.
10. **Schedule** regular pick-ups or **call** for pick-up when the bins are full.

### Involve your maintenance staff

If your building has maintenance staff, enlist their help in ensuring successful recycling programs. Request that they regularly inspect that the garbage and recycling collection areas are clean and to refresh posters, when needed.

Ask maintenance staff to monitor bins to ensure they never overflow and that they are at least 75% full at time of pick-up. Right-sized bins can lead to cost savings by avoiding additional pick-ups due to overflow.

## 4. Communicate with Residents to Increase Participation

By communicating with your residents about recycling at your building, you can demonstrate the importance of recycling, share information and tools to help improve recycling practices, and increase engagement. Below are some ideas for communicating with residents.

### Use posters & signage

The simplest way to communicate with residents is to place signage (e.g. posters) in your garbage and recycling collection areas. Posters can help residents identify the materials that go into each bin, or they can provide additional information about materials that need to be taken off-site for proper disposal or recycling.

There are a variety of downloadable posters available on the RDCO [website](#). Print the posters that are applicable to your property's programs.

### Provide information to help reduce or divert waste

Additional information can be shared through newsletters, emails, or a building Recycling Guide. Here are some resources to get you started:

1. Share the [Multi-Family Recycling Toolkit for Residents](#) with all residents. Post a copy of the toolkit in a common area or email the digital version.
2. Send an email or newsletter to residents to introduce any changes to your recycling program (see [Other Resources](#) for a template).
3. Send an email to new residents about your recycling program, include information about recycling in their Move-In Guide (see [Other Resources](#) for a template), and/or offer a move-in tour to walk them through your collection areas and show them how the building's collection system works.
4. Consider giving residents a reusable tote bag or small recycling container to help them store recycling and carry recycling to your collection areas.
5. Share information on events (e.g. RDCO's [Repair Cafe](#) and [Trunk Sale](#)), share ideas for reducing or diverting food waste, and mention the nearest recycling depot.

## Start a Green Team

A Green Team is a group of people who work together to reduce environmental impacts at a property. Creating a Green Team is a great way to build engagement around your building's recycling program (and overall environmental performance), and to encourage participation. A Green Team can be as big or small as you would like, as the main purpose is to build community, achieve a sense of purpose, and inspire others to take action. Here is how you can start a Green Team at your building:

1. Let your building's residents know you are seeking applicants for the building Green Team. Focus on diversity, inclusivity, and representation across all residents of your building(s). If there are already recycling champions at your property, encourage them to participate.
2. Decide on a meeting date, time, and location to bring the team together.
3. On the meeting date, welcome the group and start with a few icebreakers, such as asking them why they were motivated to join or what they do in their daily life to reduce their environmental footprint.
4. Next, discuss the importance of a Green Team and why you have started one. Create a set of ground rules for participation such as:
  - a. There is no such thing as a bad idea.
  - b. Commit only to the work you can complete.
  - c. Participate fully and maintain open dialogue/communication.
  - d. Organize specific projects amongst themselves.
5. Discuss the current state of waste diversion at your building: where are you starting from? What is working and what is not? This will inform your goals.
6. Come up with a list of action items and activities to tackle in the coming days/weeks and set a time to meet again to review the status of each action item. Ideally, the Green Team will meet monthly (or quarterly, at a minimum) to review progress and decide on the next action to tackle.



## Host a Recycling Information session

Making recycling easy for your residents will ensure they participate consistently. Keep your residents informed about program changes, and consider hosting a building-wide information session for residents to learn more about the programs available. Below are some ideas for hosting a successful event:

- Involve strata councils, board members, and interested residents. Hold the sessions during the evenings or weekends to increase participation.
- Promote the event on building message boards and through newsletters and emails, providing residents with a few weeks of notice and all the details for the event.
- Where feasible, provide these sessions periodically throughout the year to keep residents engaged.
- Invite a guest speaker to discuss different aspects of recycling. For example: an RDCO Waste Reduction staff member, or a representative from your hauling company.
- Provide incentives for participation such as free snacks, swag, or door prizes.
- To encourage participation and to help break the ice, plan an activity: for example, you could encourage residents to bring along items that they have questions about and you could solve recycling “puzzles” (i.e. “Is this recyclable?”). You could create a game by sorting recyclable materials into the various streams that are in place at your building.

