

Provincial Recycling Collection Changes

As of 2026, the recycling collection landscape in Ontario and Simcoe County is changing



What is changing?

The Provincial Government passed legislation to make producers of recyclable products (paper products and plastic packaging) fully responsible for the costs associated with the lifecycle of recyclable products.

By January 1, 2026, a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) will act on behalf of producers to create and manage the new province-wide **residential recycling collection system**.

While most of the new legislation is extremely positive, **the new system does not include recycling collection from Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (IC&I) locations, such as downtown businesses and most not-for-profits.**

As of January 2026, the County **will only collect garbage and organics** across the region, **not recycling**. The County will continue to accept recycling drop-off at County waste drop-off sites for an additional fee due to the cost of transfer, haulage and processing of the material.

What are the potential impacts to IC&I locations?

As of January 1, 2026, the onus will be on IC&I locations to set up and potentially cover costs for their own recycling systems. These IC&I locations include:

- All private sector businesses
- Places of worship
- Daycares
- Campgrounds (without permanent or seasonal households)
- Public facing and internal areas of municipal buildings/facilities (e.g., libraries, arenas)
- Not-for-profit organizations, (e.g., shelters, food-banks)

Why are IC&I locations considered ineligible by the Province?

Waste collection from IC&I locations has never been mandated for municipalities in Ontario. The County has collected waste from businesses as a value-added service to further support our communities.



Why can't the County continue collecting recycling from IC&I locations?

All municipalities in Ontario, including the County of Simcoe, will be out of the recycling business as of 2026. Under the new regulations, the potential costs to the County to manage recycling is estimated to be six times higher than current rates, placing a heavy burden on our taxpayers.

What is the County doing to support our businesses and IC&I sector?

County Council continues to work extremely hard with our partners at the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks and our MPPs to ensure they are aware of the potential environmental and service-related concerns by not providing collection to IC&I locations. We are also providing awareness and support to organizations, such as local BIAs, so they can support their members.

Our call to action

Environmental concerns

- In a time when Ontario's landfill space is rapidly diminishing, source separation is important for every sector.
- A reduction in diversion rates within the IC&I sector may occur, as more recycling could end up in the garbage stream.

Community service concerns

- This is a valuable and convenient service to our small businesses and not-for-profits.
- Most downtown cores lack the space to have alternative solutions.

The County of Simcoe has suggested the following amendments to the Province:

- Amend Ontario Regulation 391/21 to include small IC&I locations (those generating similar quantities of waste as a residential unit) as eligible sources to ensure Producer Responsibility Organizations are required to service these locations as part of their residential collection contract.
- Amend Ontario Regulation 103/94 to expand the application of the IC&I waste regulatory framework to additional businesses and institutions so those IC&I locations not included as eligible sources in Reg 391/21 are required to source separate (recycle).