



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 consecutive collection cycles)



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
- 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 Tangles
(no hoses, wires,
chains or electronics)

(123) 456-7890

Town and Department

 An initiative of MassDEP

SampleUrl.org
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 17th. 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)
- Tanglers (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 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

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



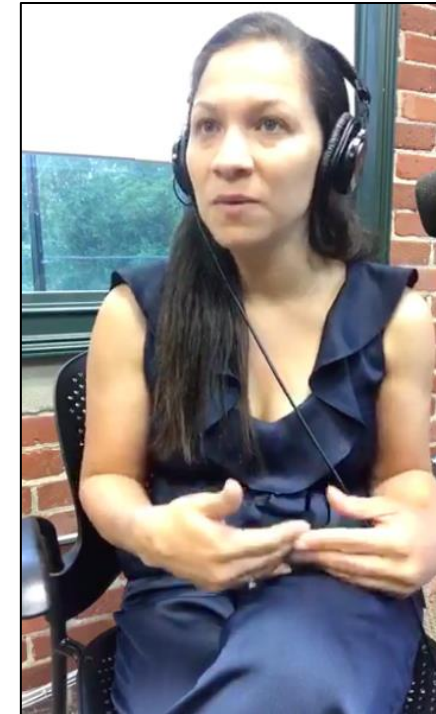
Sandwich Boards





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 ... money 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.

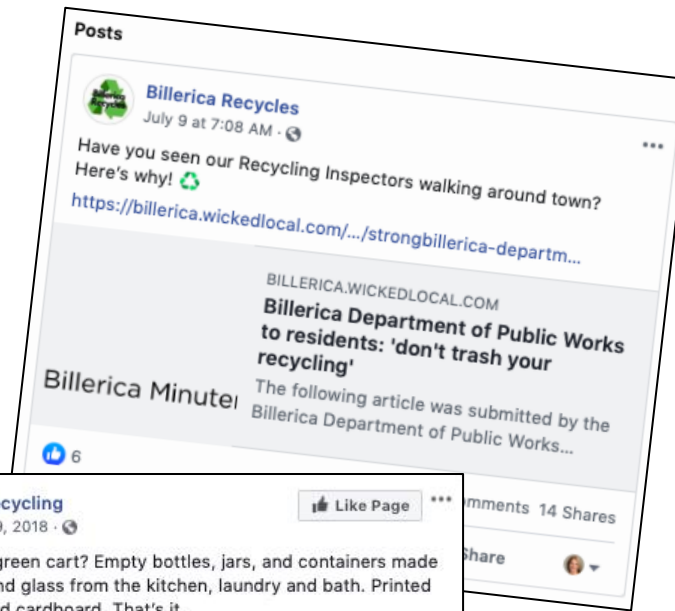
"The vendor can reject our loads based on contamination," Montuori said. This results not only in a fine from the vendor, but the follow-on cost of the load being sent to the trash contractor who then charges by the ton to dispose of that load. It will end up in a landfill or be incinerated.

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



Social Media





Partner with RecycleSmart



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, Temp workers, College students, 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



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



RECYCLE SMART

METAL
Food and
Beverage Cans



GLASS
Bottles
and Jars



empty and rinse

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!

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

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



Collecting recyclables in a bag?
Empty the contents into the cart.

Return plastic bags to retailers.



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



OOPS!

Please leave these items out of your recycling cart!

