

# Frequently Asked Questions for new Bins

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*Last Updated February 4, 2008*

## **Background**

### **Why the change to new bins?**

The City of Toronto is launching a new automated collection service across Toronto that will involve providing all houses receiving curb side collection with new Blue Bins for recycling and Garbage Bins by the end of 2008. The City is targeting 70% waste diversion from landfill by 2010. These new Blue Bins and Garbage Bins, which replace current containers, are two of the tools that will help us reach our diversion goal.

### **When can I expect to get my new bin(s)?**

Single-family houses in the Scarborough community will receive their bins first starting in December 2007 through into January 2008.

Delivery of the new bins will be phased in according to the new vertical District boundaries established in August 2007. After the Scarborough community, the area west of Victoria Park and east of Yonge will follow, with Blue Bins only, in February/March 2008. Those living in the area west of Yonge and east of the Humber River will receive delivery of Blue Bins in March-April 2008. It may be that by the time we target the Etobicoke community, those living west of the Humber River, in Spring 2008, we'll be delivering both Blue Bins and Garbage Bins together. As a final step, we'll go back to the rest of previous areas to confirm and deliver their new Garbage Bins. The launch of the new volume-based rate structure that initiates the new service fees will happen once all of the bins are delivered, ideally by November 1, 2008.

### **Do I have to pay for these new bins?**

The City is providing the new Blue Bins to residents free of charge. They will remain the property of the City of Toronto and are given to you for your use. There is no cost for recycling collection or green bin organics and yard waste collection.

For both the Blue Bin and Garbage Bin, residents should choose their bin carefully because it's likely a fee will be applied for change in bin size.

### **Is the bin program happening in any other cities?**

Yes, similar programs are successfully in place in such cities as Vancouver, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Jose and Seattle. Toronto staff studied all of these programs in making their plans.

### **Has anybody in Toronto tested these new bins?**

Yes. For a couple of years now several thousand residents in the suburban and downtown areas participated in a pilot to test these larger recycling bins. The benefits of using these bins include:

- increased capture of recyclables
- the lid reduced blowing litter and protected contents from bad weather
- potential to reduce injury claims from collection crews
- greater capacity to allow for additional materials

### **What do the new bins look like?**

Please refer to the information brochure delivered with your bin order package or check out these [bin visuals](#) for both Blue Bins and Garbage Bins that include details such as the estimated dimensions (and cost where applicable), along with approximately how much each bin size holds. The new bins have a lid that protects contents from bad weather and prevents the nuisance of blowing litter. You'll be pleased to know that the carts have wheels for easy transport.

### **Is there anywhere I can go to see what the bins really look like?**

Yes. The City is arranging to have samples of each size of [Blue Bin available on display](#) at Civic Centres and perhaps community centres or libraries local to the targeted launch area. Trained volunteers will also be at such locations as a shopping mall or library near you with bin samples for you to view.

### **I need information in a language other than English, how can you help me?**

We [translate the information brochure for each of the phased-in launches](#) into the top multiple languages, other than English and French, spoken in this area as identified by Stats Canada data. Residents also have the option of calling 416-392-BINS (2467) to gain access to the City's Language Line.

### **Is the bin-based automated collection more efficient than the existing manual collection? If so, will this result in layoffs?**

One of the reasons for moving towards a bin-based system is improved efficiency. The actual rates of improvements will be determined in the expanded pilot area, but based on experience in other cities, such as Vancouver, efficiency improvements of at least 10% are anticipated. Efficiency gains will result in the redeployment of some collection staff and will allow for the introduction of new services.

### **Will the City add new items to its recycling program?**

Plastic film is one of the types of material the City anticipates adding to the program. Plastic film may include grocery sacks, retail store sacks, bread, sandwich and bulk food bags, dry cleaning bags, diaper outer bags and frozen food bags.

### **Bin Ordering:**

#### **What Blue Bin size choices do I have?**

There are three size choices for Blue Bins: Medium, Large and Extra-large.

Medium Blue Bin = 2 blue boxes

Large Blue Bin = 4 blue boxes

Extra-Large Blue Bin = 6 blue boxes

#### **How do I order my new Blue Bins?**

You'll know you're part of the current bin launch if you receive an information brochure and bin order card in the mail. This material will indicate when to order your bin(s) and the deadline by which you must do so. Before ordering, you may wish to check out the Frequently Asked Questions page if you have any questions about the program that affects your order selection.

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There are three options for placing Blue Bin orders:

1. **Online:** via the website at [toronto.ca/target70](http://toronto.ca/target70)
2. **Automated Telephone Order Line:** call 647-288-1088
3. **Mail:** complete the enclosed postage-paid order card that came with your newsletter and mail it back.

#### **What's the bin order deadline?**

Whichever option you use to tell us your bin size choice, make sure you complete your order by **the date listed in your brochure and on your order card.**

For example, those receiving order packages that live east of Victoria Park and west of Yonge St. must order their bin(s) by no later than January 18, 2008.

