

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### **1. Why is the Service changing?**

There are a number of reasons why waste management practice in Sligo is changing. The following list outlines the reasons:

- It will allow a more accurate recording of waste collected from both Domestic and Commercial customers in Sligo. The proposed changes will ensure all customers can account for waste produced i.e. registration with a Waste Collector and/or use of Civic Amenity Sites (maintaining receipts for a minimum of 3 years).
- EU Targets for the diversion of recyclable and bio-degradable waste from landfill must be met. Ireland will be heavily penalised for non compliance of these targets.
- The new Bye-Laws will allow more scope for Waste Enforcement Officers to deal with non-compliances which in turn should reduce the amount of illegal dumping, fly-tipping and backyard burning taking place. On-the-spot fines may be issued to any member of the public for a number of circumstances including people who can not/will not prove how they are correctly disposing of waste.

### **2. Will having a 3-bin service cost more money and why is it necessary to introduce this system?**

The most expensive waste stream of all is general waste (Landfill waste), therefore it stands to reason that diversion of all recyclables and bio-degradable waste from the general waste stream should in turn save the householder money rather than the opposite.

Council Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste (known as the Landfill Directive) requires Member States of the EU to reduce their dependence on the landfill of municipal waste in favour of more environmentally sound alternatives. The Directive also sets out targets in relation to the progressive diversion of biodegradable municipal waste from landfill. Bio-degradable waste, when placed in landfill, produces methane gas which has over 20 times the global warming potential than carbon dioxide.

General waste (Landfill disposal) charges are increasing annually and are set to continue this way due to population growth, lack of landfill space and in an effort to address specified EU targets.

**3. Do I need a 3<sup>rd</sup> bin for Food Waste? I don't have any food waste in my household. I also have a Garden Composter.**

If you live in one of the specified areas in Sligo, you are obliged to have a 3<sup>rd</sup> bin for Food Waste and present it for collection on a fortnightly basis. Not all food waste can go in Garden Composters i.e. cooked food items. Use of garden composters is encouraged and is perfect for garden waste, fruit & vegetable peelings and tea/coffee grinds. All other food items which can be placed in this 3<sup>rd</sup> bin are listed under Question 4 below.

All you need to do is put your food waste in the food waste caddy instead of your usual rubbish bin and put it out for fortnightly collection. It's a matter of changing old habits.

You will be helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated by food waste at landfill sites. EU Legislation requires us to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste being sent to landfill or incur financial penalties. Current trends show that food waste makes up to 40% of the waste going to landfill.

**4. What can I place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> bin (Food Waste/Bio-degradable Waste)?**

All food and garden waste can be collected in this new waste collection stream for organic waste. Items include the following:

***Garden waste:***

- Grass cuttings
- Hedge clippings, etc

***Food scraps:***

- Cooked/uncooked meat, fish & poultry
- Shellfish & bones
- Eggs, egg boxes
- Dairy products (cheese, yogurt, etc)
- Soups & sauces
- Table & plate scrapings
- Fruit, Vegetables

- Breads, Cereals, Pasta
- Dough & rice
- Teabags, Coffee grinds
- Paper filters
- Cakes
- Biscuits
- Food soiled napkins
- Paper towels
- Food soiled paper
- Wet cardboard & paper

**NO PLASTIC ITEMS**

**5. Will there be odour and nuisance issues associated with the 3<sup>rd</sup> bin for Organic Waste?**

To reduce odour problems, biodegradable bags are available for purchase in shops; however, to avoid this cost, you can simply wrap organic items in old newspapers before placing them in the 3<sup>rd</sup> bin. Also, wash the bin following collection of waste and this will ensure avoidance of odour and nuisance issues.

**6. Why has the 3<sup>rd</sup> bin (Food Waste/Bio-degradable Waste) to be collected fortnightly? It may not be full, therefore why can I not wait until it is full?**

This is a requirement under the Waste Management (Food Waste) Regulations 2009 and also the European Union (Household Food Waste & Bio-waste) Regulations 2013. Apart from its requirement in legislation, the rationale behind collection of this waste type on a fortnightly basis is to ensure the waste undergoes the best possible treatment at a composting facility. It is more difficult to compost this waste type if it is left too long before collection. It becomes a rancid product and also increases odour and nuisance issues for the customer.

