



# MassDEP's Recycling IQ Kit

Increasing Quality in Municipal Recycling Programs



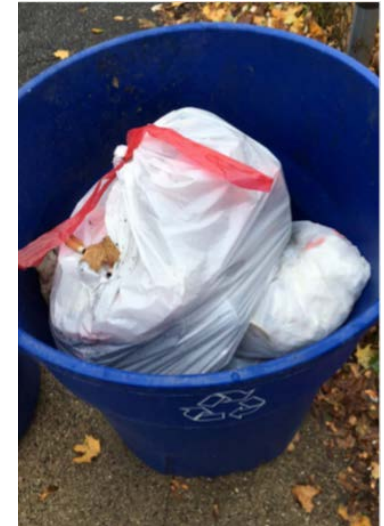
**Recycling IQ Kit**  
.....  
Improving Your Recycling Program  
A Step-By-Step Guide

Recycle  
Smart





# The Problem: Contamination





# Contamination effects

- Materials that could have been reused are wasted
- More money and time are required to separate contaminants
- Sorting machinery stoppages to disentangle non-recyclables,
- Can expose recycling workers to hazardous wastes & cause unsafe conditions
- Quality of recyclable byproduct decreases if contaminated, reducing the market value
- Recycling companies struggle to recoup the cost of contamination and pass cost on to Municipalities



# What is the Recycling IQ Kit?

- It's a MassDEP grant to clean up recycling
- Awards up to \$40,000
- Two main components:
  - Outreach and Education
  - Curbside feedback (8 weeks)



# Outreach & Education

- Recycling Information mailer to all households (mandatory)
- Biggest Issue postcard to targeted households (mandatory)
- Banners, billboards, posters, sandwich boards, electronic signs
- Newspaper, radio and local television advertisements
- Social media ads and town website with [RecycleSmartMA.org](https://RecycleSmartMA.org)
- Earned media: newsletters, local blogs, town websites, op-eds
- Community events, tabling, guest speaker





# The Recycling Mailer



Your Organization  
123 Street  
City, ST 12345



**Recycle**  
 **Smart**

**Recycle**  
 **Smart**



**Metal**



**Food and Beverage  
Cans**  
empty and rinse



**Plastic**



**Bottles, Jars, Jugs  
and Tubs**  
empty and replace cap



**Glass**



**Bottles and Jars**  
empty and rinse



**Paper &  
Cardboard**



**Mixed Paper, Newspaper,  
Magazines, Boxes**  
empty and flatten

**NO!**



**Do Not Bag Recyclables  
No Garbage**



**No Plastic Bags  
or Plastic Wrap**  
(return to retail)



**No Food or Liquid**  
(empty all containers)



**No Clothing or Linens**  
(use donation programs)



**No Tanglers**  
(no hoses, wires,  
chains or electronics)

**(123) 456-7890**

Town and Department

 An initiative of MassDEP

[SampleUrl.org](http://SampleUrl.org)  
[RecycleSmartMA.org](http://RecycleSmartMA.org)



# The Biggest Issue Mailer





# A letter from the City/Town



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
Trash & Recycling  
365 Boston Rd Room G-11 Billerica, MA 01821

June 1, 2019

Dear Billerica Resident:

We need your help. **The Town of Billerica's recycling contains 28.4% contamination. Contractually, the Town is required to have a contamination rate of 5% or less.** There is a heightened emphasis on compliance due to the global recycling market's downturn. Consequently, the Town of Billerica is embarking on a focused initiative to educate our residents on better recycling habits and lower our contamination rate.

The Town received a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to fund a robust education campaign, help us inspect what's in the recycling carts and to communicate that information to residents. We will be performing curbside inspections of residential recycling carts beginning June 17<sup>th</sup>. Contaminated carts will receive a warning and specific feedback on what issue was found. A tag indicating the issue found will be left on the cart handle, and your cart will be left behind. Once the issue has been corrected, the cart will be collected the following week.

While we understand that your cart being delayed for a week is an inconvenience, please understand that recycling has become increasingly complex in recent years and it has become necessary to increase our education efforts to keep up with this growing complexity.

#### Contamination in our recycling typically comes in two forms:

1) Materials that belong in the green cart but are not prepared correctly. For example, contamination occurs when there is still food in a plastic container or a half-filled bottle of juice. Containers should be empty and clean (just a quick rinse) before being placed in the green cart.

