

Frequently Asked Questions

This document serves as an internal FAQ for customer service help from municipalities and where to redirect resident questions. Feel free to send all questions to WRRMA's contact information above.

- **Will people be going through my recycling?**
 - Trained staff (our "recycling detectives") will be working quickly to glance at residents' recycling and leave a feedback tag if necessary. They have about 35,000 carts to check, four times each, and will just be taking a quick look at what they can see on the top of the cart.
 - If you have any questions, visit WRRMA's website www.wrrma.org or call their hotline 734-222-3920. If you want help determining if an item is recyclable, use the Waste Wizard Search at www.wrrma.org. WRRMA municipalities have also been given this search to add to their website, you may have one on your website itself.
 - If something in the search seems incorrect or needs adjustment, send a note to recyclewrrma@gmail.com and we can fix it.
 - WRRMA staff can see what contaminants were found in each resident's cart with their software (the recycling detectives take a picture when they leave a tag) – refer people to WRRMA's hotline or email with specific questions.
- **What is contamination? Why does this matter?**
 - Contamination refers to items that are in your recycling bin but are not recyclable because they are dirty, wet, or made of materials that cannot be recycled.
 - Reducing recycling contamination rates will decrease the costs associated with recycling. If our recycling is cleaner, the materials are more sought after by manufacturers who use recycled materials, and therefore more valuable. Lower contamination rates also increase safety and runtime at the recycling processing centers.
- **Who decided to do this? Who's paying for this?**
 - The seven municipal members of WRRMA applied to and won a grant to run this program from EGLE (the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy). WRRMA also received a sponsorship from Washtenaw County Solid Waste in support of the project.
 - The Feet on the Street Program itself is a program created and run by The Recycling Partnership (TRP). This program has been run in over 80 communities across the country to reduce contamination rates by as much as 40%.
- **Where can we find the results?**
 - WRRMA will release results after the program in mid-September at wrrma.org.
- **What can I recycle?**
 - There are a wide variety of items you can recycle, but only certain ones can be accepted in curbside recycling. You can find the curbside recycling flyer at wrrma.org.
 - If you want help determining if an item is recyclable, you can also use the Waste Wizard recycling search at www.wrrma.org. The search also shows where to bring harder-to-recycle items that aren't taken curbside.
 - WRRMA staff can help residents find alternate locations for recycling/donating items during the grant period. Residents can be directed to the hotline listed above.

- **Why can't I recycle (insert item here)?**
 - It depends on the item – some items are recyclable but NOT in your curbside cart or bin. Other items just aren't recyclable because there is no cost-efficient use for the materials. Send residents to the WRRMA hotline or Waste Wizard search to help finding alternate locations for hard-to-recycle items.
- **Why did I get an "oops tag"?**
 - "Oops!" feedback tags are designed as part of an educational campaign to provide feedback on what is not recyclable in a curbside recycling bin. If the resident suspects a bin was tagged in error, they can contact WRRMA for more information by calling their hotline at 734-222-3920 or sending an email to recyclewrrma@gmail.com.
 - Residents can get two different types of feedback tags
 - The first time staff finds contamination, they will leave a yellow/orange "oops!" warning tag. Recycling is collected but the resident gets feedback on what they recycled that wasn't recyclable.
 - Following the first tag, a red "oops!" rejection tag will be left if the bin again has materials that are not recyclable. The bin is not emptied, and the resident must correct the error(s) before the next collection for their bin to be serviced.
 - Any complaints can be sent to WRRMA – we can go into the tracking app to see exactly what the issue was and get back to the resident.
- **Why didn't my recycling get picked up?**
 - If the resident received two tags during the program, their recycling would not get picked up the second time (along with receiving a red "Oops!" rejection tag).
 - If the issue indicated on the tag is fixed, the cart will be serviced on their next recycling day. And be sure to remove the red tag after fixing the issue!
 - Feel free to send any residents that are unhappy (hopefully very few!) to the WRRMA hotline.
 - WRRMA has been working alongside, coordinating with, and communicating with recycling haulers in each community to ensure their full support. Haulers are also all receiving this same information as well.
- **Will people stop recycling because of this?**
 - Kent County (Grand Rapids) demonstrated last fall that participation (the number of people who put out their carts out each week) actually increased from ~50% in the first week of the program to over 70% in the last week of the program. If people have a better understanding of what to recycle, they will recycle more!