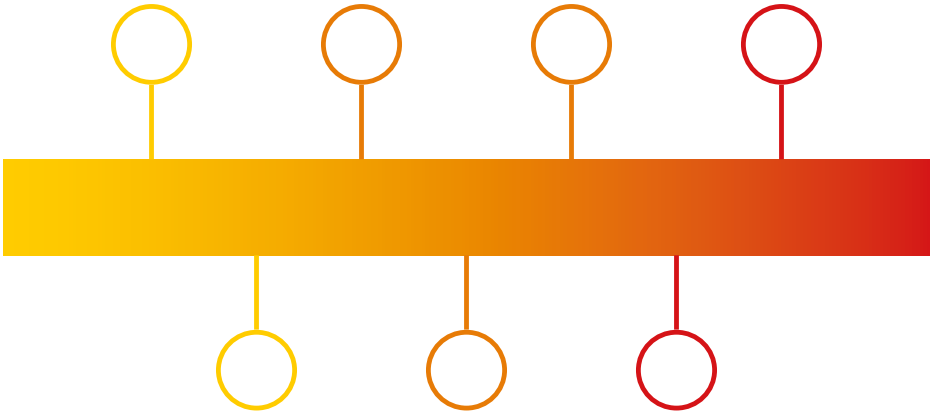




Reducing Contamination in Waste and Recycling Collections



All you need to know



Contamination is when...

- Incorrect items are put into recycling containers, for example, non-recyclable items, recyclable items in the wrong containers, or bulky items in communal containers.
- The right items are prepared the wrong way, for example, food residues on packaging, or recyclables presented in plastic bags.
- Recyclable items are placed in non-recyclable containers.

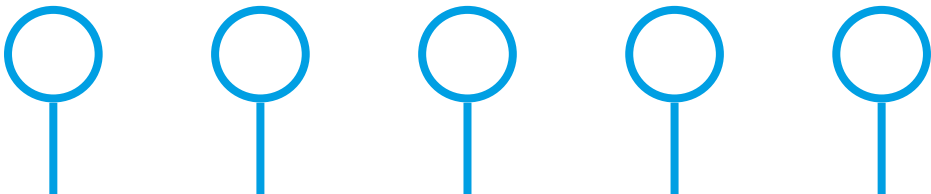
Contamination behaviours are...

Non-deliberate: Trying to recycle correctly but not understanding or being unaware of the range of items that can be recycled, resulting in low or moderate levels of contamination.

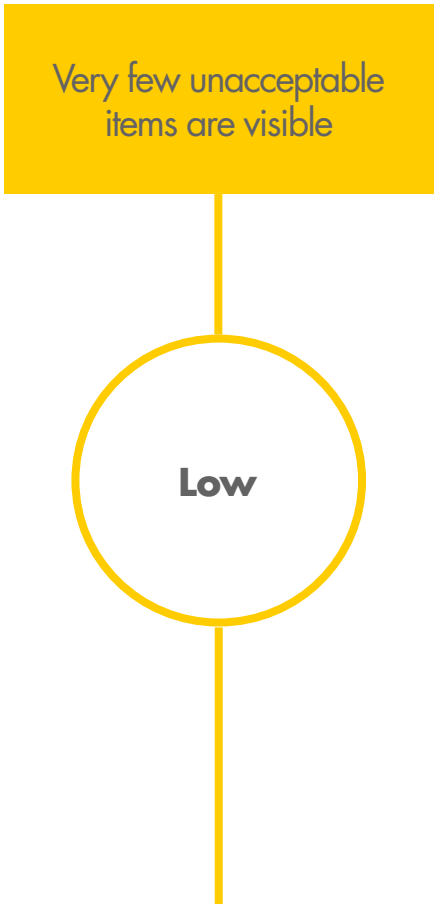
Deliberate: Purposefully placing the wrong items into recycling containers, resulting in severe levels of contamination.

Contamination impacts include...