## Hold a Community Garage Sale or Swap Table

To inspire reuse in your community, organize a swap table or yard sale where residents can trade or sell items in good condition for reuse by other residents. Organize a date and notify residents about the event. On the event day, set up a few tables and get a group of people to bring items in good condition that others can take home for free, or trade, or buy. Organizing this well in advance and promoting it to the residents could help promote reuse of items and a deeper sense of community.

## 5. Additional Material Streams to Consider

### Depot Recyclables...

Most haulers will not collect depot recyclables in their regular programs, but encouraging your residents to bring these materials to the depot will reduce the amount of material that needs to be hauled from your building, and will increase your diversion rate.

Where possible, consider starting programs at your building for depot items. If you do not have the space or budget to provide a program, consider the ideas below for innovative ways to encourage residents to collect and transport depot items.

For a list of depot item collection locations, please click [here](#). For a full list of provincial take-back programs and items, please click [here](#).

### Innovative ways to collect depot items without a hauler

- Identify recycling champions at your property to help coordinate and implement a building-wide depot recycling “Car Pool” collection program, with drivers taking turns to bring recyclables to the depot for their neighbours.
- Involve maintenance staff or resident recycling champions to help transport depot items to your local depot drop-off and pay them for their time, provide them with a gift, or suggest they keep the money they got from returning the refundables.
- Offer rewards or incentives to your residents for participating in a depot collection program (for example: the floor that collects the most clean depot items in a month receives a prize).

### Address *food waste*...

Food waste accounted for nearly 30% of the materials audited during the 2020 Multifamily Recycling Study undertaken in the RDCO. By addressing food waste, you can:

- Divert more material from landfills, reducing the amount of methane released into the atmosphere. Methane is a very potent greenhouse gas, responsible for about 15% of Canada’s carbon footprint.
- Realize cost savings by switching to a smaller garbage bin or reducing the frequency of regularly scheduled pick-ups.
- Reduce odours and avoid attracting pests.

For information on bringing composting to your building, please see the below table for a list of haulers providing compost pick-up.

Business Name	Phone Number	Website
Valley Pro Recycling	250-717-6056	<a href="https://www.valleyprorecycling.ca/kelowna-composting-services/">https://www.valleyprorecycling.ca/kelowna-composting-services/</a>
Spa Hills Compost	250-253-1459	<a href="https://spahillscompost.ca/">https://spahillscompost.ca/</a>

Even if compost services are not available at your building, there are still ways to encourage your residents to tackle their own food waste. Share resources that promote the reduction of food waste, such as the [Multi-Family Recycling Toolkit for Residents](#).

## What to do about hazardous waste?

There are several items your residents should not dispose of in the garbage or recycling, such as *household hazardous waste* which is defined as: “*Leftover products that contain corrosive, toxic, flammable or reactive components.*” **Household hazardous waste** include:

- Paint
- Cleaners, degreasers, etc.
- Aerosols
- Pesticides, fertilizers, pool chemicals
- Electronics (anything with a power cord including: cell phones, smart devices, used cables, tvs, computers, home office equipment, small appliances, etc.
- Batteries
- Fluorescent light bulbs and tubes
- Thermostats, smoke detectors, etc.
- Propane tanks

These items pose risks to human health and the environment if disposed of incorrectly. At the same time, there are several materials within these waste items that can be recovered and recycled into new products, so it is important to properly dispose of them.

