



Recycling Crisis

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It's no secret - the recycling market is in trouble. Just perform a simple Google News search for "recycling market" and thousands of results will appear. National media has brought a great deal of attention to changes in the recycling markets, and how those changes impact the collection and processing of recyclable materials. Recycling markets are volatile by nature and this has been one of the most turbulent stretches in recent history. Opinions differ on how bad or long this stretch will be, but it is clear that the effects of this downturn are spreading across the country.

Parks & Sons would like to offer a brief update on the recycling industry and outline changes that will be implemented in an effort to continue the viability of the commingled program.

CHINA'S RECYCLING BAN

In the summer of 2017, China formally announced import restriction intentions in a notice to the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the ban went into effect at the start of 2018. The justification for this action was excessive contamination of recycling loads shipped from the United States. Evidence showed that, in some cases, the single-stream recycling contamination rate exceeded 25%. Contaminates included garbage, plastic bags, food debris, unacceptable plastics, and waxed cardboard.

Contamination creates enormous problems for the recycling economy, including significantly higher costs to process the recyclables and a negative impact on the quality of material produced from recyclable materials. The new ban implemented in early 2018 established a much more restrictive contamination threshold set at 0.5%, meaning that the 25% contamination rate at the curb has to decline to virtually zero for this material to be recycled. Anything above the 0.5% contamination is now considered trash and consequentially landfilled.

In addition to the stricter controls on contamination, the prices for all materials have dropped over 75%, and in some cases more than 100%.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

With all these factors combined (contamination restrictions, higher processing costs, and reduction in commodity values), it is clear that the recycling industry is in serious duress. We need your help in ensuring the continued success of this program. When non-recyclable items end up in your recycling, they have the potential to turn the entire load into trash and increase processing costs resulting in contamination and additional service charges.

We have some simple requests:

- **DO NOT** bag your recyclables – plastic bags and film get tangled in the machinery
- **DO NOT** recycle any plastic bags (grocery, shopping, etc.) – they tangle the machinery
- **DO NOT** include food-soiled items – they can turn the entire load of recycling into trash
- **DO NOT** include yard debris such as grass, leaves, trimmings, branches, etc.
- **DO NOT** include fabrics such as clothing, pillows, furniture, etc.
- **DO NOT** add sharp or dangerous items (needles, electronics, etc.) – they can cause injury to workers and damage to the machinery
- **DO NOT** include batteries of any kind (AAA, AA, phone, car, etc.)
- **DO NOT** toss in "tangles" like rubber hoses and wires – they can shut down the recycling center
- **DO NOT** include bulky items such as propane tanks, construction debris, car parts, heavy metals, etc.

To maintain the integrity and sustainability of our recycling program, Parks & Sons reserves the right to suspend a customer's recycling participation due to excessive contamination. If non-accepted materials are found in a recycling container, the customer will be notified and provided additional educational material. Further contamination will result in fees to recover costs associated with the contamination and possible removal from the recycling program. If a customer wishes to be reinstated back into the recycling program, they may do so after a minimum period of 3 months and will be assessed a reinstatement fee.

RECYCLE RIGHT

Please join us in the battle against contamination. Thank you for doing your part to recycle right. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Customer Service or visit us online at parksandsons.com/recycling. We appreciate your business and look forward to continue serving you.