

## QUESTIONS ABOUT CLEAR GARBAGE BAGS

### **What is the Clear Bag Program?**

Starting June 1st, 2013 all Dufferin County residents will use transparent (clear) garbage bags for curbside garbage collection. Non-transparent (opaque) bags will not be acceptable. Currently, households in four local municipalities already use clear bags for garbage collection (Amaranth, Grand Valley, Melancthon and Mulmur).

### **When should I start using clear bags?**

The program takes effect County-wide June 1st, 2013.

### **What are the benefits to using transparent (clear) bags?**

Local municipal experiences and waste studies have shown that using clear bags for garbage contributes to increased diversion of recyclables, food wastes and Household Hazardous Wastes from landfill.

Another key benefit of using clear bags is the health and safety aspect. Clear bags help collection staff identify potential hazards, such as broken glass, needles and other sharp items that can potentially cause injuries during collection.

### **Why is Dufferin County transitioning from non-transparent (opaque) bags to transparent (clear) garbage bags?**

The four local municipalities that currently use clear bags in Dufferin County have seen an increase in materials diverted from landfill. Non-transparent garbage bags can hide a multitude of materials that should not be in the garbage. Unacceptable materials include hazardous items such as paint, solvents, batteries, and sharps/needles, in addition to recyclables and food waste. There are existing diversion programs available to divert all these materials from the garbage stream.

In the past, our collectors have been injured from broken glass, needles and other sharp items hidden within non-transparent bags. The use of clear bags will help keep our collectors safe from these injuries moving forward. Please remember that broken glass should be placed in a rigid container or box, and labeled as 'broken glass' for garbage collection.

### **As recyclables and food wastes are not acceptable in my clear garbage bag, where can I get additional Blue Boxes and/or a Green Bin?**

If your household requires an extra Blue Box for recycling and/or a Green Bin for composting, please contact Dufferin County Waste Services, or check [www.dufferincounty.ca/waste](http://www.dufferincounty.ca/waste) for a list of locations.

### **I understand that Household Hazardous and Electronic Wastes should not be thrown in my garbage. How do I properly dispose/recycle these items?**

Hazardous items such as paint, solvents, batteries and sharps/needles, and electronic wastes can be taken (at no charge) to one of the County's Household Hazardous Waste Days for safe and proper disposal/recycling. Check out our "Take It Back" Directory for more options.

### **How many bags of garbage can I put out at the curb for collection?**

Your municipality's current bag limit will stay in effect on a weekly basis (i.e. garbage will be collected weekly throughout Dufferin County).

### **What can I do with my extra non-transparent bags?**

Non-transparent (opaque) garbage bags can be given to family or friends in other areas that accept non-transparent garbage bags for collection. You can use them for clothing donations, or give them to a local charity that may have a use for them.

### **What about my privacy?**

If you have privacy concerns, use a small non-transparent (opaque) bag, such as a grocery bag, inside the clear bag or place your clear bag inside a garbage can.

### **What if I use small non-transparent (opaque) bags under my sink or throughout my home (i.e. grocery bags or white kitchen catchers), can I tie them up and throw them in the large clear bag?**

No. Smaller clear bags can be used under your sink/throughout your home, or dump contents of these containers straight into your larger clear bag or garbage container. Only two small non-transparent privacy bags (i.e. kitchen bags) are permitted within your clear bag.

### **Can I use a garbage can instead of a clear plastic bag?**

Yes, you can place your garbage out loose in a garbage container. Just make sure that any kitty litter and dog wastes are bagged for health and safety reasons. Private bathroom wastes (i.e. hygiene products) should be placed in your privacy bag.

### **Where do we buy clear garbage bags?**

Clear bags can be purchased at retail locations that sell garbage bags. Contact Dufferin County if you require a list.

### **Will clear bags cost more?**

No, transparent (clear) garbage bags will be similar in price to non-transparent bags. If you need a sample clear bag to get you started, please contact Dufferin County Waste Services at 519.941.2816 ext. 2620 or [dufferinwaste@dufferincounty.ca](mailto:dufferinwaste@dufferincounty.ca).

### **Can I use a clear bag for my recyclables?**

Recyclables should be loose in your Blue Boxes. They do not have to be sorted between containers and paper products. If you have overflow, you may purchase another Blue Box, or use blue tinted recycling bags.

### **Do other communities use clear garbage bags?**

Yes. The City of Guelph has used clear garbage bags for over 15 years. The majority of communities in Nova Scotia and all of Prince Edward Island also use clear bags. Markham is switching to clear bags at the end of April 2013.