

# Contamination Audit FAQ



## Why are my carts being audited?

Cart auditing is required by state law. Republic Services® and the City of Elk Grove partnered together to create an outreach and contamination auditing program that educates customers on proper sorting of trash and recyclables.

## What is considered contamination?

Contamination occurs when materials are placed in the wrong cart. Auditors look for significant contamination when evaluating the cart's contents.

## Why is contamination a problem?

Contamination may cause an entire truckload to be rejected for recycling or composting. Contaminated loads of recyclables or organic materials may be landfilled. Materials may still be able to be sorted to remove contaminated materials, but that takes more time and money to process.

## Who is conducting the contamination audits?

Republic Services employs and trains contamination auditors. The auditors will wear Republic Services-branded apparel and high-visibility safety gear.

## How often will my cart be audited?

Carts are audited throughout the year and could be audited multiple times per year.

## Are there penalties associated with the contamination audit?

Contamination penalty fees may be assessed and applied to customer accounts. As of July 1, 2024, the contamination penalty fee is \$8.32 and may increase each year. The contamination penalty fee will be assessed on your account after the third contamination notice tag in a 1-year period. A contamination penalty fee may be assessed on the recycling and organics cart types. Fees may be assessed multiple times throughout the year and will generally appear on the customer's bill within two billing cycles from the audit date.

## How will the customer be notified that they will receive penalties?

Customers will receive a Contamination Notice tag attached to their cart, and the fee will be assessed on their bill.

## How will auditors go through my carts?

Auditors will examine at least the top layer of the cart contents for contamination.

## What if my community shares carts (e.g., shared organics carts in an HOA community)?

Shared carts are also audited, and an educational tag may still be left on the cart. Republic Services will work with the HOA in cases of contamination in shared carts.

## Can I bag my food waste/organics?

You can use BPI-certified bags, paper bags or no bags to dispose of your food waste in the organics cart. Plastic bags are not allowed in the organics cart.

Questions?  
Call Republic Services  
at **916.635.2500**



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# Which cart do I put my waste in?



**Trash**



Polystyrene foam, packing peanuts, wrappers, plastic bags, broken ceramics/pottery, takeout containers, diapers and clothing



**Recycling**



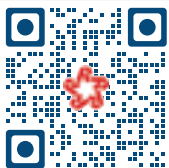
Flattened cardboard, glass bottles and jars, aluminum cans, junk mail and paper, plastic containers and bottles and paper bags



**Organics**



Meat, leftover food, bones, egg shells, fruit and vegetables, coffee grounds, BPI-certified bags, flowers, plant trimmings and leaves



Is your waste item not listed above?  
Go to **[ElkGroveCity.org/recycle](https://ElkGroveCity.org/recycle)**  
or scan the QR code to use the LookUp tool.



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