- **Communicate with your residents** about proper household hazardous waste disposal by sending an email (see [Other Resources](#) for a sample), by providing them with the RDCO Household Hazardous Waste [Brochure](#), or by directing them to the RDCO [website](#).
- If your property warrants it, and if they are available, consider **obtaining bins specifically for hazardous or electronic waste** items. Speak with your hauler to see if this is possible.

Household hazardous waste can be collected and brought to various locations across the RDCO; click [here](#) for the locations that accept the specific materials that your residents may be looking to dispose of.

### A point about sharps...

*Hypodermic needles* should never be disposed of in the garbage or recycling. These *sharps* pose a serious bio-hazard to anyone that may come into contact with them after disposal, including residents, maintenance staff, haulers, truck drivers, waste auditors, recycling sorters, and landfill staff. It is important for residents to understand proper disposal procedures. **Many pharmacies accept sharps for proper disposal: residents should call ahead to confirm that their pharmacy will accept sharps from them.** Interior Health (IH) supports the Central Okanagan to keep sharps out of the garbage by:

- Accepting used sharps back at all IH public health, primary care, mental health and substance use sites.
- Providing small sharps containers for personal use.
- Providing free posters and info sheets on safe disposal of sharps. If sharps are an issue at your property, consider downloading and printing Interior Health's [Sharps Disposal Do's and Don'ts](#) poster to hang in common areas, or to email to residents.

Needle disposal boxes can be found at the following *Kelowna* locations:

- Interior Health Community Health & Services Centre (505 Doyle Ave)
- Kelowna RCMP Detachment (1190 Richter St)
- Outreach Urban Health Centre (455 Leon Ave)
- Rutland Community Policing Office (115 McIntosh Rd)

**For more information, please visit the Interior Health Safe Needle Disposal [website](#).**

### A note on tires...

*Tires* should never go in the garbage or the recycling. Please bring used tires to local tire shops, the **Glenmore Landfill** or the **Westside Residential Waste Disposal & Recycling Centre** for proper disposal.

## 6. Monitor and Measure Progress

With any recycling and waste diversion program, it is important to **monitor and measure** progress. You want to ensure that the changes you have made are working and that your waste streams are not contaminated. **Report** your findings to residents: the findings will help them understand that they have a role to play in the success of their own programs. Reporting your findings also helps quantify progress, maintains transparency, and demonstrates leadership.

In order to best measure the success (and challenges) of your program, consider establishing a baseline: *How does the program currently function? What is working and what needs improvement?*

Below are a few ways that you can monitor and measure your progress. Pick the option below that best suits your needs and capacity.

### [EASY] Ask for feedback from your recycling hauler

- 1) Feedback might include: tonnes or volume recycled, comments on contamination, damage to bins, and reasons for missed collection.
- 2) Ask your hauler to offer guidance and support. They may also offer additional resources that can be given to residents.
- 3) Draft a quick email to residents to provide this feedback and further support recycling in your building.

### [MORE EFFORT] Conduct a visual waste assessment

- 1) Establish a regular inspection schedule (weekly, monthly or quarterly) to identify any issues that need to be addressed.
- 2) During inspections:
  - a) Ensure there is signage and labels that are easy to read, clean and not torn. Replace signage/labels that are damaged or out of date.
  - b) Check that the recycling area is clean and tidy. Clear out any obstacles that make it difficult to access the recycling bins.
  - c) Look for contamination in the recycling bins and identify common items that are unacceptable. Note the contaminating items seen so that you can communicate findings to your residents (see sample communication in [Other Resources](#)).
- 3) Consider developing a simple scoring metric to conduct weekly or monthly check-ins. By scoring your inspections, you can assess progress over time. A sample scorecard is included in [Other Resources](#).

### [ADVANCED] Conduct a waste audit

A waste audit is a quantitative study of the materials found in your garbage and recycling streams, where materials collected over a given period of time are weighed, sorted, and weighed again to understand the composition of your waste streams. Waste audits identify

and quantify contaminants in your recycling, as well as opportunities for increased diversion, providing the best insight to determine ways to improve your recycling programs.