 Do Not Bag Recyclables (no garbage)	 No Plastic Bags or Plastic Wrap (return to retail)
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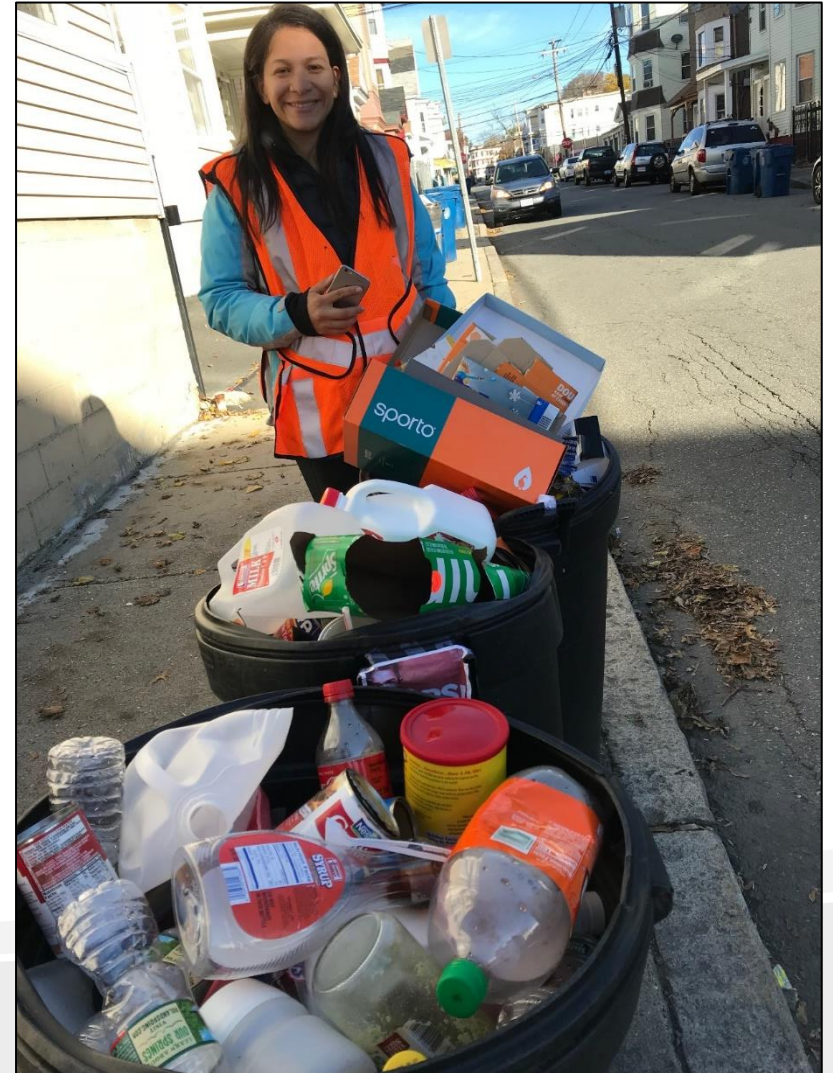


8 Weeks of Curbside Feedback Inspections and Oops Tags



8 Weeks of Curbside Feedback

Success





The Recycling IQ Kit works!

