

# Frequently Asked Questions – Blue Box Transition – Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Properties

Updated: Dec. 2023

## Background Information

- In June 2021, the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) released a new Blue Box regulation making producers of recycling materials fully responsible for the disposal of their products and packaging. The new Blue Box Regulation states that between Jul. 1, 2023 and Dec. 31, 2025 (transition period) all existing residential Blue Box programs in Ontario will transition to a single provincial collection system that is funded, overseen, and operated by producers.
  - Industrial, commercial & institutional (IC&I) or non-residential properties (businesses, commercial components of mixed-use buildings, municipal properties, and places of worship) are not included under this regulation. Regional Council approved continued collection for IC&I properties, currently serviced by Niagara Region, until Dec. 31, 2025.
- Producers are those that supply packaging, paper products or packaging-like products comprised of paper, glass, metal, or plastic to consumers in Ontario. Producers can sign up with Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) to collectively address their new responsibilities under the regulation.
- Circular Materials is the largest registered PRO in Ontario and will administer recycling collection and processing from eligible properties across the province. This includes the Blue and Grey Box program in Niagara.
- Niagara Region will transition to full producer responsibility Jan. 1, 2024, and Circular Materials will takeover managing the residential portion of the Blue and Grey Box programs. During the transition period (until Dec. 31, 2025), producers are to maintain current level of Blue and Grey Box collection services. The exception is that some materials that Niagara Region currently collects (e.g. books) will no longer be accepted.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What does this mean for Niagara Region businesses?

- Industrial, commercial and some institutional (IC&I) establishments are NOT captured in the new Blue Box regulation; therefore, Niagara Region will continue to provide Blue and Grey Box recycling collection services during the transition period (until Dec. 31, 2025).

### 2. Who do I contact for recycling collection inquiries?

- Industrial, commercial & institutional and non-residential properties (businesses, commercial components of mixed-use buildings, municipal properties, and places of worship) will continue to contact Niagara Region for recycling collection inquiries.
  - Waste Info Line at 905-356-4141 or 1-800-594-5542 or [wasteinfo@niagararegion.ca](mailto:wasteinfo@niagararegion.ca).

### 3. Are there changes to the current recycling collection schedule?

- No. There is no expected change to collection days or frequency of collection during the transition.
- All materials should continue to be set out at the curb at the time designated for your property on collection day to ensure pick up.

### 4. Where do I get a new or replacement of Blue/Grey Box?

- Niagara Region will still be responsible for distributing Blue and Grey Boxes and Carts for institutional, commercial, and industrial (IC&I) properties currently receiving collection services until Dec. 31, 2025.
- As of January 1, 2024, eligible ICI establishments can purchase blue/grey recycling boxes or carts online subject to a pre-approval process. Information on obtaining containers, distribution centers, and cart order forms is available at [niagararegion.ca/waste](https://niagararegion.ca/waste).

### 5. Where can I find information about acceptable Blue and Grey Box materials?

- IC&I property owners/tenants can continue to visit [niagararegion.ca/waste](https://niagararegion.ca/waste) for information on acceptable Blue and Grey Box material.

- Niagara Region Waste App users will continue to receive Blue Box and Grey Box information, including collection calendars and the waste search tool, through this platform.

6. Are there changes to the materials accepted in the Blue and Grey Box?

- Books will no longer be accepted in the Grey Box. Books in good condition can be donated.

7. Will there be changes to IC&I collection services after Dec. 31, 2025 (post transition)?

- Niagara Regional Council approved continued collection from IC&I properties until Dec. 31, 2025. Decisions on service levels for this sector after this date will be made in 2024 and will be communicated to IC&I properties that receive Niagara Region's collection services.

8. Will property taxes be affected by the Blue and Grey Box regulation?

- Niagara Region Council approved a zero-percent increase for the 2024 waste management operations budget resulting in the average household paying in the range of \$146 to \$198 per year for all waste management services compared to the \$147 to \$205 range paid in 2023, depending on the municipality you live in.
- A mitigation strategy was put in place in 2019 to temporary use reserve funds to offset costs increases, knowing we would have savings in 2024 as a result of the transition of the Blue Box program. Since 2019, the mitigation strategy has utilized \$7.2 million in reserve funding to help with the increased costs to the taxpayer in those years. The strategy involves replenishing the reserve funds in 2024, with the savings from the Blue Box program.