See [Other Resources](#) for a guide to completing your own waste audit, as well as a template for recording your findings.

If you do not have the capacity to conduct a waste audit, consider reaching out to a third-party waste auditing contractor, who will have the necessary audit equipment, documentation, insurance, staff, and knowledge to conduct a successful audit.

If you have made changes to your recycling programs and are seeing positive results, it is important to communicate this to your residents. Everyone likes to know that their hard work pays off, and it is a good reminder to residents that they are all working together towards the common goal of increasing diversion from the landfill.

## 7. Other Resources

### Sample Communication: introducing a new recycling program

**Subject:** New Recycling Program at *[name of building]*

We are excited to let you know that our building is starting a new recycling program beginning on *[date]*. Accepted recycling materials will include *[list material categories accepted, i.e. newsprint, plastic containers, cans, glass bottles, etc.]*, which can be dropped off at *[recycling location on-site]*.

We have provided more information on this new program below:

#### 1. Why should I recycle?

Recycling diverts recyclable materials from the landfill. By properly diverting recyclables, these materials become the raw materials for new items, which reduces the need to harvest virgin materials and keeps these commodities cycling through the economy. Through this new recycling program, we hope to help you divert more waste from landfill by providing on-site access to programs that make recycling easier for you.

#### 2. What can I recycle?

*[Remove any from the list below that do not apply to your recycling program.]*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ✓ Cardboard and boxboard  | ✓ Paper coffee cups   |
| ✓ Plastic containers  | ✓ Frozen food containers  |
| ✓ Metal food cans and foil  | ✓ Cartons   |
| ✓ Mixed paper: newsprint, magazines, mixed paper, shredded paper, telephone books | ✓ <i>[Insert any additional materials your program accepts]</i> |

#### 3. How do I prepare my recycling?

1. Please make sure your recycling is clean, dry, and loose (not bagged). An exception is that shredded paper can be placed in a clear plastic bag.
2. Rinse containers to remove any food/liquid residues.
3. Flatten all cardboard and boxboard boxes to save space.
4. *[Include additional information about sorting at your building, e.g. place all materials in the same bin or sort materials according to signage.]*

#### 4. Where should I take my recycling?

The recycling area will be located *[insert location of recycling station]*. Please be sure to follow all posted signage for proper sorting.

#### 5. What if I have materials to recycle not on this list?

- ✓ Check out the RDCO's webpage for [Multi-Family Recycling](#)
- ✓ Use the RDCO's [Multi-Family Recycling Toolkit for Residents](#) to learn more about depots.

Thank you! By participating in this new recycling program, you are helping keep *[municipality name and the RDCO]* a waste-free place to be. Recycling is one way we can all do our part to reduce the amount of waste going to our landfill.

If you have any questions, please contact *[insert contact details]*.



## Sample Communication: introducing updates/changes to existing recycling programs

**Subject:** Get Ready: Changes are coming to our recycling programs at *[name of building]*

We are excited to announce that starting on *[date]*, we will be updating our recycling program. This means you will be able to recycle more items as we will be collecting more materials and doing our part to reduce the amount of waste ending up in our landfill.

We have provided more information on the program below:

### 1. Why should I recycle?

Recycling aims to divert recyclable materials from landfill. By properly diverting recyclables, these materials become the raw materials for new items, which reduces the need to harvest virgin materials and keeps these commodities cycling through the economy. Through these changes to our recycling program, we hope to help you divert more waste from the landfill by providing on-site access to programs that make recycling easier for you.

