"It was scary," said Nyle Ludolph, Father of the Blue Box. "It had never been done before." On September 26, 1983, the first curbside recycling collection program was launched in Kitchener.

35,000 homes were given a bright blue box. Residents were asked to sort out steel cans, glass jars and newspaper from their garbage, put them into the blue box, then put the box to the curb for collection. A blue box at the curb would signal the recycling truck to stop. Why blue? So the box could be seen in summer and winter.

Two recycling trucks were custom-designed locally. The trucks had dual steering wheels so one person could operate it from a stand-up or right-hand drive position. It was side loading with multiple compartments to keep the recyclable materials separated.

Just two weeks after the launch, almost 70 per cent of residents were using the new blue box, and the first ever Blue Box curbside collection program was born!

The Blue Box was credited as a driving force behind the 1980s green revolution. "Recycling is something each one of us can do to help the environment," said Nyle Ludolph in 1983. That statement is as true now as it was then.

Over the years, packaging has changed. Today, we also recycle plastic containers (with the 1-7 symbol), cartons, aerosol cans and plastic bags. Check our website to see if you know all that can (and should not) go in the blue box. www.regionofwaterloo.ca/waste.

"Kitchener has become the focus of attention from ecologists and government leaders from all over North America and beyond…. Kitchener’s ‘blue box’ program is unique on the continent.” Exchange Magazine, October 1984, Showing North America the Way.

Lillian Croal received box # 1

A blue box at the curb was born!

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The region of Waterloo is grateful to property owners who did their part this summer by following the Water Conservation By-law.

"By following the summer watering rules, people are conserving billions of litres of tap water. This helps us keep water in reserve to fight fires, supply emergencies and do maintenance on the system," said Steve Gombos, manager of water efficiency.

The Water Conservation Bylaw is in effect each year from May 31 to September 30. For more information about the bylaw, visit www.regionofwaterloo.ca/water.

Residents lined up early on May 5 in Kitchener to buy a Region-subsidized rain barrel. Homeowners use the 200-litre barrels to cut down on using tap water outside.

Thank you for conserving water this summer

What’s inside?

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Environmental information on protecting water and reducing waste
More waste than ever is being reused and recycled: 60%!

Over the last couple years, there have been many changes in waste collection in Waterloo Region. A big change involved new curbside services that started in March 2017. Green Bin (recycling cousin to the Blue Box) has more than doubled in collected tonnage. Blue Box collected materials have also increased.

We are looking at waste differently. We are making decisions in our homes to recycle more and send less to landfill.

60% of our waste is being diverted to reuse and recycle!

In 2017 (January to December)

- up 105%
- up 8%
- down 24%

How much time do we have left operating our Waterloo landfill?

The Region’s one and only landfill in Waterloo is estimated to have about 15 to 20 years of space left. The job of the landfill is to store garbage in holes called ‘cells’. As more space is needed for garbage, new cells are built.

A new cell, called SE-4B, will open this fall. Cells are designed to fit a specific space and SE-4B is over nine acres (or 37,000 square metres) in size. A cell is constructed by digging a hole, lining it with compacted clay, and installing drainage and gas collection systems. Once a cell is full, it is capped with clay (the cap joins to the clay liner) and garbage is completely sealed in. In the tomb-like construct, materials decay very, very slowly.

Once the cell is sealed, we draw out the landfill gas and use it to make electricity.

The 15 to 20 year estimate is based on the amount of garbage received. The more we reduce, reuse and donate, the more we recycle with the green bin and blue box, the less waste goes into the landfill and the longer it will last. Our team is already looking into options for managing waste for the future.

Check out more facts and updates about SE-4B on our website. www.regionofwaterloo.ca/waste.