2) Materials that **do not** belong in the green cart. Such as:

- Plastic bags
- Other plastic film (such as the wrap around a case of bottled water)
- Tangles (such as bungee cords, wires, hoses)
- Food and/or liquids
- Textiles (such as clothing/linens)
- Electronics

#### Materials that **do** belong in the green bin include:

- Empty bottles, jars, and containers made of metal, plastic, and glass
- Paper
- Flattened cardboard

We believe deeply in diverting waste whenever possible to lessen our environmental footprint. But, unless you are absolutely certain that something is recyclable in the green cart, put it in the trash instead. **Think – "When in doubt, throw it out!"**

Please contact me if you have any questions about this new initiative. For more information about how to recycle correctly, check out the [www.RecycleSmartMA.org](http://www.RecycleSmartMA.org) website.

Thank you for your help and your commitment to a more sustainable Billerica.

Sincerely,  
Christina McLaughlin  
Recycling Coordinator, Town of Billerica  
978-671-1337  
[cmclaughlin@town.billerica.ma.us](mailto:cmclaughlin@town.billerica.ma.us)

## Appendix E: Press Coverage

Sept. 27, 2018

### Mayor's Update



We need your help.

The City of Newton's recycling contains 18 percent contamination. Contractually, the City is required to have a contamination rate of less than 10 percent. As a result, the City was charged \$6,120 in fines last month and we have paid \$65,611 in fines so far in 2018. This is a direct impact Newton is facing due to the global recycling markets downturn you may have heard about this year.

The City of Newton is embarking on a focused initiative to educate our residents and lower our contamination rate. We received a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to fund a robust education campaign, help us inspect what's in the recycling carts and to communicate that information to residents.

**Beginning next week, on Monday, October 1,** we will be performing curbside inspections of residential recycling carts. Contaminated carts will **first receive a warning and specific feedback** on what issue was found.

If, after a warning is issued, a cart is found to again contain contamination, **it will not be collected that week.** A tag indicating the issue found will be left on the cart handle and we will also send a follow up letter. Once the issue has been corrected, the cart will be collected the following week.

We know that recycling has become increasingly complex in recent years and that our education efforts have not been effective in keeping up with this growing complexity.

#### Contamination in our recycling typically comes in two forms:

1) Materials that belong in the green cart but are not prepared correctly. For example, contamination occurs when there is still food in a plastic container or a half-filled bottle of juice. Containers should be empty and clean (just a quick rinse) before being placed in the green cart.

2) Materials that do not belong in the green cart. The most common contaminant is plastic bags. Other contaminants include other plastic film (such as the wrap around a case of bottled water), food, liquids, textiles, toys and electronics.

The only materials that belong in the green cart are empty bottles, jars, and containers made of metal, plastic and glass from the kitchen, laundry and bath, and paper and flattened cardboard.

We believe deeply in diverting waste whenever possible to lessen our environmental footprint. But, unless you are absolutely certain that something is recyclable in the green cart, put it in the trash instead. **Think – "When in doubt, throw it out!"**

I know it will be difficult for you if we reject your cart because of contaminated materials and we don't pick it up for a week.

For more information about how to recycle correctly, check out the mobile [Recycle Right Newton](#) app or get information [here](#).

Thanks for your help and your commitment to a more sustainable Newton.

**Taking the Next Step on Washington Street**





# Banners



# Billboards



# Sandwich Boards







# Newspaper

# Radio



# Local TV

**WICKED LOCAL NEWTON**  
Includes content from the Newton TAB

## Newton takes action after being fined for recycling contamination

By Julie M. Cohen  
jcohen@wickedlocal.com  
Posted Oct 12, 2018 at 4:04 PM  
Updated Oct 12, 2018 at 4:04 PM

On a drizzly Friday morning Waneta Trabert walked up and down several Nonantum streets, peeking into recycling bins on the lookout for rogue plastic bags.

...ustainable materials management, a division of the city's ... and her team started their inspections after the ... \$5,000 in fines so far this year for contaminated ...

...educate residents, using the MassDEP's Recycling ... by changing habits and decreasing ...

...on streets where inspections were due to be ... writing up warnings to those residents who ... plastic bags, toys and electronics, in their ...

...educate people as much as possible," said ... Fayette Street.

...If, after a warning is issued, a cart is ... will not be collected that week. A tag ... e cart handle and we will also send a ... will be collected the following week."