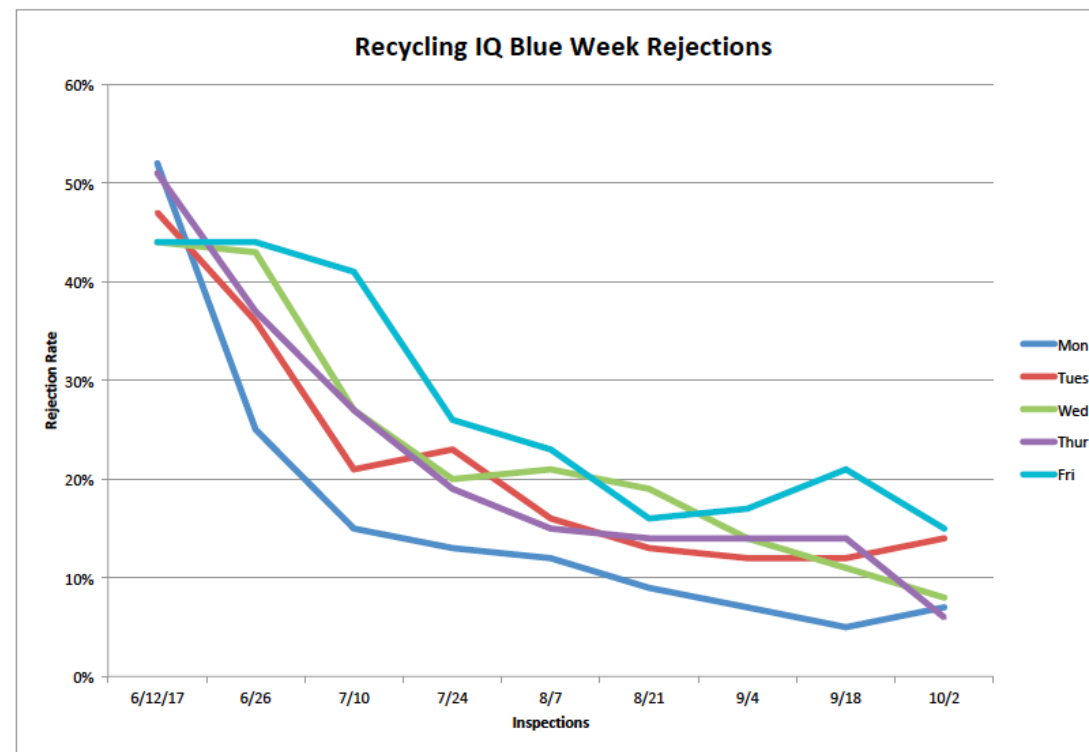
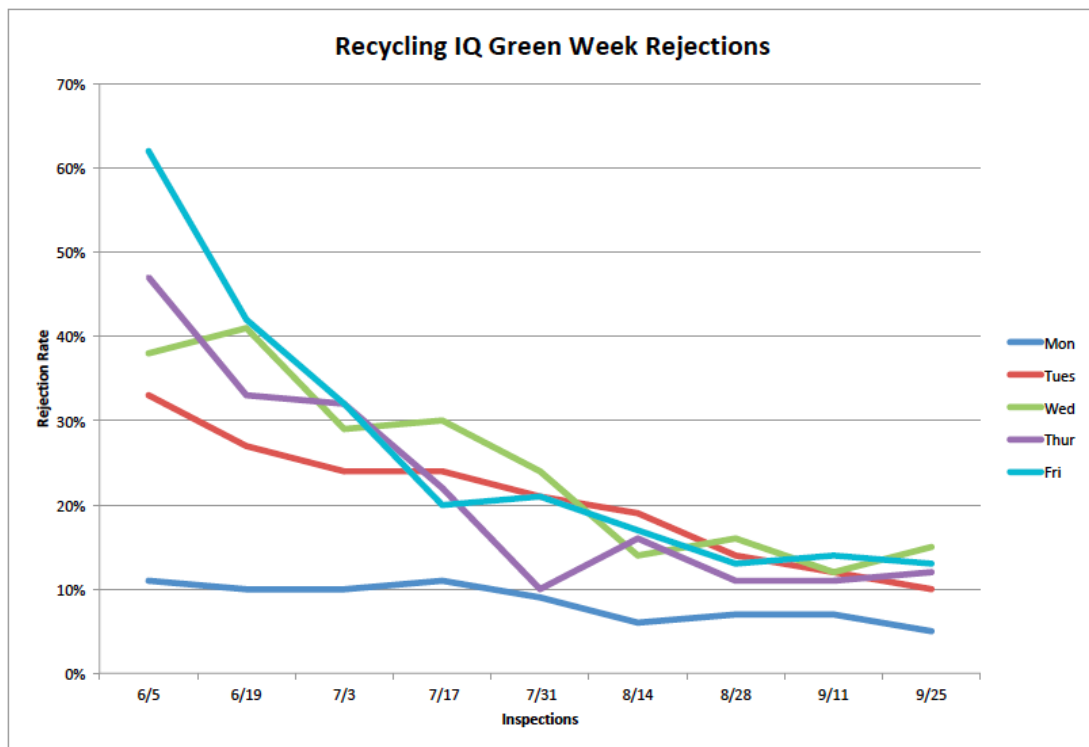
Recycling IQ Kit
Municipal results on
inspected routes

Calendar Year 2018

Municipality	Average Contamination Reduction on Routes Inspected
Dartmouth	83%
Everett	55%
Fairhaven	82%
Fitchburg	68%
Lynn	77%
Newburyport	84%
Stoneham	71%
Tewksbury	86%



