



Contamination – what is it?

The answer: *It Depends...*

- Simply put, contamination is any material other than the specific material designated for collection.
- This could be as basic as leftover milk in your milk bottle or as complicated as a multi-component container in a plastics stream.
- This guide gives you some clarity on what contamination looks like in common recyclable material streams:

Cardboard

- Clean, flattened cardboard with minimal tape, staples is best.

Common contaminants:

- Non-conforming fibre, such as white office paper.
- Fibre-based cartons, such as Tetra Pak cartons.
- Unclean cardboard, such as greasy pizza boxes.

Mixed Paper

- Paper or fibre material which matches recycler's guidelines is best.

Common contaminants:

- Non-conforming fibre, such as cardboard.
- Fibre-based cartons, such as Tetra Pak cartons.
- Plastic laminated fibre, such as some photocopier paper covers.
- Coffee cups.

Commingled Containers

- Rinsed and clean containers which conform with recycler's guidelines is best.

Common contaminants:

- Non-conforming plastic items. If unsure of requirements, stick to #1 (PET) and #2 (HDPE).
- Containers with residual food or beverage.
- Coffee cups (these are generally) commercially compostable.

Food Waste / Compostable

- Food and organic waste or certified compostable items is best.

Common contaminants:

- Items coined as only "biodegradable".
- Items which are not certified compostable.
- Raw meat can cause issues, check with your service provider.