



Frequently Asked Questions

What are the changes?

As of January 1, 2026, Blue Box recycling collection previously provided to small business customers, including those located in local Designated Business Areas will be discontinued.

Background

On July 1, 2024, the Regional Municipality of Durham transitioned the responsibility of Blue Box recycling collection to Circular Materials, an organization that represents the producers and importers of the products and packaging collected in the blue box. The transition to producer responsibility is a requirement of the new Blue Box legislation enacted by the province in 2021.

Durham Region negotiated with Circular Materials and its local recycling contractors to continue service to existing small business customers, including those located in the local Designated Business Areas until December 31, 2025.

As of January 1, 2026, Circular Materials will provide no option to include small business customers in its residential collection routes, and recycling service will be discontinued to these businesses. All municipal garbage, green bin and leaf and yard waste collection services will continue unaffected.

Why is this being implemented?

In June 2021, the Province of Ontario released Regulation 391/21 Blue Box (Regulation 391/21) under the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016, which shifts the financial and operational responsibility of Blue Box recycling from municipalities to the organizations that produce or import packaging, paper and packaging like products. The transition under the Regulation is being phased in over three years and will take full effect on January 1, 2026, province wide. Durham Region transitioned its Blue Box program on July 1, 2024.

Blue Box Regulation 391/21 designates eligible sources as residences and facilities exclusively. Facilities, as defined by the regulation, include residential-type buildings such as long-term care homes, not-for-profit retirement homes, multi-residential buildings, and schools. Commercial and industrial establishments, including small businesses, are not covered under this regulation.

What does this mean for Durham Region businesses?

Blue Box collection previously provided to small businesses, including those located in Designated Business Areas will be discontinued.

When is the scheduled end date for Blue Box collection in Designated Business Areas?

Blue Box collection previously provided to small businesses, including to those located in Designated Business Areas will end on December 31, 2025.

Is Blue Box material accepted at Regional Waste Management Facilities?

Yes, Blue Box material is accepted for recycling at any Regional Waste Management Facility. Fees apply.

What is the estimated number of businesses affected by these changes?

Approximately 2,800 small businesses in Designated Business Areas throughout the Region and approximately 200 additional small businesses that are not formally included in Designated Business Areas are impacted.

How can small businesses arrange for recycling collection services after December 31, 2025?

Small businesses must arrange for private recycling collection services by partnering with waste management companies that specialize in recycling services.

What are the consequences if small businesses fail to secure private Blue Box collection?

Under By-law 2024-009, owners and occupants must not set out garbage that includes Blue Box materials for collection.

Will the changes to the Blue Box program impact garbage, organics, and leaf and yard waste collection?

Municipal garbage, green bin, and leaf and yard waste collection will remain unchanged.

Will Blue Box recycling collection still be provided for residents living above businesses?

Residents living above businesses, including those in local Designated Business Areas will continue to receive Blue Box recycling collection services from Circular Materials.