### 2. What is the updated list of materials now accepted?

*[Remove any from the below list that do not apply to your recycling program]*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ✓ Cardboard and boxboard  | ✓ Paper coffee cups   |
| ✓ Plastic containers  | ✓ Frozen food containers  |
| ✓ Metal food cans and foil  | ✓ Cartons   |
| ✓ Mixed paper: newsprint, magazines, mixed paper, shredded paper, telephone books | ✓ <i>[Insert any additional materials your program accepts]</i> |

### 3. How do I prepare my recycling?

1. Please make sure your recycling is clean, dry, and loose (not bagged). An exception is that shredded paper can be placed in a clear plastic bag.
2. Rinse containers to remove any food/liquid residues.
3. Flatten all cardboard and boxboard boxes to save space.
4. *[Include additional information about sorting at your building, e.g. place all materials in the same bin or sort materials according to signage.]*

#### 4. Where should I take my recycling?

The recycling area will be located *[insert location of recycling station]*. Please be sure to follow all posted signage for proper sorting.

#### 5. What if I have materials to recycle not on this list?

- ✓ Check out the RDCO's webpage for [Multi-Family Recycling](#)
- ✓ Use the RDCO's [Multi-Family Recycling Toolkit for Residents](#) to learn more about depots.

Thank you! By participating in this new recycling program, you are helping keep *[municipality name and the RDCO]* a waste-free place to be. Recycling is one way we can all do our part to reduce the amount of waste going to our landfill.

If you have any questions, please contact *[insert contact details]*.

## Sample communication: introducing new residents to existing recycling programs

**Subject:** Welcome to *[name of building]* - FYI: Our Recycling Programs

Hello, and welcome to *[name of building]*! We hope you are settling in well and finding what you need. This email will provide you with additional information about our garbage and recycling program. It may look a bit different from what you have experienced in the past, so here are some helpful pointers to get you recycling:

1. Please familiarize yourself with our existing waste diversion programs. At this building, we have bins for *[include what you are diverting, i.e. garbage and cardboard only; garbage, co-mingled recycling including x, y, and z, etc.]* These bins can be found *[insert bin location]*.
2. Please ensure that all of your recycling materials are clean, dry, and loose (no bags, except for shredded paper), and that all cardboard/boxboard is flattened to save space.
3. Check out the RDCO's [Multi-Family Recycling Toolkit for Residents](#), an online resource aiming to make waste diversion easier for you, offering ideas and information to help you recycle and reduce your waste.
4. If you have any questions about our recycling program, or have accessibility or mobility concerns, please respond to this email to schedule a move-in tour to get acquainted with our collection system.

We hope you enjoy your time here at *[name of building]*. Thank you for doing your part to reduce the amount of waste we send to the landfill and keeping our community clean!

## Sample communication: household hazardous waste

**Subject:** Hazardous Waste, Tires, and Sharps - the Do's and Don'ts of Proper Disposal

Did you know that household hazardous waste cannot be disposed of in regular garbage or recycling? These items are defined as *“Leftover products that contain corrosive, toxic, flammable or reactive components,”* and they include:

- Paint, pesticides, fertilizers, pool chemicals
- Cleaners/degreasers
- Aerosols
- Electronics, small appliances, cell phones, smart devices, used cables
- Batteries
- Fluorescent light bulbs and tubes
- Thermostats, smoke detectors

These items contain materials which pose risks to human health and the environment if disposed of incorrectly. At the same time, there are several materials within these waste items that can be recovered and recycled into new products, so it is important to properly dispose of them.

There are a number of ways to safely dispose of any household hazardous wastes you may have in your home.

1. Take a look at the RDCO Household Hazardous Waste [Brochure](#) to learn more about what is considered hazardous waste.
2. Check with your nearest recycling depot to see if they accept any of the above materials. Some depot locations may accept things like batteries or light bulbs, but it is good to check beforehand.
3. Collect and bring your hazardous waste items to Kelowna Recycling aka The Battery Doctors, located at 1972 Windsor Road in Kelowna.

If you have any questions about household hazardous waste, please visit the RDCO [website](#) for more information. If you need assistance returning your household hazardous waste to Kelowna Recycling or a depot location, please reach out to your neighbours to see about pooling materials for a group drop-off.

