

Clear Bag Program

TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION

January 1st, 2016

Voluntary start

Soft start to the program. Those residents that feel strongly about diverting waste and saving what little landfill we have left, would be considered champions and should be recognized for their support. Signs will go out to the site reminding residents that they must use up their dark bags and prepare for the switch. This will also allow residents time to use up their coloured bags.

April 21st, 2016 – EARTH DAY

Mandatory launch

Residents must begin using clear bags for disposal. Warnings will be issued and recorded by staff at the site. Curbside contract should be recording or informing of the same.

July 1st, 2016 – NO EXCEPTIONS

Enforcement

Warnings have been issued at the site and from the administrating office of the non-compliant resident. Council to direct further action.

Frequently Asked Questions and Standard Replies

Why would a municipality want to implement a clear bag program?

The primary reason is the preservation of the existing landfill and to ensure all residents are participating in the recycling and diversion programs, before we start shipping our garbage to another landfill.

We are scheduled for closure by the end of 2017, however an application for expansion, which will be submitted in 2016, may see us with another 10 years or 20,000 cubic meters of waste of capacity (room for garbage). If we don't control the volume of waste going in –20,000 cubic meters of waste could be placed in the landfill in 5 years rather than 10.

The other reasons for the program revolve around worker safety and protecting themselves from being cut by sharp objects such as broken glass or needles. It will also be easier to assess if there is hazardous items such as oil, paint, pharmaceuticals or corrosive wastes, all of which could have a direct impact on the environment and should be disposed of at the Hazmat events.

What about my privacy?

Residents will be allowed to place a specified number of smaller opaque bags within the clear bags. This will provide an adequate method to enable residents to shield material that they would prefer not be

exposed for view. One but not more than three is our goal. At the curb, residents may also place their bag inside a garbage can but the bag must still be clear. The privacy bag can be no bigger than 20"x22", about the size of a grocery bag.

Do clear plastic bags cost more than traditional black bags?

Both clear plastic and opaque garbage bags are manufactured from the same type of plastic resin. The only difference between clear and coloured bags is the dyes which have been added to colour bags. Price differences occur based on the bag size, closure type, brand name or packaging size.

Will the use of clear bags increase the diversion of waste from landfill?

Yes, existing programs have noticed an increase in the amount of recyclable material diverted. Clear bag programs have been increasing diversion for over a decade. Throughout Canada, over half a million households are involved in a clear bag program. Within Ontario there are forty municipalities already collecting with clear bags. The entire province of Nova Scotia has implemented clear bags for garbage programs.

Why a phased in approach?

The voluntary start will allow residents that already support diversion to champions. This show of support will influence those that are on the fence about this change. It is also a way to ease those other residents who do not participate in diversion to see the errors in their ways. This strategy will also enable residents to use up existing inventories of opaque plastic bags and offers additional time for them to purchase clear bags.

What if a resident places some divertible material in the clear bag?

A tolerance level of up to 10% typically addresses the orphaned item that ends up in the waste. The can of bacon grease, the jar of butts, the overall program intent is to engage the non-participants and under achievers.

Does everyone have to use clear bags?

Yes, at home and at work, for curbside and depot. The multi-residential property owners will have to made aware of their responsibility to the program as well. They will be expected to police their residents as well.

The only exception – Public facing receptacles and public events. So the bins along the main street, bags from the public parks and beaches, and the community festivals will also be exempt due to the Health and Safety of the staff and volunteers collecting and the inability to police these bags.

What happens if I don't follow the rules?

If you don't use clear bags or have recyclable/hazardous waste in your clear bag, your garbage will be left at the curb and/ or turned away at the landfill site. The Landfill Attendants will be required to enforce the rules, but they do not make them. Please direct comments and/or questions to the Landfill Administrator. 705-382-3332 or landfill@armourtownship.ca