

88°

WILLIAMSON COUNTY

Video captures Round Rock Refuse failing to separate curbside garbage and recycling



88°

It comes after a man caught on camera the simultaneous collection of both trash and recycling in the same curbside pick-up.

In a viewer video obtained by KXAN, a dump truck labeled Round Rock Refuse, pulls up to a curb and picks up garbage. The truck then drives forward and also collects the recycling, delivering it into the same chute as the garbage.

Doug Rice, who lives in Round Rock, shot the video. He said his family is very careful to separate their trash from their recycling. He was frustrated to see his trash collection service fail to separate the two during curbside pick-up.

“It’s almost ritualistic around here to make sure we recycle. I was as shocked as anyone,” Rice said. “We have to pay every single month for a service that should be dependable.”

Mike Lavengco, the general manager of Round Rock Refuse, said the driver saw wood in the container, an item considered a “contaminant” and non-recyclable.

Lavengco said the driver thought that trashing the wood would both help the Rice family and eliminate the contaminant.

Doug Rice said he was not attempting to recycle wood. He also challenged the driver’s story, saying the bins were closed and there was no way to ascertain the contents of the containers without physically examining them.

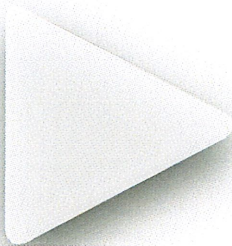
Lavengco said a supervisor went to investigate on Friday after seeing Rice’s video posted on social media. He said that there were no other instances of both garbage and recycling being improperly collected that day.



(KXAN/Alex Caprariello)

88°

Video appears to show dump truck improperly dispos of waste



“The driver thought he was giving excellent customer service and made a bad judgement call,” Lavengco said. “We have re-educated and disciplined the driver. We don’t take it lightly. We are dedicated and committed to recycling.”

Officials with the City of Round Rock also chimed in, saying this isn’t what they expect from their contractor of more than 20 years.

Our contract with Round Rock Refuse explicitly states that trash will be taken to the landfill and recycling will be delivered to a single-stream facility. Recycling is an essential service we provide and we believe that our third party contractors have a clear understanding of our expectations.

- CITY OF ROUND ROCK

88°

should be placed in a separate green container.

“Recycling at home is easy and convenient with the City’s single-stream curbside recycling program. Toss your [recyclables](#) in your green recycling container, no sorting necessary, then place at the curb on your [scheduled pick-up day](#),” the website says.

Shift in thinking

A shift in global recycling has caused a number of cities to rethink things. Last year, China, enacted an anti-pollution program. Essentially the country no longer buys recyclable materials unless it is almost a hundred percent free of contaminants.

China was long the world’s leading buyer of recyclables. That means it costs some programs more to recycle than previously.

Proper recycling

To help out your recycling program, clean out your recyclables. Remove food and liquids, and rinse them.

Detach items that are not alike. Remove metal lids from glass jars. Take off foil from yogurt tubs. Not all facilities can handle and properly separate such materials.

Double check with your specific program. When non-recyclable items are thrown in with reusables, they ultimately have to go to the landfill anyway. That results in another cost of transport fee for the service.

Tonight on KXAN News at 9 and 10 p.m., [Alex Caprariello](#) will visit with both Round Rock Refuse and the homeowner to determine how the trash collection service will proceed in customer collections.