#### **I have placed my order but I want to change it, is this possible?**

Any order can be changed prior to the bin order deadline listed on your brochure and order card. You must go on-line or call the automated phone number 647-288-1088 to replace your bin order.

#### **What happens if I do not return my bin order card or order on-line or by telephone by the deadline?**

If you miss the order deadline for selecting your new Blue Bin size, a Large size (equivalent to 4 blue boxes) Blue Bin will be delivered to your home.

**Can I place my order after the stated bin order deadline?**

No, an order will be placed for a default Large size Blue Bin on behalf of any resident that does not place an order on their own by their specific bin order deadline set in their order package. Therefore it is important to place your order on time.

**Can I order more than one Bin for my single-family home?**

No, only one Bin will be permitted per single-family home. Please think carefully and order the appropriate size for the amount of recyclables you generate every two weeks. If your home has a basement apartment, the tenants will need to share the bin size you select.

**I am the landlord of a multiplex and received the order card that allows me to order multiple Blue Bins. How many in total can I order?**

While landlords should order enough bins to accommodate the amount of recyclables generated by his/her tenants, please keep in mind the storage of the bins and that the maximum that can be ordered is one Blue Bin per apartment unit.

**I live in a residential property above a commercial unit and did not receive the information brochure and order package to choose a Blue Bin. Why?**

Residential properties above commercial properties will not be part of the initial community Blue Bin rollout – they will be assessed at a later time.

**Bin Delivery:**

**My neighbours all received their new Blue Bins, but I did not. How do I get a Blue Bin?**

Please tell us this by calling Customer Service at 416-338-2010. You may continue to use your blue/grey box until your new Blue Bin is delivered.

**I was delivered a default Large Blue Bin as I did not place an order by the deadline but it is too big/too small. How can I exchange it?**

The City has now decided to allow one free bin exchange per household, provided the exchange is made before November 1, 2008. We ask that you try your current bin out for several collection cycles to confirm if you really need to make a change. If you do, then please call Customer Service at 416-392-BINS (2467).

**Instructions for Use:**

**When should I start using my new bins?**

Start using the new bins as soon as you get them. You must stop using your old containers, as items will only be picked up if they're placed in the new bins.

**May I continue to use my current collection containers?**

No. The bins will be collected by an automated truck designed to pick up the bin (but not your original containers) with an automated arm. We ask that residents make every effort

to make the program work. It would cost a considerable amount of money to send a second truck to collect original blue/grey boxes. Also, as the new program goes city-wide all houses will have to use the bins.

**What do I do with my old collection containers?**

You can use your containers to carry your recyclables from the house to the bin, or for storage in your home. If you have no use for your old blue/grey boxes and would like to recycle them, you can drop them off at one of the City's Recycling Container Pick-up Locations (excluding Etobicoke Civic Centre). For a complete listing of locations, see your collection calendar or visit the City's website at: [toronto.ca/recycling](http://toronto.ca/recycling)

**Where should I keep the bin(s)?**

The bins are designed to be stored outside in all weather. It is entirely a resident's choice, but there are lots of options, such as a) store it wherever you currently keep your garbage can; b) in the garage; c) in the backyard; d) in an outdoor storage unit; e) by the side of the house.

**Can I line my new Blue Bin with a plastic bag?**

No. Items should be placed directly in the bin.

**Will my collection day change?**

No, there are no changes to collection days or to collection frequency. Blue Bins will continue to be collected every two weeks.

**What if I can't fit all my recycling into my new bin?**

Overflow of recyclables will not be permitted (for special circumstances such as the purchase of large appliance, the cardboard packaging may be cut down and placed beside the Blue Bin). Residents should keep their overflow recyclables for the next scheduled pick up day for collection.

**What if my Blue Bin goes missing or gets stolen?**

Please call Customer Service at 416-338-2010 to report the missing Blue Bin. A Service Request will be issued and a new Bin will be delivered. Until the new Bin is delivered, you may use your blue/grey box for recyclables collection. Residents must purchase the replacement bin.

**What if I have other bin problems like the wheel is broken, the lid is damaged or it is in need of a repair?**

Residents should call Customer Service at 416-338-2010 to request a repair to the Blue Bin. A Service Request will be issued and the bin vendor will repair or replace, if necessary, within five business days. No fee will be charged to the resident for the repair of a Blue Bin.

**How do I exchange my Blue Bin for a different size?**

The City has now decided to allow one free bin exchange per household, provided the exchange is made before November 1, 2008. We ask that you try your current bin out for several collection cycles to confirm if you really need to make a change. If you do, then please call Customer Service at 416-392-BINS (2467).

**Looking ahead to new Garbage Bins in 2008**

With the new volume-based rate structure, there is a cost associated with the new Garbage Bins that you will receive in 2008. At this time, only estimated fees per bin size are available. The actual fees won't be confirmed until spring 2008 after the City's operating budget is approved in March 2008. Keep these costs in mind; along with the size of Garbage Bin you'll need when estimating which Garbage Bin you choose to hold all of the garbage you set out for collection every two weeks. You won't be charged the associated fees until every single-family home in Toronto gets their Garbage Bin, which should be approximately early November 2008.

