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North Shore recycling collection weathers bumpy road

[Brent Richter](#) / North Shore News

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The North Shore's new recycling collection contractor services Upper Delbrook Thursday. Photo Mike Wakefield

It was a harried couple of weeks but North Shore Recycling says things are back on track after its new curbside collection contractor has taken over.

After winning a competitive bid process in 2014, Smithrite Disposal Limited took over collection from Waste Management Canada on July 2. But soon after, complaints came pouring in that the new drivers weren't showing up.

"Our neighbourhood is regularly visited by black bears and it was disconcerting to be told to leave recycling containing food jars, cans, etc. which are bear attractants, out for three days before collection," said Clements Avenue resident Scott Montague.

"It's especially ironic as we can be fined for putting out our garbage the night before."

North Shore Recycling was expecting some hiccups in the early days of the new contract as Smithrite learned the ropes, said Kathleen O'Malley, program manager.

Residents can now expect their bottles, cans and paper to be picked up on schedule.

"Smithrite is now all caught up with single-family and multi-family. They had two extra trucks out on the weekend with swampers — two guys on the back, so they're way faster," she said. "It was learning the new routes and the roads and the lanes. We're not a grid system here so there are lots of dead ends."

The contractor also had trouble getting access to some multi-family buildings, not having access to the right keys and fobs but that too has been addressed, O'Malley said.

"They've actually done quite well. It was a better transition than the last contract turnover," she said.

Beyond the missed collection days, there have also been complaints about drivers speeding or leaving a mess behind, which the North Shore-wide service has taken up with the contractor.

"I do know one driver that was speeding is no longer with Smithrite and we have been talking with them every day about speeding and safety and they relay that to their drivers every morning in their crew talks," O'Malley said.

The contract does have a mechanism to fine Smithrite for missed pick-ups but O'Malley said those fines won't be levied for the recent snafu.

"We couldn't do anything the first week. They were just getting to know the routes," she said.

Smithrite beat out two other firms for the five-year collection contract, O'Malley said, using a number of criteria.

While she could not say how much money taxpayers were saving by going with Smithrite, their bid was cheaper than the competitors, O'Malley said.

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