



Green Cart Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Can I opt out of the program?

No. In order for our community to implement an effective waste reduction program, a comprehensive organics waste program was chosen, and each household that currently receives curbside waste collection is required to utilize the green organics cart as well.

Q. How does the Green Cart program differ from backyard composting?

Organic waste from the green cart will be taken to a large-scale commercial composting facility. This facility maintains higher temperatures than backyard compost bins and can break down materials within 8 to 13 weeks compared to 3 months. High temperatures are required to kill bacteria and break down difficult organic items including dairy, grains, and proteins that cannot be composted in a backyard compost bin.

Q. My waste was not collected. What should I do?

There are many possible reasons why your waste was not collected. Please read the following list to determine if any of these reasons apply:

Is this your collection day?

Please double-check our collection schedules and verify that this is your collection day and that you have the proper items curbside.

* <http://www.townofporthawkesbury.ca/town-departments>

Did you place your waste curbside before 7:00am on collection day?

If waste has already been collected in your area and you set your waste out after 7:00am, it will not be collected. Please note, collection drivers may change their pickup routes and schedules: even if they normally pick up your waste at a certain time, there is no guarantee that this will happen every week.

Was your waste visible and free of any obstructions?

If your waste was obstructed (e.g., blocked by a parked vehicle) or not set out on the curb, the collection truck drivers may not see them, meaning they will not be collected. Please help the collection truck driver by making your waste visible and accessible. If there is a vehicle parked near your waste, please pull your waste up in line with the obstruction.

Is there a sticker on your waste?

If there is a sticker on your waste, please read it. Does the note say that your waste will not be collected today, and explain why? For example, your waste may have been refused because it was contaminated or set out on the wrong collection day.

If none of these four conditions apply, please call the Solid Waste Management Information line at (902)-625-7888 to report a missed collection.

Q. Why is garbage and green carts only collected once every two weeks?

The Town of Port Hawkesbury has chosen biweekly collection to encourage residents to reduce their waste. Compared with having weekly collection of organics and garbage, biweekly collection decreases costs substantially and increases the likelihood that residents will divert their organic material.

In most cases, families who place their food and yard waste in their green cart and who recycle using their blue bags will have very little garbage. Check out our sorting guide to see if there is anything else you could be placing in your green cart or blue bag.

Q. Where are the organics going?

All organics collected at curbside are trucked to the Guysborough Waste Management Facility. They offer 2 yearly pick-ups (fall and spring) where their compost material is available for the public to purchase for \$20 dollars per yard bucket.

Q. What if my cart is damaged or goes missing?

Contact the Solid Waste Management information line at (902-625-7888) if your green cart becomes damaged and is unusable. Your information will be added to our Green Cart Repair/Replacement list for a staff person to visit your address. The staff person will assess your green cart to determine if the cart can be repaired or if a replacement cart is required for your civic addresses.

Q. How do I clean my kitchen bin and keep my green cart from getting smelly?

While your food scraps can be placed in the cart loose, you can control odors and keep your cart clean by:

- Using a paper bag or newspaper liner in your kitchen pail.
- Freezing meat and fish waste until collection day, especially during warm weather.
- Wrapping wet foods in newspaper or placing them in cardboard boxes.
- Sprinkling a small amount of baking soda in your kitchen pail and green cart.
- Rinsing your green cart with lemon juice, vinegar or baking soda.
- Emptying your kitchen bin into your green cart every two-to-three days.
- Placing your green cart curbside for collection every available pickup, even if it's not full.
- Keeping the lid of the kitchen bin and green cart closed.

Q. What does compostable mean? How is it different from biodegradable?

When an item is compostable, it means that it will fully degrade into natural elements. Biodegradable simply means that the item will break down into smaller pieces of plastic, but it will never fully degrade.

To make sure that our organic matter becomes high quality compost, we are recommending residents use paper bags for their kitchen bins rather than ones labelled as biodegradable.

Q. Can I use a liner in my green cart or kitchen pail?

Yes, lining your kitchen pail with newspaper will help absorb liquids, reducing odours and making it easier for you to clean. We suggest wrapping meat scraps and bones in paper towel or old newspaper before putting them into your kitchen pail.

Q. Can I use compostable bags?

Plastic bags labelled as compostable or biodegradable are not accepted. Although they do break down eventually, it takes longer for them to break down than it takes the Guysborough facility to make compost material. If you do want to line or reduce items from adhering to the cart (especially in the winter) acceptable cart liners include paper bin liners and paper products including paper bags, newsprint, or paper. Please place all organic waste loosely into your green cart and do not compress items. Please refrain from using plastic of any kind. Plastics can degrade the quality of the compost and could even result in rejected collection.

