

INCREASED RECYCLING – LESS PACKAGING



**Shifting costs away
from taxpayers**





You may have heard about the new recycling system across B.C. that took effect May 19, 2014. B.C. is well-known internationally for being a leader when it comes to recycling and the new system will further enhance the province's reputation as an environmental leader.

Basically, after years of requests by local governments and even many of the producers of packaging and printed paper (PPP), the Province has shifted the \$100 million annual costs and responsibility from local governments/taxpayers to the producers of those materials.

It is a simple concept called Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and the expanded Recycling Regulation provides a real financial incentive for companies to reduce packaging and printed paper wherever possible – because they are now paying all the costs for collecting and recycling everything they produce. With that incentive now in place, many companies have already begun to review ways to cut down on their PPP and make it more environmentally friendly and easier to recycle.

So what's changing starting May 19th?

Depending on what community you live in, you may see some changes. In most areas, local governments will continue to provide existing collection services on behalf of Multi-Material BC, the stewardship agency formed by producers of PPP to collect and recycle their products.

In other communities, MMBC will provide this service. Either way, the list of acceptable materials you can now recycle will be expanded.

Several communities will also have curbside recycling for the first time, including: Terrace, Smithers, 108 Mile House, Nakusp and Kaslo.



Many other British Columbians will begin to see benefits including:

- ❖ Savings of approximately \$80-100 million in municipal taxpayer dollars
- ❖ Improved recycling services to local communities
- ❖ More items accepted in blue boxes and recycling depots
- ❖ More waste diverted from landfills
- ❖ Elimination or reduction of unnecessary packaging

Depending where you live, there may be some other minor changes in regards to separating your recyclables for curbside pick-up. For example, in some communities, you will be required to separate glass from other blue box items because broken glass can be a safety hazard and make it difficult to properly recycle other materials. As well, some communities who previously were able to put plastic bags and other stretchy plastic packaging in their curbside recycling will now have to take these items to a recycling depot. Be sure to check with your local collector on these details.

What new items can you put in your blue box?

Curbside blue boxes will now accept several new items including:

- ❖ Milk cartons
- ❖ Plant pots
- ❖ Aerosol cans
- ❖ Aluminum foil containers
- ❖ Plastic clamshell containers
- ❖ Wax or plastic coated packaging (i.e. ice cream cartons)
- ❖ Drink cups

Items such as styrofoam and plastic film packaging will also now be accepted at all recycling depots.

How do British Columbians save?

Before May 19 2014, local governments have been responsible for recycling any packaging or printed paper that residents purchase or get delivered (i.e. brochures, flyers).

Local governments, through municipal taxpayer dollars, would then pay the costs of having to recycle these items.

After May 19, 2014, several municipal governments will realize significant savings and it will be up to them as to how they will pass those savings on to taxpayers. Some will redirect these funds towards other zero waste programs such as organic waste management and composting, while others may reduce municipal taxes.

How is this good for the environment?

This new system will ultimately help reduce unnecessary packaging and printed paper thereby reducing the impact to our landfills.

Despite the best efforts of local governments and existing curbside recycling programs, packaging and printed paper still comprise approximately 20-30% (by weight) of the material put in B.C. landfills. The goal is to increase the recycling rate for packaging and printed paper across the province from 53 % to 75% in five years.

Producers of PPP for the first time have an incentive to reduce the volume and increase the recyclability of their products. Now, those who produce more will pay more. However, they now have a true financial incentive to redesign their packaging and printed paper to reduce such costs and be more competitive in the marketplace.





The Big Picture

At the request of local governments and industry, B.C.'s Recycling Regulation was amended to include packaging and printed paper in 2011. This supports a Canada-wide Action Plan, agreed to in 2009 by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, calling for all jurisdictions to implement an extended producer responsibility program for packaging and printed paper by 2015.

Under B.C.'s Regulation, producers must comply with an approved stewardship plan by May 19, 2014.

The only plan submitted to-date covering all PPP and granted approval by the province was from the stewardship agency Multi-Material British Columbia (MMBC).

Producers are not required to sign on with MMBC's plan—but they are required to take full responsibility for the packaging and printed paper

Any producer or groups of producers can elect to develop their own stewardship plan and submit it for ministry approval.

For more information on MMBC's recycling program, please visit: <http://recyclinginbc.ca/>

For more information on this program or B.C.'s other extended producer responsibility programs, please visit the Ministry of Environment's Product Stewardship website at:

<http://ow.ly/wQGQz>