...RECYCLING | PAGE 15

**TOWN CRIER - WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 2018**

## Plastic bags causing the problem Contaminated recycling costing the town

By PAIGE IMPINK  
News Correspondent  
paige@yourtowncrier.com

TEWKSBURY — "Single use plastic bags are not recyclable despite the recycling symbol on them," said Town Manager Richard Montuori.

The bags are considered contaminants in the town's recycling totes and are part of a much larger problem and cost that Tewksbury is now facing.

"Residents need to return those bags back to the stores where they made purchases," Montuori said.

Plastic bags get caught up in the machinery that sorts single stream recycling and as such, are an enormous nuisance for the recycling contractor. The town offers free bins to residents for handling their recyclables, but Montuori and Assistant Town Manager Steve Sadwick said that Tewksbury residents are putting trash and non-recyclables in the bins and it is going to cause fines and rejection of the town's recyclables.

"The vendor can reject our loads based on contamination," Montuori said. This results not only in a fine from the vendor, but the follow-on cost of the load being sent to the trash contractor who then charges by the ton to dispose of that load. It will end up in a landfill or be incinerated.

It is a serious problem. According to details from the vendor, items such as umbrellas, chairs, tires, wood and so forth have been in the recycling bins. Pizza boxes are not recyclable. Styrofoam is not recyclable. And single use bags are not recyclable. The problem is so bad that nearly 20 percent of the haul from Tewksbury is contaminated.

"The contractor is actually doing their own visual inspections and tagging bins that have items in them that are not recyclable," said Montuori.

Sadwick said the Department of Environmental Protection gave Tewksbury a grant to educate and inspect the recycling totes to try to improve compliance.

"Residents are sent a recycling calendar every year and we have information on the town website," said Sadwick. "We are going to send postcards and have informational signs," he explained, which will detail what can and cannot be put in the recycling bins.

There is even funding for temporary recycling inspection positions and those interested should contact Town Hall. Tewksbury has sent notices about the use of plastic bags to "bag" recyclables and the problems they create. The Tewksbury Recycling Committee shares multiple helpful links on the town webpage including how to dispose of hard to recycle items and what is not considered recyclable. The town needs resident to be extremely mindful of what is trash and what is recyclable to try to improve compliance.

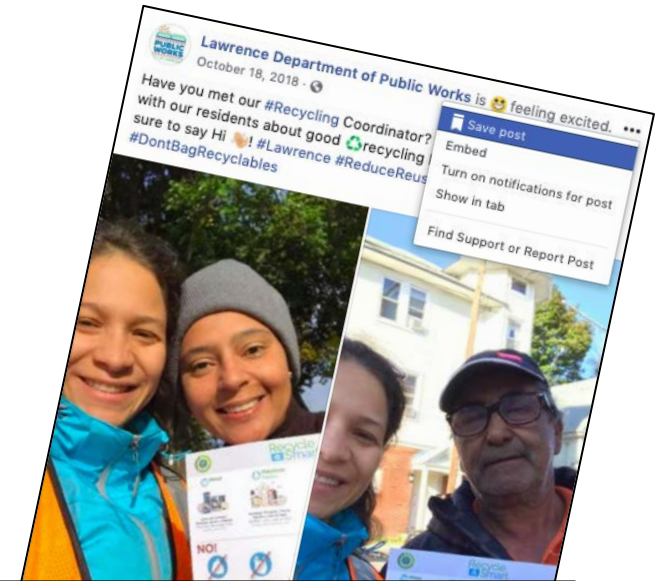
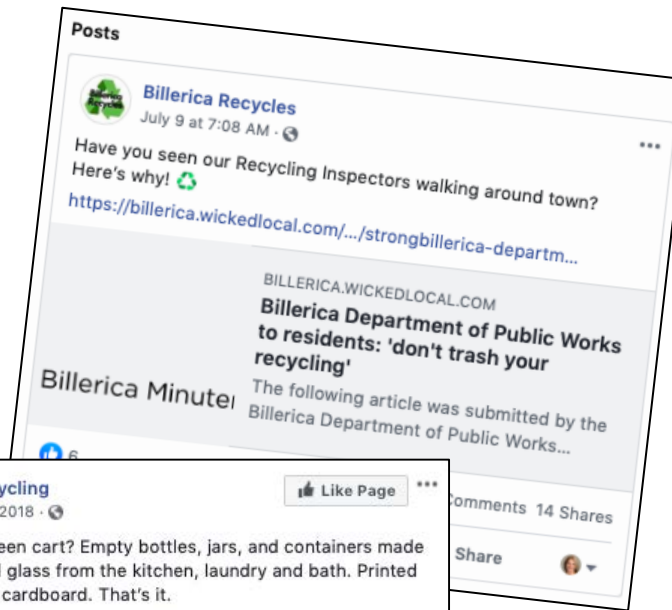
HomeNewsHere.com