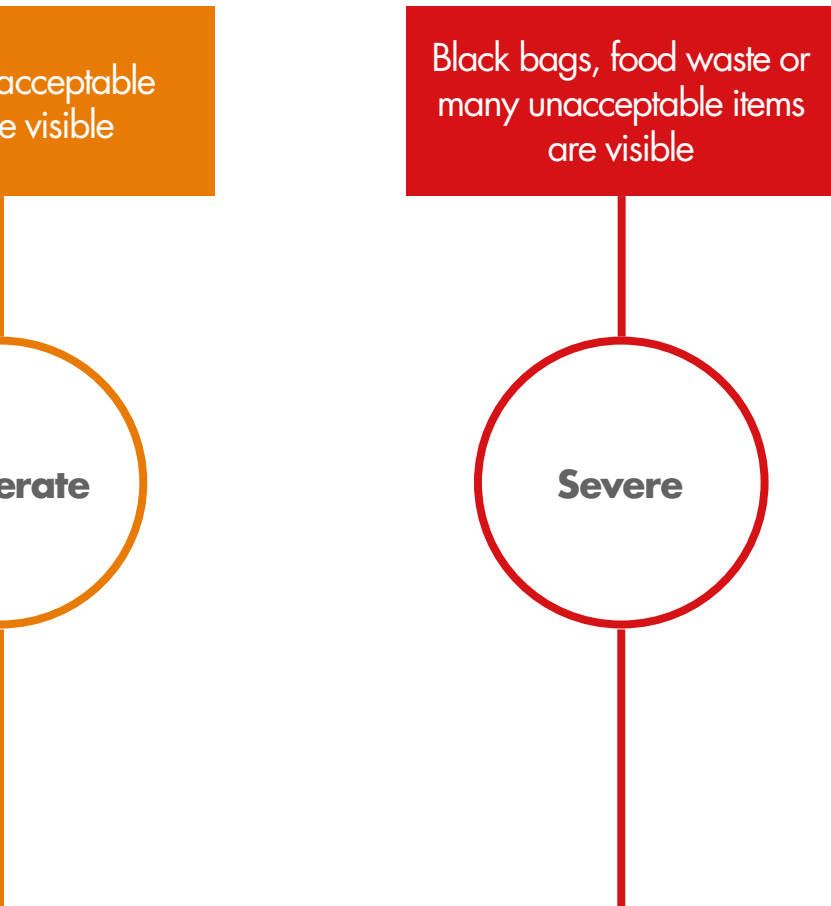
- Loss of revenue due to lower quality of materials collected and rejection of entire vehicle loads by reprocessors.
- Increased costs due to operational impacts, infrastructure damage and intervention activities.
- Reputational risk and associated procurement and contractual issues.
- Loss of public and staff confidence in recycling services.
- Reduction in local environmental quality due to flytipping and side waste.
- Failure to meet recycling targets.
- Costs and impacts of contamination through the supply chain (when known).



Contamination levels



Defining each contamination level is important to inform the remedial actions to be taken by the collection crew. Definitions for each level of contamination are provided and in addition specifying the number of items, and defining the impact that different items can have, can also be helpful.



What contamination looks like...

Kerbside

Paper, card
and cardboard



Low

Communal

Paper, card
and cardboard





Moderate

Severe



What contamination looks like...

Kerbside

Plastics, metals
and cartons



Low

Communal

Plastics, metals
and cartons





Moderate

Severe



Policy implementation

These are the key operational and communication activities that should be carried out when there are low levels of contamination:

Low Contamination
Bin Hanger

1st Incident of Low
Contamination

Crew Check Bins:
Low Contamination
Observed

In-Cab Monitoring
Handheld Device
Empty Bin
Attach Low Bin Hanger

Communications Activities

Low Contamination
Bin Hanger and Letter

Letter

Performance
Improvement Feedback
Letter or Postcard

2nd Incident of Low
Contamination

Informs
residents
about common
contaminants.
Remind how to
recycle correctly

Feedback on
Improved Recycling
Behaviour

Low

Review
Contamination
Levels

Compositional Analysis
Crew Contamination
Monitoring (Route/Area)

Operational Activities

Policy implementation

These are the key operational and communication activities that should be carried out when there are moderate levels of contamination:

Moderate Contamination
Bin Hanger and Letter

1st Incident of Moderate Contamination

Crew Check Bins:
Moderate Contamination Observed

In-Cab Monitoring Handheld Device
Do Not Empty Bin
Attach Mod. Bin Hanger

Communications Activities

Moderate Contamination Bin Hanger and Recycling Advisor Visit

Recycling Advisor Intervention

Performance Feedback Letter or Postcard

Performance Feedback Letter or Postcard

2nd Incident of Moderate Contamination

Recycling Advisor Intervention Targeted to Moderate Routes or Areas - Consider Incentives for Good Recycling Behaviour

Feedback on Recycling Behaviour - Positive (Thank You Letter) or Negative (Letter to Introduce Concept of S46)

Repeated Incidents of Moderate Contamination - Escalation to Section 46

Moderate

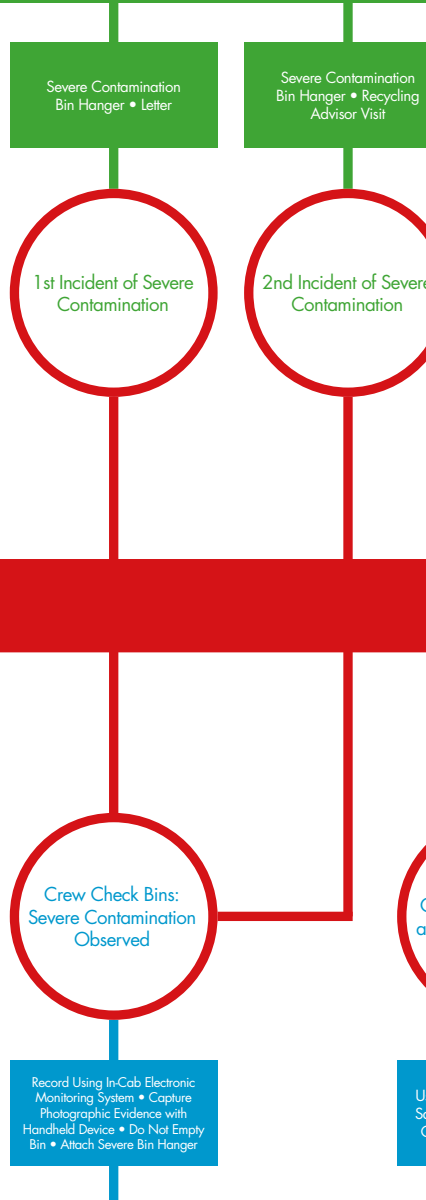
Review Contamination Levels

Compositional Analysis Crew Contamination Monitoring (Route/Area)

