

RECYCLING NEWS BULLETIN

May 2018



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RECYCLE RIGHT.™

As valued customers committed to recycling, we are providing this important recycling update.

Overview

In recent years, almost 30% of all recyclables from across the globe were shipped to China, including over 50% of the world's recyclable mixed paper and plastics. On January 1, all mixed paper and mixed plastics were banned as an import into China. On March 1, China began enforcing a new 0.5% contamination limit on imported recyclables, then later in March implemented [Operation Blue Sky](#), a screening effort at their ports to enforce their new policies.

China's new policies have been implemented in response to their aggressive new environmental goals, which include creating their own recycling collection programs. China has announced a plan to eliminate imports of all post-consumer recyclables by 2021, and they appear to be taking steps to move down this path.

May 3, 2018 Update: Chinese Government Announces 30-day Inspection Suspension

On May 3, the Chinese Government announced that it has suspended inspections/certificates for all recyclables from the U.S. through June 4, 2018. Because all loads shipped to China must be certified, recyclables will not be able to be shipped from the U.S. to China during this time. **In other words, regardless of the material bans and the 0.5% contamination limit, no recyclables will ship from the U.S. to China for at least the next month.** It is apparent that China will not be easing up on their import restrictions soon.

Impact of this Latest Announcement

The suspension of U.S. imports into China adds additional pressure on global markets, which ultimately impacts recycling programs in communities across the U.S. Some of the material that was being shipped to China (cardboard, some newspaper, sorted office paper) will now compete for the same markets that have been established for lower value mixed paper. Inevitably, some paper will likely be left without a market.

With this latest news, commodity pricing continues to fall. We have seen a 50% reduction in commodity values in the past several months, while processing costs have increased. Every community and every recycler is impacted.

Keeping the Focus on Quality

Alternative markets - domestic and export - require high quality recyclable materials with little to no contamination. Waste Management (WM) is focused on reducing contamination to help move materials to end markets. Given continued market volatility, we must all work together on solutions. We all have a role - and a responsibility - to make recycling successful.

THE BATTLE TO REDUCE RECYCLING CONTAMINATION

The sustainability of all recycling programs is dependent upon collecting high quality recyclable materials free of unacceptable materials. From an environmental, economic and safety perspective, addressing the quality of recycling is imperative and we must tackle this together. Here is what WM is doing, and how you can help:

- Waste Management's education and outreach program, [Recycle Often. Recycle Right](#)® website has tips and tools to help customers reduce and eliminate contamination. [Practice and share these tips!](#)
- We continue to invest in technology to process cleaner material, more efficiently. [Send us clean materials!](#)
- As allowable, WM will enforce contract provisions related to contamination to the fullest extent. We will also work closely with our customers to adjust the current recycling business model to reflect today's marketplace. We are seeking cost recovery as allowed, [charging for contamination](#) and amending contract language. [Let's work together to eliminate contamination and make recycling work!](#)

Resources for Recycling Industry News

[Recycle Often. Recycle Right.® Newsroom](#)

[WasteDive](#)

[Waste360](#)

[Resource Recycling](#)

[Waste Today](#)



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