

Crackdown on recycling

Brookhaven stops taking items put in bins improperly

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Brookhaven Town has stopped picking up recyclables from homes where plastics, paper and aluminum cans were improperly mixed, officials said Friday.

The town, which in November switched from single-stream recycling to a dual-stream system, said it started enforcing new rules last week intended to keep paper and cardboard products separate from bottles and cans. The town also stopped curbside collections of glass.

Carters collect metals and certain types of plastics one week, and paper and cardboard the next. The changes were implemented last year following the collapse of prices in international recycling markets.

Christopher Andrade, who runs Brookhaven's recycling program, said recyclables must be properly separated to ensure they are not contaminated by

Do's and don'ts

Brookhaven collects the following recyclable material:

- Plastic bottles
- Aluminum and metal cans
- Newspaper and magazines
- Cardboard

It does not collect:

- Greased-stained pizza boxes
- Cardboard milk containers
- Plastic bags

Glass may be deposited at any of seven town-operated facilities. See brookhaven.ny.gov for locations.



"Oops!" cards were placed at homes not recycling right.

BROOKHAVEN TOWN

being with other materials. The town does not fine residents for improper recycling, but on Jan. 30, carters started skipping houses that ignored the rules.

"In order to market the commodities, it's got to be clean," Andrade said. "It's not recyclable if it's contaminated."

Some residents have put the wrong items in their recycling bins, and carters also have found cardboard milk containers and greasy pizza boxes, which cannot be recycled, town officials said, adding some homes have improperly used plastic bags to throw out recyclables. Plastic bags can't be recycled.

Andrade said the town did not strictly enforce the new recycling rules for the first two months of the dual-stream program as it publicized the changes through mailings, advertising, social media and videos posted on the town website.

During that time, residents received what the town called "Oops!" cards if they improperly mixed recyclables, officials said. Stickers were placed in bins to identify material that didn't belong in them, or if residents used plastic bags.

"The grace period is over," Andrade said. "We're getting a lot of contamination."

Don Drosselmeier of Centereach said his recyclables were not picked up Wednesday, apparently because he placed material in a plastic bag. He said he was surprised because he had used the same type of bag for recyclables.

"I put out the bag that I've been putting out for the last 10 years and they went right by," Drosselmeier said. "I believe notices were sent [to neighbors], but I didn't get one."

Drosselmeier, 59, a broadcast engineer, said he would stop using plastic bags. "I'll do whatever it takes," he said. "I really care about the environment, and I'm going to do everything I can to take care of the planet."

Andrade said most residents are cooperative when they are informed of their recycling mistakes and how to correct them. He said some residents appeared to be "confused" about which recyclables to put out each week.

Overall, recycling collections have been strong, and material collected has been cleaner than under single stream, he said.

"We're really hopeful that extensive education is going to get the message through," Andrade said. "I firmly believe most people are going to cooperate once they learn what to do."

Newsday

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THIS DATE IN HISTORY

1929 Under the Lateran Treaty, Italy recognized the independence and sovereignty of Vatican City.
1937 After a 6-week-old sit-down strike, General Motors agreed to recognize the United Automobile Workers Union.
1945 President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill and Soviet leader Josef Stalin signed the Yalta agreement; Stalin agreed to declare war on Imperial Japan following Nazi Germany's capitulation.
1968 The fourth and current Madison Square Garden, on the former site of the Penn Station building, opened with a "Salute to the USO" hosted by Bob Hope and Bing Crosby.
1986 Dissident Natan Sharansky was released by the Soviet Union after nine years of captivity as part of an East-West prisoner exchange.
1990 South African activist Nelson Mandela was freed after 27 years in captivity.
2006 Vice President Dick Cheney accidentally shot and wounded hunting companion Harry Whittington in Texas.
2008 Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and five others held at Guantánamo Bay were charged with war crimes in connection with the Sept. 11 attacks.

DRIVER KILLED IN SHIRLEY

A driver was killed and a man was hospitalized with serious injuries after a fiery early morning crash in Shirley on Sunday, police said.

James Dontae, 29, of Shirley, was driving a 2010 Toyota sedan on William Floyd Parkway shortly before 1 a.m. when he struck the back of a 2004 Jeep traveling south near Dawn Drive, Suffolk County police.

The Jeep caught fire and its driver, whose identity has not been released, was pronounced dead at the scene, police said.

Dontae was taken to Stony Brook University Medical Center with serious injuries, police said.

Both vehicles were impounded for safety checks.

Seventh Squad detectives are investigating. Anyone with information is urged to call police at 631-854-8252 or Crime Stoppers at 800-220-8477. —VERA CHINESE



Firefighters at William Floyd Parkway crash Sunday, when one driver was killed and another injured.