Thank you for doing your part to help keep household hazardous wastes out of our garbage and recycling!

## Sample communication: communicate feedback on the recycling program to residents

**Subject:** Feedback about our Recycling Program

Recently, we enlisted the help of our building's waste hauling service provider to gain a better understanding of whether we are diverting our waste appropriately. With any recycling and waste diversion program, it is important to monitor and measure progress so we can ensure that our program is effective.

We would like to share the following feedback with you, so that you can understand the role you play in the success of these programs.

- Over the last *[time period]* our building has recycled *[tonnes or volumes]* of materials. Of that material, approximately *[x%]* was considered contamination - meaning it should not have been placed into the recycling bin.
- Common contaminants that were observed included: *[insert recurring contaminating materials and any other observations from your hauler]*.
- *If contamination is low...**[Name of Hauler]* observed that over the last *[time period]* our contamination rates have dropped - that means we are doing a good job at effectively diverting our waste. Great job!
- Recently, our bins were not collected because *[list reasons, e.g. too many recyclables observed in the garbage bin; bulky items blocked access; bin was overflowing and could not be safely dumped]*.

From this feedback, it is clear that *[select one: we are making progress; there is room for improvement]*.

If you have questions about recycling, or diverting other types of waste (e.g. food scraps, e-waste, etc.) please consult the [Multi-Family Recycling Toolkit for Residents](#) or reach out to RDCO's Waste Reduction Office by emailing [recycle@rdco.com](mailto:recycle@rdco.com) or by phoning 250-469-6250.

Thank you for doing your part to keep our building and *[city/ "the RDCO"]* clean and diverting your waste from going to the landfill!

## Sample communication: communicating waste audit findings to your residents

**Subject:** Waste Diversion at *[building name]*: How are we doing? Waste Audit Results

Recently, we conducted a waste audit at *[name of building]* to gain a better understanding of whether we are diverting our waste appropriately.

A waste audit is a quantitative study of the composition of our garbage and recycling programs, where a team sorts and weighs materials found within our bins. This study can help us identify how much material we are generating, and also identifies opportunities to improve recycling efforts by diverting more materials from the landfill into our recycling programs. It also identifies materials that are contaminating our recyclables. You may have seen our team at work on *[date]*.

It is important to monitor and measure our waste programs so we can ensure that our program and practices are effective. We would like to share the findings of our waste audit with you, so that you can understand the role you play in the success of these programs.

### How is a waste audit conducted?

There are many ways to conduct a waste audit. For this waste audit, we *[briefly explain the method used: visual; obtained feedback from hauler; conducted a volunteer-led waste audit; or hired a third-party consultant.]*

### What are the results?

During our waste audit, we analyzed the contents of our garbage and *[name recycling programs here, e.g. co-mingled, cardboard only, etc.]* recycling programs. It was found that of the *[total weight/volume]* of garbage audited, *xx%* were actually recyclables that could have been diverted into the recycling stream. Similarly, of the *[total weight/volume]* of recycling audited, *xx%* was actually garbage that should have been put into the garbage stream.

We identified the following materials in the garbage that should have been diverted to recycling:

- *[Insert materials found]*

We identified the following materials in the recycling stream that were not recyclable and should have been disposed of in the garbage stream:

- *[Insert materials found]*

We identified the following materials that should be taken to a recycling depot for recycling:

- *[Insert materials found]*

The following materials are considered hazardous and require safe disposal. For more information on [hazardous waste](#) and to identify locations for drop off, please visit the [RDCO website](#):

- *[Insert materials found]*

## What do these results mean?

These results mean that collectively, we *[insert what needs to be done, i.e.: we have some work to do to reduce our contamination; we are doing a great job at diverting our waste]*.

## How are we taking action?

With these waste audit results in mind, we will be *[identify action items to be taken, e.g. increasing the amount of signage on all waste and recycling bins; starting a Green Team; etc.]*.