To reach  
The Town Crier  
Call: 978-658-2346  
TownCrier





# Social Media







# Partner with RecycleSmart



[recyclesmartma.org](https://recyclesmartma.org)





# Curbside Feedback (8 weeks)





# Prior to launch of Curbside Feedback

- Get approval for leaving contaminated carts behind
- Kick-off meeting with Town and Hauler
- Pre-Audit at Materials Recovery Facility (MRF)
- Decide routes to be inspected
- Staffing: Temporary positions (9-10 weeks)
  - A few hours week day mornings
  - Summer hires, Seniors in community. . .
- Order all tagging materials



# The Week Before the Launch of Curbside Feedback

## Warning Tags



Thank you for recycling!

**PLEASE NOTE:** Soon, we will be inspecting bins in your neighborhood. Bins containing non-recyclable items (plastic bags, food, hoses, etc.) may not be collected. You will receive a tag to let you know why. No worries, just clean up your bin and it will be emptied next time.

For more information on what to recycle, visit our website:

[SampleUrl.org](http://SampleUrl.org)



Funded in part by MassDEP, Min. 30% recycled paper.

RECYCLE SMART

**METAL**  
Food and Beverage Cans  
empty and rinse



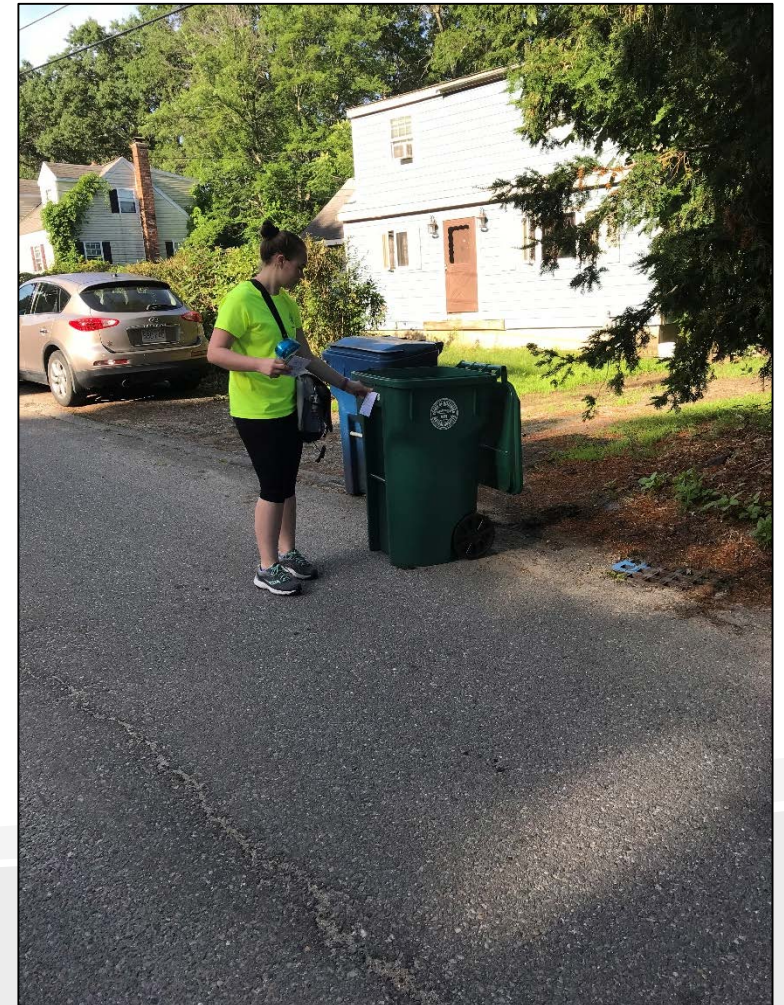
**GLASS**  
Bottles and Jars



**PAPER & CARDBOARD**  
Mixed Paper, Newspaper, Magazines, Boxes  
empty and flatten




**PLASTIC**  
Bottles, Jars, Jugs and Tubs  
empty, rinse, replace cap













# 8 Weeks of Curbside Feedback



## OOPS!

Please leave these items out of your recycling cart!