**7. What if I can't fit a 3<sup>rd</sup> bin at my property?**

Your Waste Collector will provide a kitchen caddy type bin for this waste type (unless a larger bin is required). This kitchen caddy is small and can easily be stored in a shed, utility room or kitchen.

**8. I don't need a 3<sup>rd</sup> bin for food waste as I put food waste through my kitchen macerator or give it to my farm animals.**

It is prohibited under the Waste Management (Food Waste) Regulations 2009 and the European Union (Household Food Waste & Bio-waste) Regulations 2013 to dispose of food waste into the sewerage system via kitchen macerators. The use of such macerators can put pressure on sewage treatment systems and cause blockages in the drainage system. This applies to both domestic and commercial customers irrespective of whether a discharge licence has been issued to the premises.

In regard to feeding food waste to animals, this is also prohibited under the Animal-By-Products legislation. Food waste can carry diseases such as Foot and Mouth and Swine Fever which can kill farmed animals. Feeding food waste to pigs in particular remains the most likely route by which Foot and Mouth or Classical Swine Fever could enter Ireland. Feeding food waste to pigs was the cause of the 2001 foot and mouth outbreak in the UK. An outbreak of these diseases would shut down Ireland's agricultural industry, causing hardship to animals and people. Foot and Mouth disease is a highly infectious viral disease which affects farmed, pet, or wild cloven-hoofed animals, cattle, sheep, pigs, goats etc.

A person found guilty of such an offence is liable to a fine of €250,000 or 3 years in prison or both.

## 9. What can I place in the dry recyclables bin?

Remember to wash and squash before placing recyclable items in the dry recyclables bin. This helps you get more into your recyclable bin giving you value for money while also improving the efficiency of the collection of the recyclables. Items for the dry recyclables bin include:

### *Aluminium:*

- Food tins
- Drink cans
- Lids from glass bottles
- Biscuit tins
- Clean tin foil
- Takeaway trays

### *Plastic Items:*

- Toiletries bottles/containers
- Window cleaner bottles
- Washing-up liquid bottles
- Detergent bottles
- Fabric softener bottles
- Yogurt drink bottles
- Clean plastic wrap I.E. the type that toilet paper & kitchen towels are packaged in
- Lids removed from plastic & glass bottles
- Plastic bags
- Clean plastic food containers

### *Paper & Cardboard:*

- Phone books
- Catalogues
- Tissue boxes
- Labels & tags
- Envelopes
- Printing paper

### *Tetra Pak:*

- Milk cartons
- Juice cartons
- Soup cartons

## 10. What can I place in the general waste bin (Landfill Waste)?

This is the most expensive waste stream of all. This should be the least used waste stream if correct segregation of waste is taking place. No recyclables or bio-degradable waste should be placed in the general waste stream. This bin should only contain non-recyclable waste, non compostable waste and non hazardous waste. The only items that should be placed in this waste stream are:

- Ashes (cold)
- Nappies
- Dirty plastic
- Dirty tin foil
- Sanitary items
- Blades
- Toothpaste tubes
- Non CFL light bulbs
- Crisp packets
- Biscuit wrappers
- Wax paper wrappings

## 11. I am not on the specified list of areas in Sligo that requires a 3 bin system; therefore a 2 bin system is continued in this area. What does this mean for me?

This means that you must continue to recycle as much as possible. Use of garden composters is highly encouraged for diversion of garden waste and the following food waste: vegetables, fruit, eggs, egg boxes, teabags & coffee grinds.

