



## **Ontario begins new recycling initiative**

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By Katie Stewart

EMC News- A new program has been launched in Ontario to help make managing hazardous and special waste materials easier for residents.

Stewardship Ontario, the industry organization responsible for the Blue Box program and the Municipal Hazardous or Special Waste (MHSW) program, implemented the Orange Drop initiative on July 1 to help people dispose of 22 types of waste materials so that it can be collected and recycled or disposed of safely.

"Our mandate", said Stewardship Ontario CEO, Gemma Zecchini, in a press release "is to develop, implement and continuously improve recycling programs that are both environmentally and economically sustainable."

Orange Drop, which builds on the original MHSW program, adds thirteen new categories to the list of accepted materials that can be dropped off at numerous designated locations so that they can be recycled and reused.

According to Stewardship Ontario, the additional categories of material added will divert almost 27 million kg from landfills and waterways next year.

Items such as batteries, pharmaceuticals, syringes, aerosol containers, antifreeze, fire extinguishers and pesticides can now be recycled and disposed of in an environmentally friendly way.

Things like a can of paint will be recycled so that both the extra paint and the can be used again. Items that cannot be recycled will be disposed of.

"This program makes hazardous and special waste collection easy and safe for consumers," said Sean Magee, consumer recycling expert for Orange Drop who was in Ottawa at Bluesfest last week to promote the new program. "We have an extension of items and have extended the number of locations for people to drop their materials.

Mr. Magee explained that many homeowners often store extra materials like paint and aerosol cans in their basements that just sit there because people often don't know the protocol for how to dispose of them and don't want to pour them down the drain.

"People often just get fed up and take it to a landfill which is essentially hazardous and is using landfill space unnecessarily," he said, adding that Ontario doesn't have much available landfill space already and that this can lead to the pollution of water and soil.

"A lot of people are paying attention and we will be talking to close to 4 million people by the end of September," said Mr. Magee. "Everyone is part of (the) ownership of this program.

There are 92 municipal recycling depots collecting all materials along with 217 collection events that have been organized around the province in the upcoming months. For batteries and paint, hundreds of retailers have signed on to become drop off zones. In addition, 2,700 pharmacies will be accepting pharmaceuticals, sharps, and syringes. "Materials are collected and processed in a way that is environmentally and economically sustainable," said Mr. Magee.

The new eco fee that was introduced by the province also on July 1, was believed by organizers of the Orange Drop initiative to help ensure that items like the ones used in the Orange Drop program would be recycled as best as possible.

An announcement of the expected future of the eco fee was expected at EMC deadline.

With the launch of this new program, which includes a provincial tour and an informative and easy to use website, residents will be able to find out what can be collected, how they can be transported, and where they can be taken.

Stewardship Ontario believes that the program will catch on similarly like the blue box recycling initiative, which was implemented in 1981.

"Ontario is a beautiful province and we want it to stay that way by finding ways to preserve that," said Mr. Magee. "We are back on the map with creative and innovative solutions."

For more information, visit [www.makethedrop.ca](http://www.makethedrop.ca).

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