 <p><b>Do Not Bag Recyclables</b> (no garbage)</p>	 <p><b>No Plastic Bags or Plastic Wrap</b> (return to retail)</p>
 <p><b>YUCK</b> <b>No Food or Liquid</b> (empty all containers)</p>	 <p><b>No Clothing or Linens</b> (drop-off only)</p>
 <p><b>No Tangles</b> (cords, hoses, chains or electronics)</p>	 <p><b>No Hazardous or Big Items</b> (wood, metal, styrofoam, batteries or sharps)</p>

**CORRECT THIS AND WE WILL COLLECT NEXT TIME.**

NOTES

[SampleUrl.org](#)

Questions about your curbside recycling service?  
**(123) 456-7890**

## NO PLASTIC BAGS!

# DO NOT BAG

## Recyclables



## NO PLASTIC BAGS IN THE RECYCLING BIN!

Town & Department: [Sample URL](#)  
(123) 456-7890

 Return plastic bags to retailers.

**Recycle Smart**

Thank you for recycling. Funded in part by MassDEP.  
Min. 30% recycled paper.







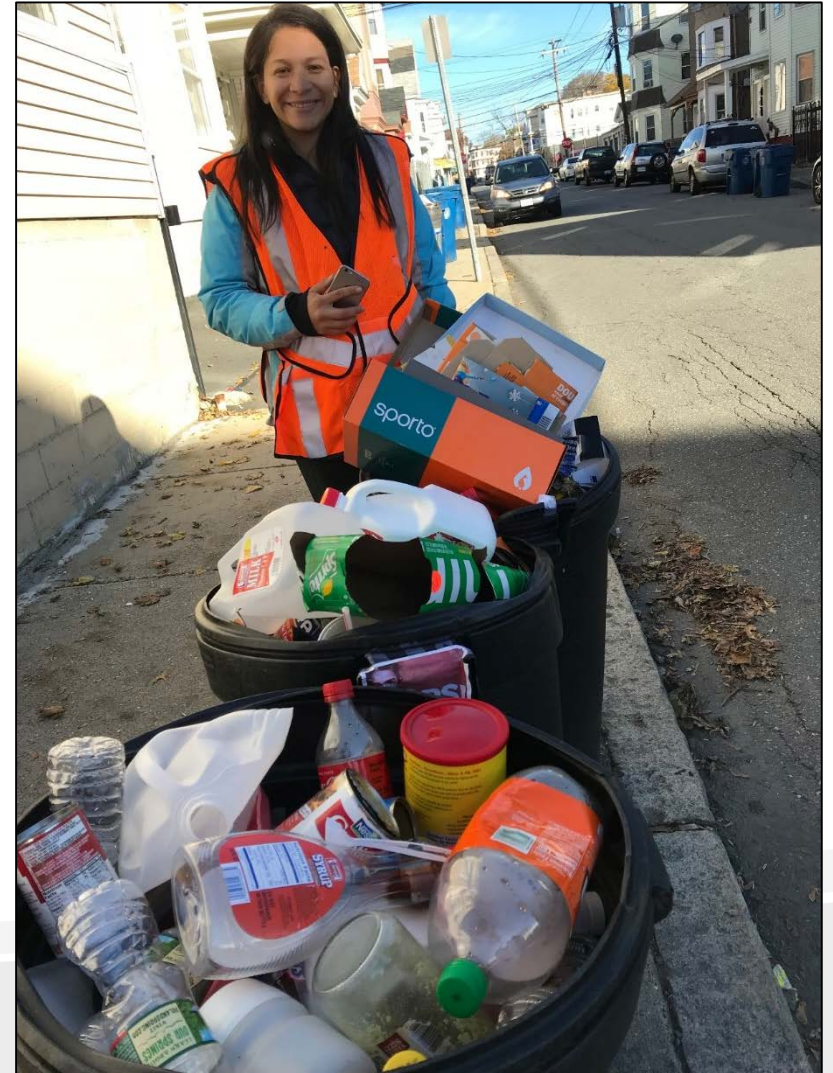
# 8 Weeks of Curbside Feedback Inspections and Oops Tags