Good waste diversion requires all of us to do our part, so we hope that these results will encourage you to continue your waste reduction and diversion efforts. If you have questions about how to improve, please consult the [Multi-Family Recycling Toolkit for Residents](#). Additionally, you can also reach out to the RDCO's Waste Reduction Office by email [recycle@rdco.com](mailto:recycle@rdco.com) or by phoning 250-469-6250.

Thank you for making this building a waste-free place to be!

## Sample Visual Waste Assessment Scorecard

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Inspected by: \_\_\_\_\_

### Bin Fullness

<b>Garbage Bin</b>	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
<b>Recycling Bin</b>	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%

### Inspection

	Requires Immediate Attention	Poor	Adequate	Good	Excellent
<b>Signage</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Labels</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Condition of bins</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Cleanliness</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Contamination</b>	1	2	3	4	5

Contaminants Include: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## How to complete a waste audit?

1. Assemble a team of volunteers to help with this exercise. Ask them to wear comfortable clothing that they can move in and do not mind getting dirty.
2. Obtain basic personal protective equipment (e.g. nitrile gloves, masks, tongs and a first aid kit) and equipment needed for the audit. Equipment includes: a sorting table, buckets, extra bags, a scale (e.g. fish scale, platform scale or even a bathroom scale), and paper to record data (e.g. use the [Sample Waste Audit Data Collection Sheet](#) template provided below).
3. On the audit day:
  - a. Discuss the audit process with volunteers, ensuring to cover safety considerations and items to watch out for (e.g. broken glass, sharps, knives or sharp edges, feminine hygiene products, bloody items, chemicals or hazardous materials). Discuss the process if any of these items are found.
  - b. Set up your table, buckets and bags for easy sorting. Labelling the materials meant for each bucket or bag will ensure proper sorting.
  - c. Prepare your data recording sheet or audit template (see [Sample Waste Audit Data Collection Sheet](#)).
  - d. Select a sample each of garbage and recycling; this may be all materials available, or it may be a percentage of what is in your bins.
  - e. Start with garbage or recycling. Opening one bag at a time, quickly scan the bag for [hazardous materials](#), then sort the contents into the labelled material-specific buckets and bags.
  - f. Once all materials have been sorted, record the volume and/or weight of each bucket or bag. Hint: the volume of material collected is determined by the size of bucket or bag you use multiplied by the percentage that it is filled (e.g. a 10 L bag that is 25% full = 2.5 L).
  - g. Once all the garbage and recycling bags have been sorted, total your weights or volumes for the two streams, and then repeat steps E to F for any other material streams.
  - h. Clean up. Dispose of the waste and recycling into the correct bins, sweep and mop as required, then clean your audit equipment and put them away.
  - i. Wash your hands and change your clothes.
4. Analyze results; what materials were found in each stream that should not have been there?
5. Communicate the results to residents with information on better source separation. Use the email template in [Other Resources](#) to send the findings to your residents.

## Sample Waste Audit Data Collection Sheet

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Audited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit of measure: \_\_\_\_\_

(e.g. kilograms or pounds for weight, cubic meters or yards for volume)

	Garbage Bin	% of Garbage	Recycling Bin	% of Recycling
<b>Garbage &amp; Residuals</b>				
<b>Recyclables</b> (paper, tin, and plastic container packaging)				
<b>Depot Recyclables</b> (glass, styrofoam, plastic bags, flexible plastics)				
<b>Food Waste</b>				
<b>Yard Waste</b>				
<b>Hazardous Waste</b>				
<b>TOTALS</b>				

**Instructions:** 1) Sort all materials collected in your garbage stream into your buckets/bags by material-type. 2) Quantify material in each bucket and record the weight or volume in the Garbage Bin column. 3) Clean up, and repeat Steps 1 & 2 for Recycling. 4) Calculate the % of each material type compared to the total materials audited for that stream. 5) Communicate successes and areas for improvement to your residents.