**Recycling Done Right!**

Each week the Department of Environmental Health (DEH) collects approximately 7,500 pounds of recyclables from its six supermarket recycling depots throughout Grand Cayman. We have placed containers at these depots to make it easier for you to recycle, and for us to collect, types 1 and 2 plastics, metal containers, mixed paper as well as glass and ceramic items.

Collection statistics for 2018 depict, however, that 20% of items the DEH collects from recycling containers are not suitable for recycling and end up in the landfill.

I know that many persons recycle. Therefore, I thought it might be useful to share with you ways in which we can make our recycling efforts more effective both at work and at home.

Any items you place for recycling wind up in the landfill once they are considered to be contaminants. Contaminants refer both to recyclables incorrectly placed in recycling containers and non-recyclable items placed among recyclable items.

The following are four of the contaminants we observe most often at DEH recycling depots.

**1. Plastic bags**

Recyclable items contained in plastic shopping bags are a common sight at DEH depots. These bags are not recyclable and create additional work for the recycling staff, who currently sort items by hand.

During your next visit to the depot, and at work, empty the contents of the plastic bags into the recycle bins and keep plastic bags out of the recycling bins.

**2. Beverage cartons/ frozen food packaging**

Beverage cartons and frozen food packaging are also common contaminants. Although paperboard is used in the manufacture of beverage cartons and packaging materials, their outer layer usually consists of either polyurethane (a form of plastic) or wax. Place these containers with the regular trash.

**3. Types 3 to 7 plastics**

Another common practice is putting several plastic types into recycling containers. Only place types 1 and 2 plastics into DEH plastic recycling containers as these are the only plastics we recycle at present.

Types 1 and 2 plastics are used to manufacture soda bottles, water bottles, milk jugs and detergent bottles, to name a few. To identify types 1 and 2 plastics, look for the PET, PETE or HDPE codes or the symbols 1 or 2 on the container.

Dispose of all plastics which bear the symbols 3 to 7 in your non-recyclable garbage.

**4. Soiled recyclables**

The DEH recycles many types of food containers, including tin and aluminium cans, disposable foil trays, and the above-mentioned plastic soda, juice and milk bottles.

However, recyclable items that contain the remnants of food waste will end up in the landfill. The presence of these and other contaminants lessens the quality of our recycling product and significantly reduces the amount of revenue we get from local recycling activities.

Take care, especially with paperboard items as we cannot wash these. As such, never place takeout food containers and grease-laden pizza boxes in DEH recycling containers.

Always rinse other recyclable items, like those containing household cleaning and personal supplies, before placing them into recycling containers.

Play your part! Reduce the number of contaminants in recycling containers by carefully separating and cleaning recyclable items before placing them in the appropriate containers.