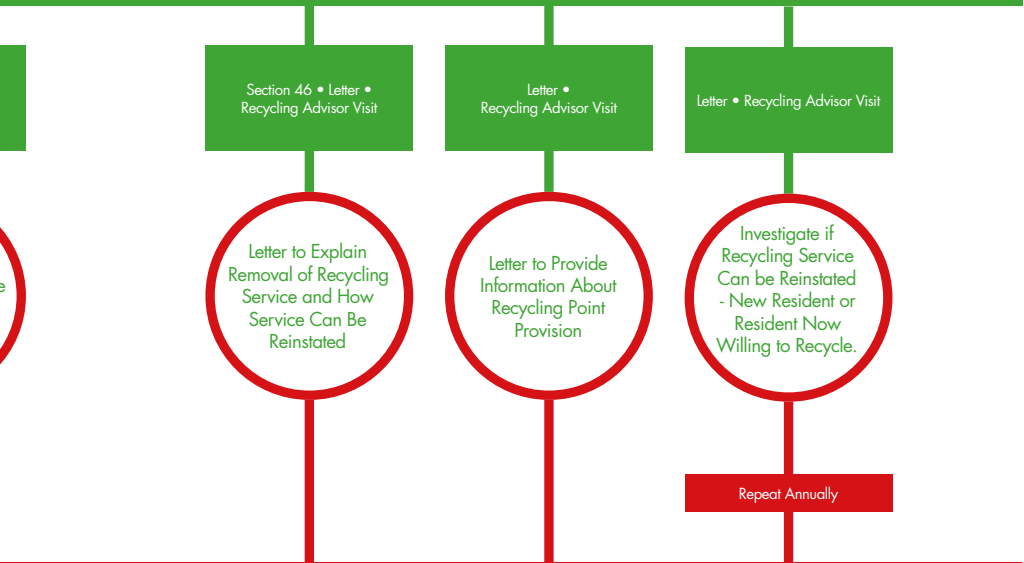
Operational Activities

Policy implementation

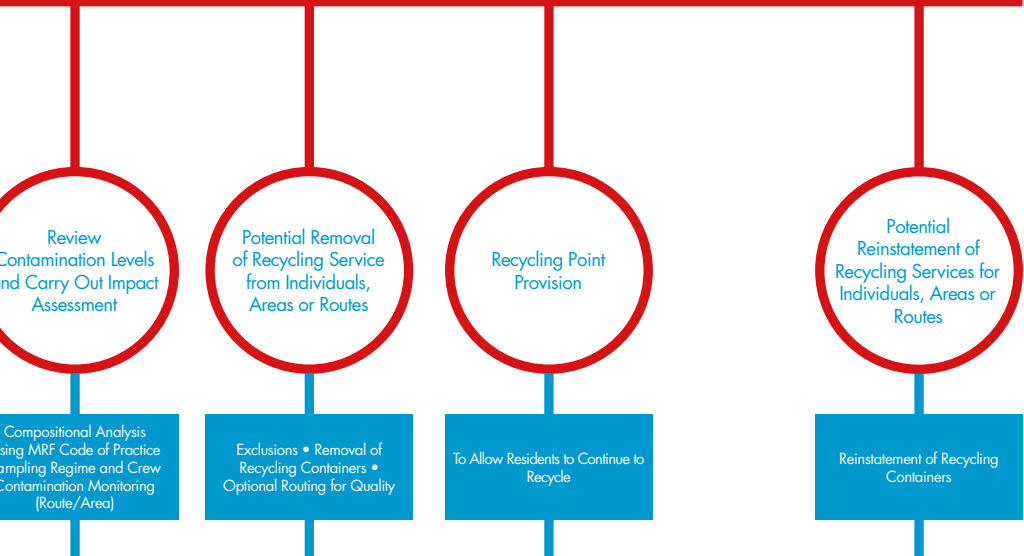
These are the key operational and communication activities that should be carried out when there are severe levels of contamination:




Communications Activities



Severe



Operational Activities



Resources to help you manage contamination in waste and recycling collections

This leaflet forms part of the Council's Internal Communications Toolkit and Plan to engage key staff and internal stakeholders in supporting the implementation and ongoing delivery of the Council's contamination policy.

Other communication resources include toolbox talks, presentations, briefing notes and intranet copy.

There is also a library of images available showcasing how to recognise levels of low, moderate and severe contamination for kerbside and communal properties for charter compliant dual stream recycling services.

For further information and support contact Zero Waste Scotland on (01786) 433 930.

