

FAQ Sheet - Clear Bag Program

What is a Clear Garbage Bag Program?

- A** A Clear Bag Garbage Program requires all household waste to be placed in transparent bags so contents are easily visible to collectors. Effective January 2, 2020, only clear bags are permitted; one small opaque privacy bag may be included inside. Opaque bags will no longer be collected after June 1, 2020.

Why did OSM make the change to a clear bag program?

- A** The Township of Otonabee-South Monaghan introduced a Clear Bag Garbage Program to improve waste management, protect the environment, and enhance safety. Clear bags help collectors spot and remove recyclables and hazardous items, keeping banned materials out of the landfill. This change extends the Peterborough County-City Waste Management Facility's lifespan, reduces emissions, and supports the Township's Climate Change Action Plan—promoting a safer, more sustainable community.

Does the use of clear bags (garbage) increase diversion from landfill?

- A** Yes, all participating municipalities have noted an increase in the amount of recyclable material diverted from the curbside garbage into curbside and depot recycling where programs are in place.

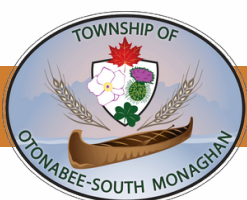
What about my privacy?

- A** We understand some items are private. To protect your privacy, you may place one small opaque bag (about the size of a grocery bag) inside each clear garbage bag or keep your clear bag inside a garbage can until collection.

The privacy bag is for items such as:

- Sanitary or incontinence products
- Medical or pharmaceutical waste
- Diapers
- Used tissues

Cat litter can go directly in the clear bag. Confidential papers should be shredded and placed in your Fibres Blue Box for recycling.



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Will someone be looking through my garbage each week?

- A** No. Collectors will not open or go through your garbage bags. They will simply visually check that each bag follows the Township's by-law — ensuring that recyclables and hazardous materials are not placed in the garbage. This quick inspection is done based only on what is visible through the clear bag.
- The goal is to encourage proper sorting and safe disposal, not to invade your privacy.

What if I have a medical condition and need an exemption?

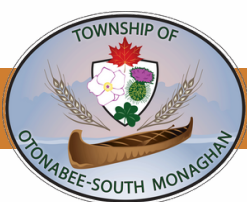
- A** The Township recognizes that some residents may need a medical exemption from the Clear Bag Waste Collection Policy.
- To apply, residents must:
- Complete a Waste Exemption Application Form
 - Provide medical documentation from a qualified professional
- Submit applications to the CAO/Clerk at the Township Office. All information is kept confidential, and exemptions must be renewed annually to remain valid.

What if there is recyclable materials in my garbage?

- A** The Township allows up to 10% recyclable or divertible materials in garbage bags. Garbage collectors will check to see if you tried to separate recyclables from trash. If there's too much recyclable stuff, your bag won't be picked up. Please sort recyclables in your Blue Box to reduce waste and protect the environment.

Do clear bags cost more and where can I buy them?

- A** Clear garbage bags are made from the same materials as black bags, just without added coloring. This means that the retail price is generally the same for comparable sizes and styles.
- Clear bags are widely available at local retailers and online.



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Do other communities use clear bags?

A

Yes. Many communities across Canada and the United States have successfully implemented clear garbage bag programs. Since 2015, over half a million Canadian households have participated in clear bag waste collection.

Within Peterborough County, several neighbouring municipalities already use clear bags, including:

- Trent Lakes
- Township of Asphodel-Norwood
- Township of Douro-Dummer
- Township of Cavan Monaghan

Several larger urban centres have also adopted clear bag programs, such as:

- City of Guelph
- City of Kawartha Lakes
- Town of Aurora
- Municipality of Bluewater
- Dufferin County
- Town of Markham

These communities have seen improvements in waste diversion, recycling participation, and environmental protection as a result of switching to clear garbage bags.

Can I use small opaque bags from around the house inside my clear bag?

A

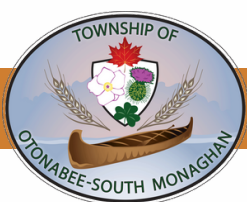
You may place one small grocery-sized opaque bag inside a clear bag to serve as a privacy bag.

For other waste from around your home, you should:

- Dump it directly into larger clear garbage bags, or
- Use clear kitchen catcher bags throughout your home (these are available at local retailers).

Important: Multiple opaque bags inside a single clear bag are not permitted.

This approach helps protect your privacy while ensuring that the Clear Bag Program works effectively for recycling, safety, and waste management.



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