**12. Why wasn't my bin collected? My bin had a sticker on it saying it was contaminated therefore wasn't going to be collected. What does this mean?**

If your bin hasn't been collected by your Waste Collector, this means that this particular waste stream has been contaminated with incorrect waste items e.g. too much food/biodegradable waste placed in the general waste bin, etc. Under the new Waste Presentation Bye-Laws, Waste Collectors are obliged to inform Sligo Local Authorities if this is a regular occurrence for a particular household/commercial premises. A Waste Enforcement Officer from Sligo Local Authorities will inspect the premises to discuss the problem. A warning letter may be issued following inspection and if following this letter, the problem continues, an on-the-spot fine may be served for non compliance of the Bye-Laws.

**13. I currently buy my dry recyclable bag from my local shop. How do I dispose of dry recyclables once the sale of these bags cease?**

Householders are obliged to either dispose of waste through their local Civic Amenity Sites (must maintain receipts for a minimum of 3 years) or can register with your local Waste Collector. Waste Collectors will provide you with the appropriate bins which will be micro-chipped for recording purposes. Collectors will have different systems in place e.g. e-card, pay as you go, etc. You can discuss the various payment options with your Waste Collector but the majority of them will allow a payment system whereby you can top-up on-line or in your local shop or by direct debit.

**14. What does the new system involve for me?**

The new system will mean that you have to contact and register with your local Waste Collector. Your Waste Collector will provide you with a micro chipped or bar coded bin for dry recyclables as the current bag system will be phased out. Your Waste Collector will also microchip your current general waste bin. If you are living in one of the specified areas for the provision of a 3<sup>rd</sup> bin, your Waste Collector will also provide you with a small micro chipped kitchen caddy bin for segregated food waste. Alternatively, if you do not wish to register with a Waste Collector, you can transport your household waste to a Civic Amenity Site – in doing this, you must maintain receipts from the sites for a minimum of three years as proof that you are availing of this service rather than your local Waste Collector.

**15. What are the time scales for changing my current system to the new system?**

The old system will be phased out over a three month period from the making of the Bye-Laws. Householders are obligated to ensure the required changes are in place by **4<sup>th</sup> March 2014**.

## **16. What other options are available to me if I don't want to register with a Waste Collector?**

If you choose not to register with a Waste Collector, you must dispose of your waste via Civic Amenity Sites / Transfer Station / other Authorised Facility. By going down this route, you must maintain receipts from the sites for a minimum of three years. In order to account for all households in Sligo and what is happening to the waste from each household, a Waste Enforcement Officer from Sligo Local Authorities may inspect your premises to ensure you are disposing of your waste in an environmentally sound manner. If you do not have receipts from your Civic Amenity Site / Transfer Station / other Authorised Facility to prove you are using this facility to dispose of waste, you may be issued with a Warning Letter and/or an on-the-spot fine.

## **17. I live in an Apartment/Complex Block. What does this new system mean for me?**

Your landlord will be obliged to discuss and outline all changes that apply to waste management practice in Sligo. The same will apply to apartment/complex blocks as per any other household/dwelling in Sligo i.e. 3 bin system must be incorporated on to the premises.

## **18. What happens to each of the three waste streams?**

General Waste is brought to a local landfill or for incineration depending on the Waste Collector. Recyclable Waste is brought back to the headquarters of the Waste Collector and goes through a picking station whereby each of the recyclable items are categorised into cardboard, tetra pak, plastic, aluminium, etc. They are then shipped to various places in Europe or further, where they are re-used in further production of items. Food Waste/Biodegradable Waste is brought to a licensed Composting Facility whereby it undergoes treatment to produce high grade compost to in turn be used as soil conditioners in commercial agriculture, landscaping, organic fertiliser or as a custom growing media.

## **19. I am a Property Management Company, what is expected from me?**

Under the new Waste Presentation Bye-Laws 2013, you will be required to complete the registration form (see Fourth Schedule) and submit free of charge to the Environment Section of Sligo Local Authorities on an annual basis. This will be a requirement of owners of all holiday houses, apartment blocks/complexes and management companies.

For any further queries that may not have been answered above, please direct to [enviro@sligococo.ie](mailto:enviro@sligococo.ie).