**What about residents living in multi-unit buildings (rental or condo)?**

An equivalent program will be put in place for multi-unit residential dwellings.

**Will anyone be exempt from this plan?**

No, this plan applies to all residents receiving City collection (including those with medical needs, low income families, seniors, large families and Toronto Community Housing Corporation).

**Where can I get more information about the bins or this new volume-based rate structure?**

Keep checking our website as we are constantly updating the list of Frequently Asked Questions and Answers as program details are finalized. There are also [City staff reports](#) and [presentations](#) that explain background information, including why this new program is necessary, what new waste reduction programs are needed and how we will pay for all of the new services and programs required to meet the goal of 70% waste diversion from landfill by 2010.

**How will residents be charged?**

Residential households and property owners of multi-unit residential buildings will receive a new combined Toronto Water/Solid Waste bill. The Solid Waste cost portion will show charges based on how much garbage the home/building generates.

Residents will only pay for solid waste services on the new direct bill. Because the current costs for solid waste services are collected as part of property taxes and cannot easily be removed from the property tax bill, every household/multi-unit building will receive a credit equal to the average amount collected through the tax bill. Home owners will put the \$209 yearly rebate towards paying for their individual household's solid

waste service charges. Those opting for the Small-size Garbage Bin, will not pay an additional cost.

For multi-unit buildings with rental tenants, the building property owner will get an annual grant of approximately \$157 per unit applied against charges incurred by the building. Condo properties, whose bills are typically made out to the condo corporation, will also see a grant of \$157 per unit on their bill, which will offset charges incurred by the condo building.

**Why charge a volume-based rate for solid waste services/programs?**

Funding is needed to pay for the planned new diversion activities required to reach 70 % diversion by 2010. This comprehensive plan will divert an additional 250,000 tonnes of waste from landfill annually, extending the life of our landfill until 2034. The rate charged will now vary according to the volume of garbage put out for collection. Linking costs to volume of garbage means residents who reduce garbage will pay less.

**How much money is needed to fund getting to 70 per cent diversion?**

The City needs to cover off the existing cost of solid waste programs and services, which is approximately \$183.5 million a year, plus pay for the expansion of diversion initiatives, which is estimated to be an additional cost of \$54 million annually.

**What will the money received via the new Toronto Water/Solid Waste bill pay for?**

There are a wide variety of expanded diversion initiatives proposed, many of which are interdependent and would need to be implemented simultaneously. Some examples of what the payments will eventually help fund include:

- Expanding the Green Bin Program to apartments and condominiums
- Establishing a series of Reuse Centres and curb side collection of durable goods
- Providing Blue Bins for recycling to increase capacity
- Adding new materials to the recycling program
- Providing door-to-door green bin and recycling collection to townhouses
- Making recycling more convenient in multi-unit buildings
- Education, outreach and enforcement of mandatory diversion by-laws
- Introducing a volume-based rate structure based on volume of garbage generated

**Won't a program like this increase illegal dumping of garbage?**

The City recognizes and understands residents' concerns about a potential increase in illegal dumping when the volume-based rate structure for garbage is implemented. Other municipalities that have implemented similar systems have found there was an initial blip in illegal dumping but no sustained increase. Other municipalities rectified the initial illegal dumping problems through communications, monitoring of illegal dumping "hot spots" and bylaw enforcement.

**When it's time to pick my Garbage Bin, what size options will I have?**

There are **four size choices for Garbage Bins**: Small, Medium, Large and Extra-large.

- Small = 1 regular size garbage bag (no fee)
- Medium = 1 ½ regular size garbage bags (estimated fee of \$41/yr.\*)
- Large = 3 regular size garbage bags (estimated fee of \$101/yr.\*)
- Extra-Large = 4 ½ regular size garbage bags (estimated fee of \$151/yr.\*)

\* Reminder: Exact Garbage Bin fees will not be confirmed until the City's budget is approved in March 2008.

**What if I don't produce enough garbage to fill even a Small-size Garbage Bin every two weeks?**

You have the option of waiting until your Garbage Bin is full before setting it out for collection.

**What if I go on vacation or otherwise don't set out garbage?**

Residents will choose a bin size and be charged an annual rate whether they set out the bin or not, similar to the current situation where you pay for solid waste services as part of your tax bill.

**What should I do with my old garbage can(s)?**

Once the new Garbage Bins are delivered, residents can reuse their old plastic garbage cans as storage containers or for new uses such as setting out leaf and yard waste for collection. Yard waste is collected at curbside from April to December on the days indicated in your collection calendar. Weeds, plant trimmings and leaves can be set out for collection in any rigid open top container that has handles. Reusing plastic garbage cans for leaf and yard waste will reduce, if not eliminate, residents' need to purchase kraft paper yard waste bags.