Q. Do I have to buy compostable bags for my green cart?

No. There are several alternatives, including placing your organic waste in the cart loose (i.e., no bag), making your own bin liners from newspapers or flyers, or using a cardboard box (e.g., cereal box).

If you do choose to use bags in your kitchen bin, paper bin liners are available at the local Atlantic Superstore, Sobeys, Walmart, Canadian Tire and Giant Tiger.

Q. What is the contact information for questions?

Please contact the Solid Waste Management Information line at (902-625-7888) or via email at recycling@townofph.ca

Q. What is the schedule for pick up?

Port Hawkesbury will be providing bi-weekly and year - round services to all of our organics customers. Please see our collection schedules.

Q. What goes in my green cart?

The rule of thumb is, "If it grows, it goes!" Please see our sorting guide for a list of acceptable and non-acceptable materials.

Q. How do I prevent my cart from freezing in the winter?

During the winter, the contents of your green cart may freeze to the sides or bottom of the cart. Drivers performing the collection make every effort to dump all contents, but it is your responsibility to ensure your cart contents are loose. If the cart doesn't get completely emptied because of frozen contents, please be patient, wait until your next organics collection day and ensure contents are loose.

Tips to prevent organics from freezing:

- Wrap wet foods in napkins, newspaper or boxes
- Layer wet organics (food waste, leaves) with dry organics (newspaper, boxes)
- Drain excess liquids
- Line the bottom of your cart with newspaper, cardboard boxes or paper bags
- Do not compress cart contents
- Consider spraying your cart with cooking oil to minimize the risk of freezing and ensure easy removal

Q. How do I get my cart to the curb during winter?

If you are worried about how you will get your cart curbside for collection in the snow, there is no requirement to take your green cart to the curb for every collection if it is not full. If you find that there is snow and ice obstructing your path, you can wait until the next collection day if conditions are more favourable.

Q. What about my green cart attracting animals?

While the green carts have a secure closure, we suggest keeping your green cart away from fences and deck railing so animals cannot get into it and always ensure the lid is securely closed. Spraying a strong-smelling repellent such as vinegar on your green cart and using natural repellents such as peppermint oil, cayenne pepper, chili pepper and hot sauce can act as anti-gnawing repellents and deter animals from taking an interest in your green cart.

Q. Why won't my excess garbage be collected?

The main purpose of the new waste management program is to reduce residents' waste. Collecting excess garbage from some households would be unfair to those households that have reduced their garbage.

Q. What can I do if I have extra garbage?

You can take extra garbage directly to the Guysborough Waste Management Facility. Please visit their website or contact them at (902)-232-2316 for more information.

Q. How can I dispose of grease, fats and cooking oils?

Please do not pour these liquids down the drain: they will block sewer lines. Instead, dispose of oils using your green cart.

To avoid creating a mess in your green cart, you can pour the liquids into a disposable paper coffee cup before placing it in your cart. Or pour the oil into a container, freeze it, and on collection day, dump the solidified contents into your green cart. Please do not put any plastic or metal containers in your green cart because these materials are not accepted.

Q. I saw a person look inside or move my cart. Why are they doing this?

Periodically, Town staff or waste collection contractors may do quick visual inspections of residents' green carts. If an error (e.g., contamination, wrong placement) is found, the staff member leaves a helpful note. The goal of auditing is to educate residents about contamination and proper placement.

Q. Why did I get a note on my cart?

Notes are friendly, educational reminders about sorting your waste and placing your carts. The waste truck driver or Town staff may leave a sticker on your waste for one or more of the following reasons:

Your waste was contaminated

If there were non-recyclables in your blue bag, recyclables in your garbage bags, organic waste in your garbage bags or non-organic waste in your green cart, your waste is contaminated.

Your waste was too heavy

Bags must not exceed the weight limit of 20kgs, and green carts must not exceed the weight limit of 25kgs.

Your green cart was overflowing

Your cart's lid must fully close.

You exceeded the bag limit

We permit 6 clear bags for garbage, 3 blue bags for plastics and 3 blue bags for papers.

You placed the wrong items curbside

Please double-check our collection schedules and verify if it is green cart and garbage week or blue bag week.

Q. Why did I get a "Great job" sticker on my cart?

This means that Town staff or collection drivers checked your cart and found that its content and placement were great. Thank you for sorting your waste properly!

Q. Will I be fined if my cart is contaminated?

Generally, no. The Town's approach is educational: we want to help residents get used to the new waste program. This is why we leave educational notes on contaminated or improperly placed carts. However, in cases of repeated, heavy contamination, and after several written warnings, we may apply fines as a last resort.

Q. What if the COVID situation gets worse?

As things evolve daily, please refer to the Town's website (www.townofporthawkesbury.ca) to get the latest updates on garbage and green waste collection services.