# 8 Weeks of Curbside Feedback

## Successes





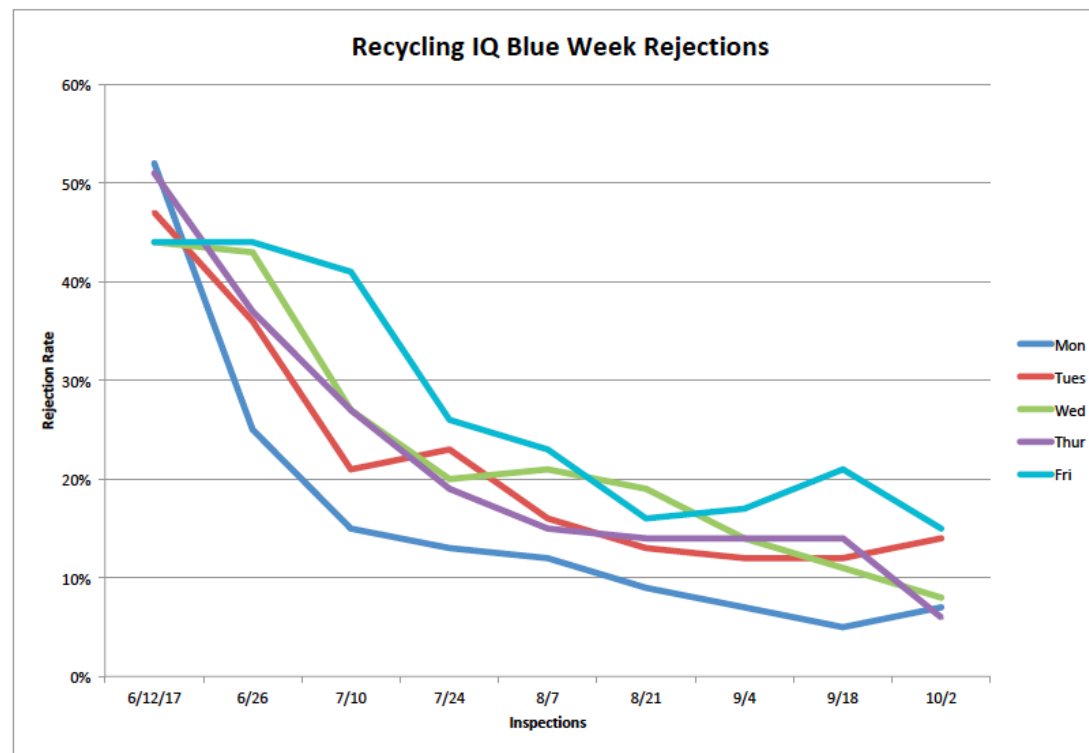
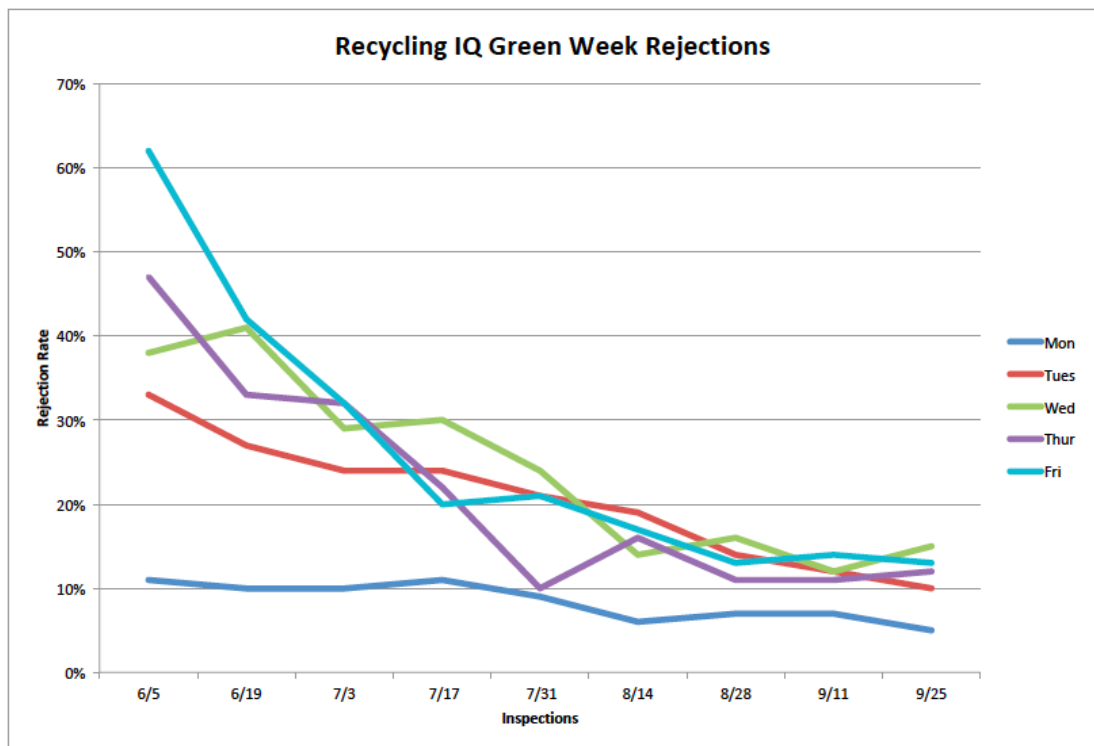
# The Recycling IQ Kit works!

