



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
Trash & Recycling  
365 Boston Rd Room G-11 Billerica, MA 01821

June 1, 2019

Dear Billerica Resident:

We need your help. **The Town of Billerica's recycling contains 28.4% contamination. Contractually, the Town is required to have a contamination rate of 5% or less.** There is a heightened emphasis on compliance due to the global recycling market's downturn. Consequently, the Town of Billerica is embarking on a focused initiative to educate our residents on better recycling habits and lower our contamination rate.

The Town received a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to fund a robust education campaign, help us inspect what's in the recycling carts and to communicate that information to residents. We will be performing curbside inspections of residential recycling carts beginning June 10<sup>th</sup>. **Contaminated carts will receive a warning and specific feedback on what issue was found. A tag indicating the issue found will be left on the cart handle. Once the issue has been corrected, the cart will be collected the following week.**

While we understand that your cart being delayed for a week is an inconvenience please understand that recycling has become increasingly complex in recent years and it has become necessary to increase our education efforts to keep up with this growing complexity.

**Contamination in our recycling typically comes in two forms:**

1) Materials that belong in the green cart but are not prepared correctly For example, contamination occurs when there is still food in a plastic container or a half-filled bottle of juice. Containers should be empty and clean (just a quick rinse) before being placed in the green cart.

2) Materials that **do not** belong in the green cart. Such as:

- Plastic bags
- Other plastic film (such as the wrap around a case of bottled water)
- Food and/or liquids
- Textile
- Electronic

**Materials that do belong in the green bin include:**

- Empty bottles, jars, and containers made of metal, plastic, and glass
- Paper
- Flattened cardboard

We believe deeply in diverting waste whenever possible to lessen our environmental footprint. But, unless you are absolutely certain that something is recyclable in the green cart, put it in the trash instead. **Think – "When in doubt, throw it out!"** Please contact me if you have any questions about this new initiative. For more information about how to recycle correctly, check out the [www.RecycleSmartMA.org](http://www.RecycleSmartMA.org) website.

Thank you for your help and your commitment to a more sustainable Billerica.

Sincerely,

Christina McLaughlin

Recycling Coordinator, Town of Billerica

978-671-1313 Option 2

[cmclaughlin@town.billerica.ma.us](mailto:cmclaughlin@town.billerica.ma.us)