

Strategies to Reduce Contamination in the Recycling Stream

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A Story About the Way it Used to Be



Why is This Needed?

1. Contamination is high
2. Recycling markets are still low and having clean recyclable material is the only way to keep it marketable.
3. Incentivizing re-use and recycling helps achieve our City Goal 6.6E.
 1. “to promote, and facilitate the use of measures which reduce, reuse, and/or recycle resources, including food and other solid waste throughout the City”



Why is This Needed?

Contamination is Still Happening



CFL Light Bulbs
Pizza Box
Styrofoam



Wood Pallets
Plastic Film

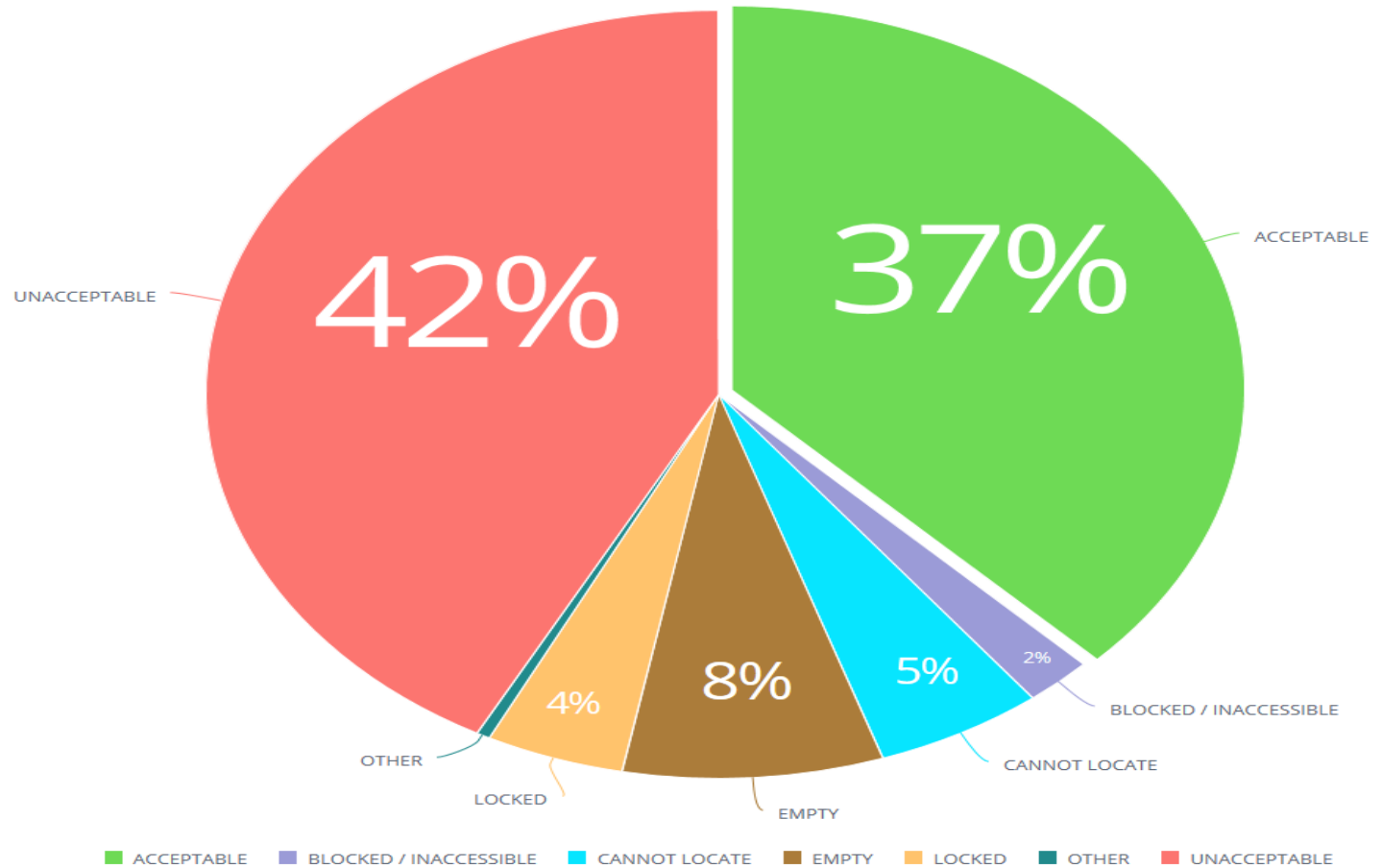
Why is This Needed?