Recycling IQ Kit  
Municipal results on  
inspected routes

Calendar Year 2018

Municipality	Average Contamination Reduction on Routes Inspected
Dartmouth	83%
Everett	55%
Lynn	77%
Newburyport	84%
Newton	87%
Stoneham	71%
Tewksbury	86%

# Curbside Feedback: The 8 Week Trend

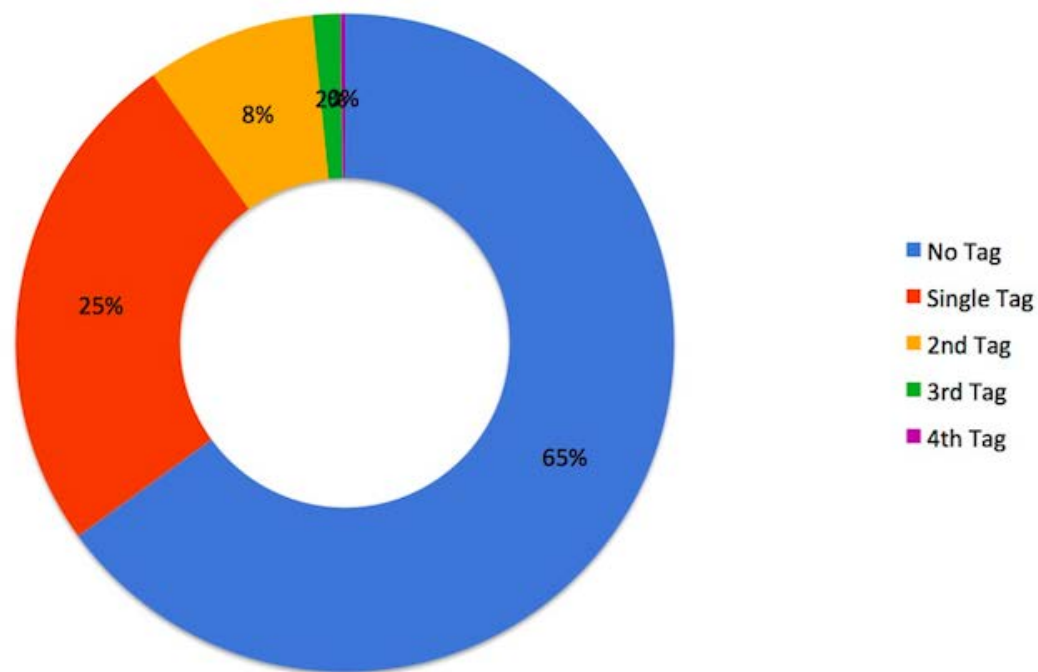




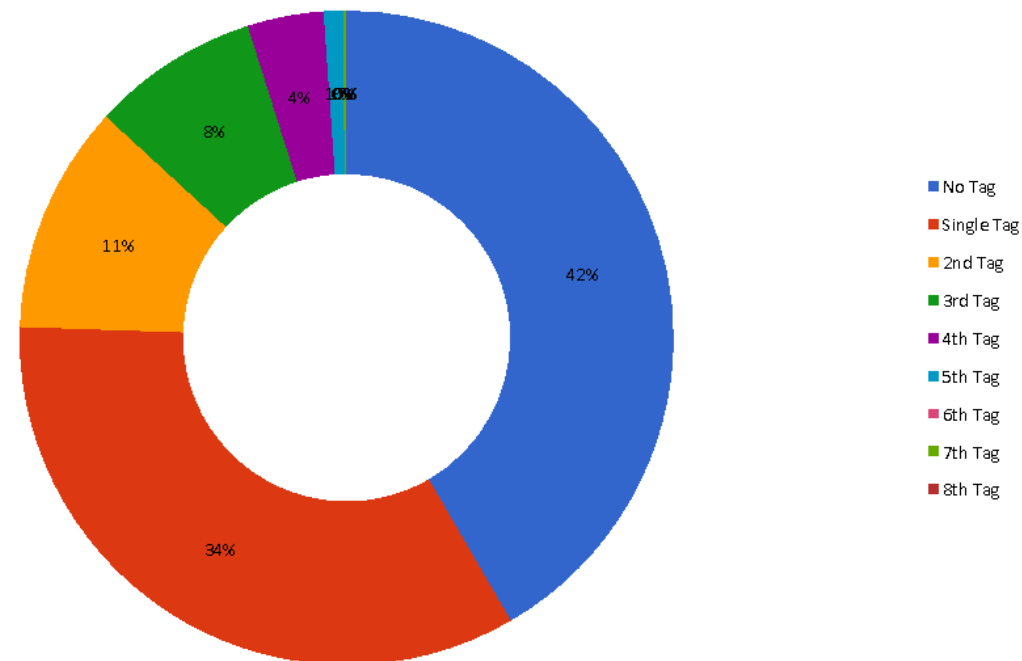


# Curbside Feedback: 75-90% compliance with a single tag

Lynn Green Monday - All Rejections



Lynn Blue Wednesday - All Rejections



# Final MRF Audit





# Maintaining Clean Recycling

## The Hauler

### Reminders

- Please make us aware of what bins are **recycling** & **trash** on your pick up days
- Do not place your recycling in plastic bags
- All items need to be clean



**WM**  
WASTE MANAGEMENT

**YOUR CART WAS NOT EMPTIED FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:**

- ☐ UNACCEPTABLE MATERIAL PLACED IN YOUR RECYCLING CART
- ☐ RECYCLING - NO PLASTIC BAGS
- ☐ CART LID MUST BE CLOSED, NOTHING ON TOP OR ON THE GROUND, UNLESS BAGGED WITH APPROVED OVERFLOW BAGS
- ☐ YARD WASTE, DIRT IN TRASH CART
- ☐ NON-COMPLIANT CART
- ☐ CONSTRUCTION DEBRIS IN TRASH CART
- ☐ RECYCLABLES IN TRASH CART
- ☐ CART WAS NOT AT CURB BY 7:00 AM
- ☐ 3 FT. SPACE BETWEEN CARTS / CARS, PHONE POLE
