



Standardised Colours of Rubbish and Recycling Bins

Until October 2015, councils and businesses in New Zealand had used a variety of colours to indicate what items can be recycled in what bins. This created confusion when colours were used inconsistently and increased the likelihood of contamination. In October 2015 WasteMINZ, the Glass Packaging Forum and councils around New Zealand agreed on a standardised set of colours for mobile recycling and rubbish bins, crates and internal office bins. In 2016 the New Zealand Recycling Symbols (formerly known as the RONZ symbols) were updated to match the colours for mobile recycling and rubbish bins. Companies wishing to implement nationwide recycling schemes are strongly encouraged to use these colours both for their bins and also on their signage. This will ensure that the colours used are consistent with both public place recycling and household recycling.

What are the colours?



Table 1: Bin and lid colours including PMS code

Material Type	Body colour	PMS colour	Lid Colour	PMS colour
Rubbish	Dark green or black	PMS553C	Red	PMS032
Commingled Recycling	Dark green or black	PMS553C	Yellow	PMS109C
Food /Food and Compostable Packaging / Food and Garden combined	Dark green or black	PMS553C	Lime Green	PMS361
Garden only	Dark green	PMS553C	Dark Green	PMS553C
Commingled glass	Dark green or black	PMS553C	Blue	PMS299
Clear glass	Nature green	PMS364C	White	White
Brown glass	Nature green	PMS364C	Brown	PMS4695C
Green glass	Nature green	PMS364C	Nature green	PMS364C
Cans/ Metal	Dark green or black	PMS553C	Light grey	PMS455C
Plastics (including EPS)	Dark green or black	PMS553C	Orange	PMS021C
Paper / Cardboard	Dark green or black	PMS553C	Grey	PMS423
Construction and Demolition	Dark green or black	PMS553C	Brown	PMS4695C
Textiles	Dark green or black	PMS553C	Purple	PMS258C
Ewaste/Appliances	Dark green or black	PMS553C	White	White
Hazardous	Yellow	PMS109C	Red triangle with black font	Red = PMS1797C

Table 2: Colours for crates and internal office bins

Material Type	Crate or internal office bin colour	PMS colour
Rubbish	Red	PMS032
Commingled Recycling	Yellow	PMS109C
Food /Food and Compostable Packaging / Food and Garden combined	Lime Green	PMS361
Garden only	Dark Green	PMS553C
Commingled glass	Blue	PMS299
Clear glass	White	White
Brown glass	Brown	PMS4695C
Green glass	Nature green	PMS364C
Cans/ Metal	Light grey	PMS455C
Plastics (including EPS)	Orange	PMS021C
Paper / Cardboard	Grey	PMS423
Construction and Demolition	Brown	PMS4695C
Textiles	Purple	PMS258C
Ewaste/Appliances	White	White
Hazardous	Red triangle with black font	Red = PMS1797C

For back of house bins supplied by waste and recycling companies

Where possible mobile bin lids should use the relevant colours. Where it is not possible due to corporate branding requirements, signage of the relevant colour should be used to indicate what can be placed in the bin.

For skips

Signage on the skips should use the colours outlined above.

Purchasing Bins

A list providing details of New Zealand suppliers of indoor and outdoor recycling bins and accessories can be found on www.wasteminz.org.nz/sector-groups under the Recycling & Resource Recovery Sector Group. The document is focused on the needs of commercial operations but could be applicable to households and schools. Inclusion in this document does not confer any preference or recommendation, suppliers are listed alphabetically and the list is updated periodically.

Recycling Symbols

There are currently 52 different recycling symbols provided in Te Reo Māori and English with translations by He Kupenga Hao i Te Reo Māori with advice from Para Kore.

The symbols can be downloaded as portrait or landscape orientation as a zipped folder from www.wasteminz.org.nz/sector-groups under the Behaviour Change Sector Group. The PDFs are editable so you are able to replace a kupu (word) if required, in consultation with your local iwi, in recognition of dialectical differences.

The PMS colours for the recycling symbols are the same as those in Table 1 above.

Signage

Effective signage helps to minimise contamination in recycling bins and decreases missed capture (recyclables ending up in the rubbish bin). A guidance document “Zero Waste events guidance” has been created showing examples of effective signage for events and outlining considerations to consider when developing signage. This factsheet can be downloaded from www.wasteminz.org.nz/sector-groups under the Behaviour Change Sector Group.