<i>Month</i>	<i>Average Contamination %</i>
Jan	48.71%
Feb	0.00%
Mar	35.23%
Apr	46.67%
May	43.88%
June	43.15%
July	38.86%
August	30.67%
September	0.00%
October	34.65%
November	37.35%
Average	40.23%



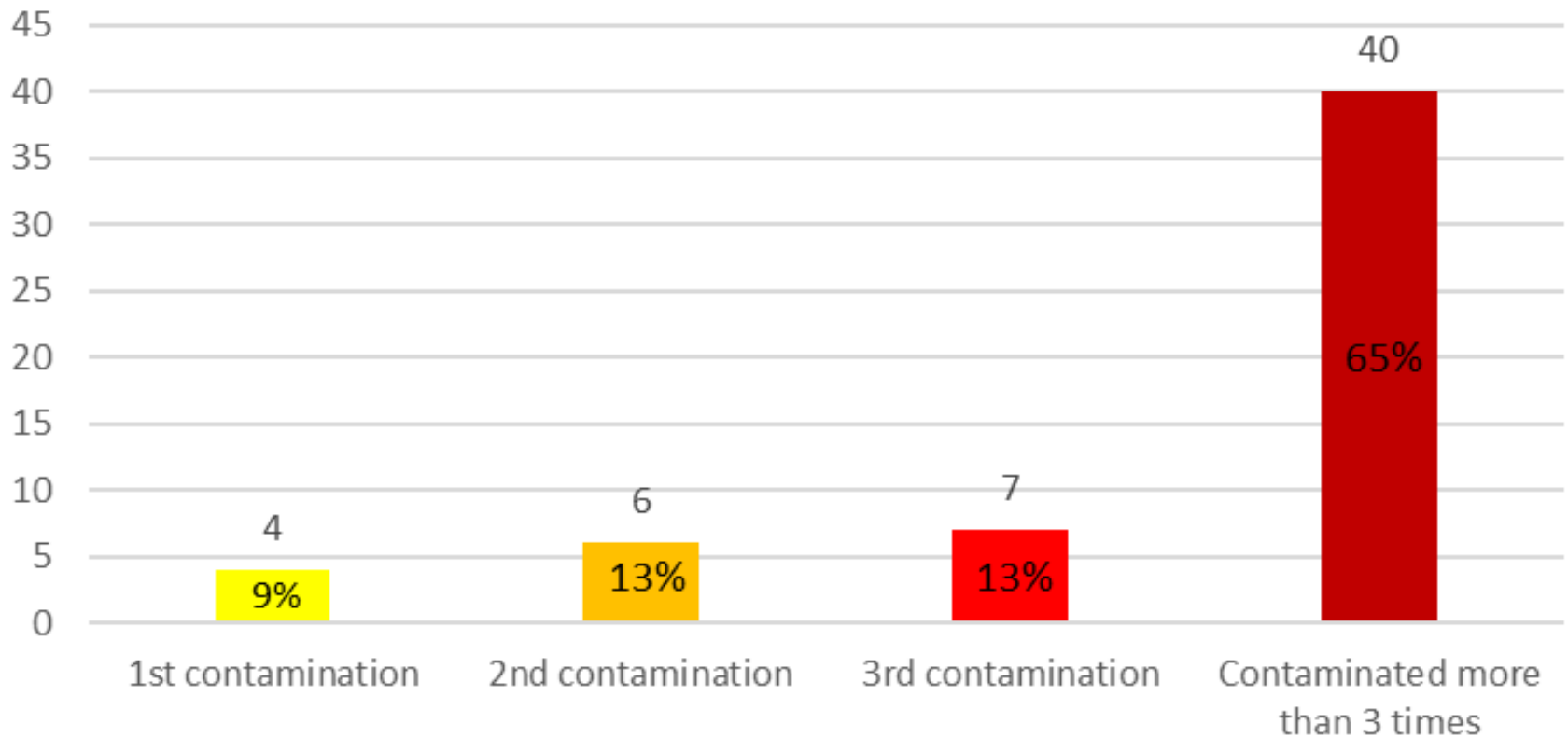
Overall Audit Results

Audit Conditions for Seatac



Overall Audit Results

November- Total Contaminated Customers



Requiring single family customers to sign a contract that allows the waste hauler examine their recycling and compost bins before acceptance.

Pros	Cons
Allows Recology to follow up with customers who contaminate their recycling	Could be seen as an invasion of privacy
Can significantly reduce contamination rates	Requires increased Recology staff time to follow up with contaminated customers
Could lead to contamination fines for single family homes	May not be legal



Requiring all food service businesses to use all compostable service ware for takeout items.

Pros	Cons
Decreases contamination in the recycling bins from “wishful” recyclers	Increases costs for food service businesses
Increases participation in composting program	Enforcement can be difficult
Decreases the amount of food waste going to the landfill	



Requiring plastic straws be available on request only.

Pros	Cons
Plastic straws are a common contaminant in the recycling stream	Difficult to enforce
Encourages the use of re-useable straws	Increases costs for some businesses (example, bubble tea shops)
May help reduce plastic pollution	

Re-usable Bag Ordinance

Pros	Cons
Plastic bags are the most common contaminant in the recycling stream	Paper bags can cost shoppers up to .10 for a paper bag
Plastic bags are the second most common littered item and can cause storm drainage issues	
There is a small secondary market for plastic film	



What direction(s) should we explore?

