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4-1154 Kingston Rd,
Pickering, ON L1V 1B4

Hours of Service:
Monday to Friday 9-5pm



(905) 839-3620



Juanita.Nathan@Parl.gc.ca

CHANGES TO BLUE BOX PICK UP MAY CAUSE LOCAL BUSINESSES

OSHAWA

Last week we published the Metrolinx plan to cut off Simcoe street for up two years. In the same week the City of Oshawa requests the cooperation of all property owners in ensuring compliance with the City's waste management regulations.

Garbage Pickup Schedule

Property owners and residents must ensure that garbage is set out on time and on the right day. Materials left at the curb outside of the specified times be subject to enforcement. In other words they will charge you for pick up.

Garbage is collected weekly on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at designated properties in the downtown core. Regulated without compensation they want for you to place materials at the curb no earlier than 6 p.m. the night before collection and no later than 7 a.m. the morning of collection. Please ensure that all garbage is placed at the curb on the designated pickup days.

Be advised that any violations of the garbage disposal regulations, such as placing garbage out on non-designated days or failing to properly contain waste, will be subject to fines. We appreciate your cooperation in helping to keep our downtown area clean and pleasant for all.

All this compounded by the Province of Ontario is implementing significant changes to waste diversion and recycling under the Blue Box Regulation (O. Reg 391/21). These changes support the transition to a full producer-responsibility system, where those who create packaging play a larger role in managing it at end of life.

These updates begin affecting businesses on January 1, 2026, and municipalities want to ensure businesses understand how they may apply to your operations.

Why These Changes Are Happening

The provincial shift toward producer responsibility is intended to:

- Reduce the amount of waste going to landfill
- Improve recycling consistency and efficiency across Ontario
- Hold producers accountable for the packaging and paper products they supply into the Ontario market
- Remove recycling system costs from municipalities and taxpayers.

These changes represent a major restructuring of waste diversion, and they will impact businesses differently depending on their role in the supply chain.

What Changes on January 1, 2026

- For Small Businesses** Receiving Municipal Blue Bin Service. Beginning January 1, 2026, Region of Durham blue bin recycling collection for small businesses will end.
- The final day of municipal pick-up will be December 31, 2025.** After this date, small businesses must secure private recycling and waste-collection services to manage their recyclables. This means additional charges. For some this means going out of business. Many downtown businesses are hit hard with taxes, no parking for clients, prostitution, drugs and the homeless. All this compounded with the fact that Simcoe Street South may be shut down for up to 2 years. Oshawa downtown looks like it will finally empty out. Municipalities recognize this is a significant operational shift, especially for storefronts, small offices, and businesses located in mixed-use or multi-tenant buildings that have traditionally relied on municipal service.
- For Medium and Large Businesses — “Producers” Under the Regulation** Some businesses may have obligations under the Blue Box Regulation if they supply packaging or paper products to Ontario consumers. A business may be considered a Producer if it:

- Manufactures packaged products,
- Imports packaged products into Ontario,
- Places a brand or private label on packaging, or
- Sells packaged products directly to consumers in Ontario.

If your business meets one of these criteria, it may be required to:

- Register with the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority (RPRA)
- Report annually the type and amount of packaging supplied in Ontario
- Meet collection and recycling requirements, often by joining a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO)
- Contribute financially to the collection, processing, and recycling of Blue Box materials

Obligations vary based on business size, supply chain role, and the amount and type of packaging supplied. Not every medium or large business will qualify, but many will, and it is important to assess whether the regulation applies.

he Region of Durham has advised that effective December 31, 2025 by Circular Materials will no longer provide municipal curbside Blue Box collection for small businesses, including those in Designated Business Areas. Beginning January 1, 2026, small businesses must arrange for private recycling collection services for Blue Box materials. At least in Oshawa. Business owners are left to fend for themselves.

The local Chamber has no influence and minimal membership. Downtown municipal representatives are far from approachable and or hands on. This may be the year 2026 when Oshawa core empties out.

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