- ☐ UNACCEPTABLE BULK ITEM
- ☐ OTHER
- ☐ YARD WASTE
  - UNACCEPTABLE ITEMS
  - EXCEEDS 35 LB. LIMIT

**PLACE YOUR CART CURBSIDE WITH ARROWS ON LID FACING STREET**

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:  
WASTE MANAGEMENT ~800-972-4545**

## Recycling Coordinator

r





# Recycling IQ Kit Next Steps

Follow link to Recycling IQ Kit



Contact your Municipal Assistance Coordinator

Coordinator	District	Phone	Email
Irene Congdon	Central	978-597-9191	<a href="mailto:irene_congdon1@yahoo.com">irene_congdon1@yahoo.com</a>
Dawn Quirk	NE 1	617-292-5557	<a href="mailto:dawn.quirk@state.ma.us">dawn.quirk@state.ma.us</a>
Sharon Kishida	NE 2	978-605-2409	<a href="mailto:skishida@beverlyma.gov">skishida@beverlyma.gov</a>
Julia Greene	NE 3	781-918-4271	<a href="mailto:jgreene@bedfordma.gov">jgreene@bedfordma.gov</a>
Kari Parcell	SE 1	508-375-6974	<a href="mailto:kari.parcell@barnstablecounty.org">kari.parcell@barnstablecounty.org</a>
Kathi Mirza	SE 2	508-821-9469	<a href="mailto:kmirza@taunton-ma.gov">kmirza@taunton-ma.gov</a>
Todd Koep	SE 3	781-293-1775	<a href="mailto:tkoep@town.halifax.ma.us">tkoep@town.halifax.ma.us</a>
Veronique Blanchard	West	413-325-3472	<a href="mailto:vblanchardmac@gmail.com">vblanchardmac@gmail.com</a>