Inspector’s Corner: our ears and eyes on the street

Our inspectors are out in the community every day helping residents. We asked them for the most common recycling issues:

- Wrong items in the blue box: Diapers, chip bags, shoes, umbrellas, furnace filters, dishware, and toys are not recyclable. These are garbage or reuse.
- Plastic bags: Bag all plastic bags and outer wrap into one grocery-sized bag, tie tightly shut, and put into the Paper and Plastic Bags blue box. Securing loose bags helps prevent the wind from blowing bags out of the box.
- Flatten boxboard (food boxes): Save space in your blue box: flatten cereal and tissue boxes and put them into one bigger box.
- Cardboard: Flatten, tie into bundles with twine, and place beside the blue box for collection. Bundle size maximum is 75 centimetres (30 inches) wide and long, and 20 centimetres (8 inches) thick so it can fit into the compartment on the side of the collection truck.
- Broken glass: This can be dangerous to collectors and pedestrians. Do not put broken glass into the blue box. Wrap broken glass in newspaper and put it into the garbage.

Larger mirrors and windows (less than 92 centimetres or 3 feet) can be collected with the Bulky Item collection when you tape an “X” across the surface with masking or duct tape and place next to your garbage. Glass objects larger than 92 cm or three feet cannot be collected.

Not sure how to dispose of an item? Ask the Waste Whiz!

Find this on our website, www.regionofwaterloo.ca/waste, or on our free My Waste app.
Winter is challenging for businesses. Keeping your property safe for staff and visitors is your number one concern. But salt can damage concrete, kill landscapes and destroy flooring and carpets.

There are steps you can take to prevent areas from icing over. Start with a complete winter maintenance plan. Fall is a good time to start. On a rainy day watch how water drains from the property. This will give you a better idea of where ice may form in the winter and how you might keep it safe.

Get started with our free winter maintenance plan worksheet: www.regionofwaterloo.ca/winterplan.

Winter is challenging

Winterplan.

Book a talk on salt Looking for a presentation for your club or group? Invite the Region to your meeting and learn why salt is a water quality concern and actions everyone can take to protect the Region's drinking water supply. To request a presentation email waterservices@regionofwaterloo.ca.

Use less salt to protect drinking water

Salt, including de-icers and ice melters, impacts water quality – and not in a good way. Over time, the salt we put on the ground can end up in our drinking water and cause it to taste salty.

The salt doesn’t go away after it melts the ice. Salt may soak into the ground to mix with groundwater or drain into a storm basin that empties into a stream, pond or river.

Stopping salting completely may not be realistic but there are actions we can take to use less. Learn more at www.regionofwaterloo.ca/winterplan.

What to use instead of salt

Non-salt options that melt ice are hard to find. Whether a product is salt, ice melter, de-icer or it says it is environmentally friendly; it most likely contains chloride and is salt.

Here are a few tips to help you cut down on salt:

• Clear the snow as soon as possible before it packs down
• Remove ice using an ice chopper
• Add traction where needed with sand, grit or non-clumping kitty litter
• Use small amounts of salt on icy areas only and give it time to work into a stream, pond or river.

For more snow and ice clearing tips, visit www.regionofwaterloo.ca/winterplan.

Close areas instead of salting

Businesses can reduce salt use by closing areas not needed during the winter months. Outdoor patios, extra parking spaces, redundant walkways and stairways are just a few examples of areas to close.

Closing areas can reduce winter maintenance costs, reduce slip and fall hazards and protect the property from salt damage.

The Region has free “closed” signs you can order. For ideas on areas to close and to order your signs: www.regionofwaterloo.ca/winterplan.

Everyone wants to know about water softeners

Region of Waterloo staff answer calls and emails from the public wanting to know about water softeners. This makes sense, considering many homes have a water softener.

The most common question is, “I want an efficient softener, which one should I buy?” The short answer is that you should check out the Waterloo Region/Guelph web site, www.watersoftenerfacts.ca. This non-commercial web site gives independent information about why people “soften” their water, how water softeners work, and what to look for when buying one. You can also find out how “hard” the water is in your neighbourhood.