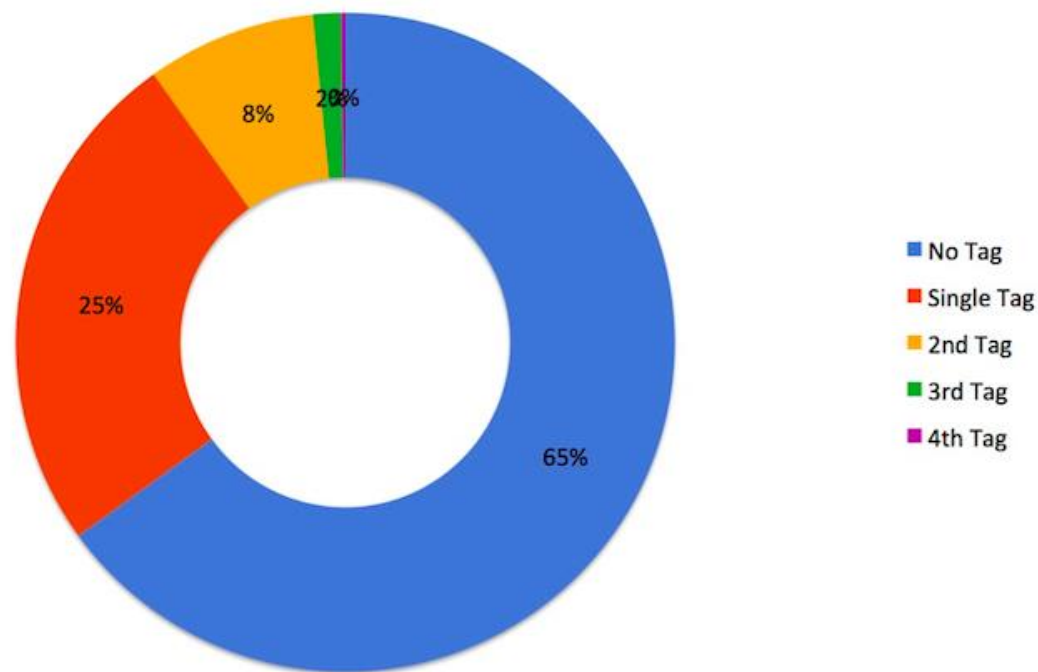
Curbside Feedback: The 8 Week Trend



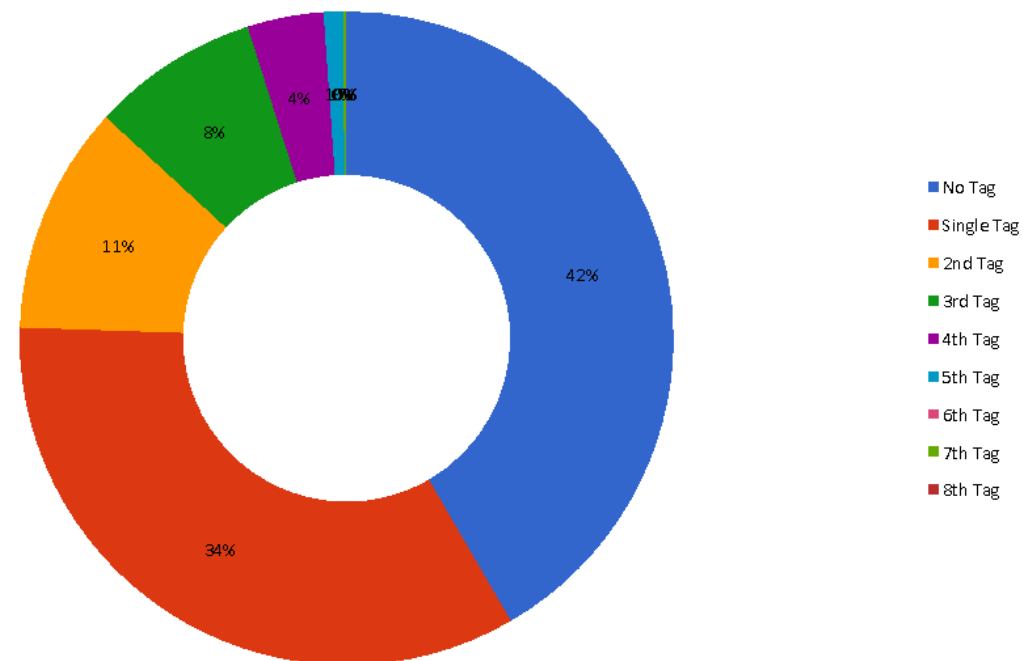


Curbside Feedback: 75-90% compliance with a single tag

Lynn Green Monday - All Rejections



Lynn Blue Wednesday - All Rejections



Final MRF Audit



Maintaining Clean Recycling

The Hauler



Recycling Coordinator



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	irene_congdon1@yahoo.com
Dawn Quirk	NE 1	617-292-5557	dawn.quirk@state.ma.us
Sharon Kishida	NE 2	978-605-2409	skishida@beverlyma.gov
Julia Greene	NE 3	781-918-4271	jgreene@bedfordma.gov
Kari Parcell	SE 1	508-375-6974	kari.parcell@barnstablecounty.org
Kathi Mirza	SE 2	508-821-9469	kmirza@taunton-ma.gov
Todd Koep	SE 3	781-293-1775	tkoep@town.halifax.ma.us
Veronique Blanchard	West	413-325-3472	vblanchardmac@gmail.com