



Ontario's transition to producer responsibility

In 2021, the Ontario government released the [Blue Box Regulation](#) that shifts the financial and operational responsibility of recycling programs to producers – those that produce and supply blue box materials to residents. In this new extended producer responsibility framework, producers become financially and operationally responsible for collecting and recycling blue box materials.

Who we are

Circular Materials is a national not-for-profit organization that builds efficient and effective recycling systems where materials are collected, recycled and returned to producers to use as recycled content in new packaging and paper. As the administrator of Ontario's common collection system, Circular Materials is responsible for operating the new system for blue box materials. We are committed to increasing recycling rates across Ontario and ensuring more materials are looped into the circular economy, benefiting both people and the environment.

What does this transition mean for residents?

Transition to the new framework will occur in a phased approach over the next two and a half years. During this time, Ontarians will still be able to recycle the same materials as before.

Residents with recycling questions can contact their community's contractor.

Community-specific recycling information can be found at circularmaterials.ca/ON.

Transition timeline

Transition to extended producer responsibility will take place between 2023 – 2025, with the new framework fully in place on January 1, 2026. Along with the Regulation, the government released a [schedule](#) that assigns each of the 376 Ontario communities a transition date.



Why the transition is important



- Historically, Ontario's blue box programs were operated by municipalities who shared the costs with producers. Now, under the Blue Box Regulation, Ontario is transitioning to a new model where producers are fully responsible for operating and funding the entire blue box program.
- In 2026, Ontario can expect a convenient, consistent, and effective recycling system in place that will improve recycling rates. This includes a consistent list of recyclable materials across the province.
- This new system operated by Circular Materials represents the evolution from product stewardship to a more circular economy where materials are collected, recycled and used again as recycled content in new packaging and products.

What does extended producer responsibility (EPR) mean?

EPR is a framework in which producers – the businesses that supply paper and packaging to residents – are responsible for managing the end-of-life management of these materials. EPR enables innovation, operational efficiencies, increased standard levels, and access to materials. It is recognized as one of the most effective mechanisms to improve recycling rates.

How we are enhancing Ontario's recycling system



Strategic partnerships and collaborative initiatives to drive innovation



Optimizing recycling operations and infrastructure



Promotion and education that drives recycling rates



Ensuring a continuous loop where materials are used again in new packaging and products



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