Our water is “hard” because it comes mostly from deep wells, and this water has picked up minerals like calcium and magnesium from rock.

Hard water is healthy to drink, but it can cause scale buildup on appliances and plumbing. People use softeners to stop scale buildup on plumbing, and they like the slippery feeling of soft water when they bathe.

What about all the salt?

Water softeners take minerals like calcium and magnesium out of the water and put in salt. Avoid drinking softened water, don’t water plants with it, and don’t use it for your fish tank.

Wastewater treatment plants do not remove salt, so it ends up in local rivers. Water softeners in Waterloo Region and Guelph are responsible for flushing 25,000 tonnes of salt per year down the drain. These salts can have a negative impact on wildlife in rivers.

Local water softeners also use 1.9 billion litres of drinking water per year to backwash. Is there a technology that can conserve this water? Region of Waterloo and Guelph are working together to find new technologies that don’t use as much salt and water. However, the more promising technologies do not actually soften the water; they just stop the water from forming scale. To learn more about new technologies, go to www.watersoftenerfacts.ca/how-softeners-work/#alternate.
# How to sort your waste

Maximum weight 23 kilograms (50 pounds) for each bag, bin or can.

## Containers only
- Plastic package #1–7
- Cans and foil trays
- Glass jars and bottles
- Paper cartons and cups
- Paper
- Outer wrap
- Pet waste

## Paper and plastic bags
- Paper and junkmail
- Paper and box board
- Flexible film plastic
- Produce bags
- Coffee grinds, filters and tea bags
- Coffee grounds

## Green bin organics
- Meat, chicken, fish and bones
- Paper plates, paper towels and napkins
- Pasta, bread, rice and pizza
- Fruits and vegetables
- Pet waste

## Garbage
- Diapers, feminine hygiene products
- Straws, chip bags, snack wrappers
- Styrofoam
- Broken dishware, plastic cutlery
- Garden hose
- Hangers

### How to sort your waste

Empty, rinse and put loose in the blue box

Put all plastic bags in one bag and tie shut

Bundle and tie cardboard

Wrap pet waste in paper or a certified compostable bag, then put in the green bin.

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## Wondering about something else?

Check Waste Whiz on our website [www.regionofwaterloo.ca/waste](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/waste)

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### Waste happenings this fall

**Education Centre for school groups**

Booking now for the 2018/19 school year. For Grades 3, 5, 7, 9-11. Call 519-575-4400 for details on this free program.

### Yard Waste schedule

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Cambridge and Waterloo

Kitchener and Townships

### For loose leaf collection details call:

City of Cambridge 519-621-0740

City of Kitchener 519-741-2345

City of Waterloo 519-886-2310

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### How to dispose of cooking oil and grease:

**Do not put it down the sink!**

**Green Bin:**

Small amounts of liquid oil (no more than 1 cup).

**Garbage:**

Collect oils/fats/grease in a small re-sealable jar, seal it tightly.

**Recycle it:**

Drop-off cooking oil only at the bulk tank at Gate 2, Waterloo waste site, to be recycled into bio-diesel.

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**Come for a landfill tour!**

Saturday, October 20, 2018

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

1516 Glasgow Street, Kitchener

Free one-hour bus tours. Learn more about our recycling centre, landfill design, climb into the big landfill trucks and meet the falconer. Call 519-575-4400 to book.

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Waste Management contact info:

Waste Management
925 Erb Street West, Waterloo, Ontario N2J 3Z4
Tel: 519-575-4400 Fax: 519-741-4404
waste@regionofwaterloo.ca
www.regionofwaterloo.ca/waste

Water Services contact info:

Water Efficiency
150 Frederick Street, 7th Floor, Kitchener, Ontario N2G 4J3
Tel: 519-575-4400 Fax: 519-575-4452
watercycle@regionofwaterloo.ca
www.regionofwaterloo.ca/water

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