

GARBAGE 101

Introduction to Garbage Collection and Disposal in Saint Paul

What is Garbage?

Solid Waste, or “Mixed Municipal Solid Waste,” is defined in Minnesota laws and includes garbage, appliances, furniture, recyclables, yard wastes, and organics.

Garbage includes most unwanted items thrown out from the household including items such as cat litter, diapers, empty toothpaste tubes, broken coffee makers, lamps, plastic bags and unrepairable clothing. It does not include Construction and Demolition debris, such as lumber and toilets, or Hazardous Waste.

Problem Materials are large items such as appliances, electronics (televisions and computers), furniture, mattresses and box springs, and carpeting. These items must be handled separately from household garbage either because they are or contain dangerous substances, or they are difficult to process at the disposal facility. For example, some problem materials such as appliances or electronics have hazardous components that must be removed before recycling or disposal. Other items such as lawn mowers or snow blowers must have gasoline or oil drained. Mattresses or hide-a-beds can damage collection and/or processing equipment.

Traditional Recyclables include glass and plastic bottles, news and household papers, corrugated cardboard, boxboard (shoe, cracker, and tissue boxes), metal cans, and some plastic containers.

Ramsey County requires the City to ensure organized recycling services are available for traditional recyclables to all residents at their place of residence, including single family homes, townhome dwellings and multi-unit and high-rise properties. The County has adopted the state recycling and solid waste diversion goal of 75% by 2030 and requires the City to work toward achieving that goal. The County provides a portion of the City’s recycling costs using State SCORE (Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment) funds when those funds are available.

Eureka Recycling is contracted by the City to collect and process recyclables from all residential dwellings in the City, including multi-unit properties.

Yard wastes include grass clippings, bushes, shrubs, and branches. Yard wastes are not allowed to be combined with garbage, and in the twin cities metro area must not be disposed of in plastic bags (Minnesota Statutes 115A.931). Yard wastes can be composted on site, collected separately by a hauler, or taken to a yard waste drop-off facility.

Organics includes food scraps, paper towels, napkins and tissues, and compostable tableware. There is not currently a residential collection program for organics. Most organics are being disposed of in the garbage cart. Organics can be taken to one of the Ramsey or Washington County organics drop-off locations, or fruit & vegetable food scraps can be composted at home for garden use. The Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy Center (REC) is developing a system to collect organics from each household using a Durable Compostable Bag. The program is expected to launch in early 2023.

Household Hazardous Wastes include used oil and automotive fluids, paints, household cleaners, batteries, lawn and garden products, propane tanks, electric cords and string lights, and items such as fluorescent light bulbs and thermometers. These wastes may not be placed in a garbage or recycling cart. Ramsey County has a free, year-round collection site for these items.

Where does our garbage go?

All garbage collected in Ramsey County must be taken to the Recycling & Energy Center (REC) in Newport. This facility is jointly owned by Ramsey and Washington Counties. Currently, garbage is ground into Refused Derived Fuel (RDF), transported to an Xcel power plant, and burned to generate electricity. The REC is being modified and expanded to process garbage on-site either by anaerobic digestion or gasification. These processes recover the energy in garbage for use as fuel. The facility is also being modified to remove traditional recyclables from garbage and to sort out household organics (food scraps and non-compostable paper) in Durable Compostable Bags (DCBs) to be sent to a composting facility. A virtual tour of the REC can be found at <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=qve1yPnYh7o>

The Minnesota State Legislature determined that counties with publicly owned facilities may require (designate) all garbage in their county to be taken to a specific facility. This ensures the counties can recover the capital and operating costs of disposal and supports the State Waste Management Hierarchy which encourages waste reduction, recycling, composting, and processing of garbage over landfilling.

What is Coordinated (Organized) Collection?

"Coordinated collection" is a system for collecting solid waste in which a specified hauler, or a member of an organization of haulers, is authorized by a city to collect solid wastes from a defined geographic service area. Reasons to coordinate collection include reducing the number of trucks in an area on a given day, standardizing services and prices, reducing overall system costs, and ensuring proper disposal of wastes. There are several forms of coordinated collection.

Waste Reduction

The City of Saint Paul, through Resolution 14-519, established goals of diverting waste by 50% by 2020 and 80% by 2030. The City's Climate Resilience Plan notes five priority strategies to reduce solid wastes: (<https://www.stpaul.gov/sites/default/files/Media%20Root/Mayor%27s%20Office/Saint%20Paul%20Climate%20Action%20%26%20Resilience%20Plan.pdf>)

- Follow the State's waste hierarchy with particular attention to the prevention of waste generation
- Ensure that environmental justice is included in decision-making and program implementation
- Continue education and outreach in partnership with Ramsey County to increase recycling rates in historically low participation neighborhoods
- Demonstrate leadership at the City level in operations and at events
- Coordinate with Ramsey County to properly manage and dispose of debris that results from emergency situations

Weight/Volume based garbage pricing

Minnesota Statutes 115A.93 and 115A.9301 require volume or weight-based pricing for solid waste services. The charges must increase as the volume or weight of the waste collected on site from each generator's residence increases. In Saint Paul there are four levels of solid waste service:

- Small Cart, Every Other Week (EOW) (35-gallon cart)
- Small Cart Every Week (35-gallon cart)
- Medium Cart, Every Week (65-gallon cart)
- Large Cart, Every Week. (95-gallon cart).

The price of service does not increase on a strictly volumetric basis due to costs of vehicles and personnel, billing, and similar costs that are consistent across all customers.

What are the components of the pricing by Saint Paul's garbage haulers?

The price of garbage disposal in Saint Paul is spelled out in the City's Residential Solid Waste, Yard Waste and Bulky Waste Collection Agreement with the St. Paul Haulers, LLC ("the Consortium"). The price can be changed once per year, with any change taking effect on January 1 of the following year. The Agreement includes specific components of pricing shown in the chart below.

Proposed 2022 Rates												
Cart Size	Collection		Non Collection			Proposed 2022 Quarterly Subtotal	Taxes		Annual Change			
	Non-Fuel	Fuel	Billing	Bulkies	Disposal		CEC	MSWT	2022 Quarterly Rates	2021 Quarterly Rate	\$ Diff.	% Diff.
Sm EOW	\$8.43	\$0.94	\$1.99	\$1.32	\$1.67	\$43.05	\$12.05	\$4.20	\$59.30	\$59.23	\$0.07	0.1%
Sm W	\$9.30	\$1.12	\$1.99	\$1.32	\$3.16	\$50.68	\$14.19	\$4.94	\$69.81	\$69.04	\$0.77	1.1%
Medium	\$11.44	\$1.23	\$1.99	\$1.99	\$6.72	\$70.10	\$19.63	\$6.83	\$96.56	\$94.87	\$1.68	1.8%
Large	\$11.44	\$1.23	\$1.99	\$1.99	\$9.20	\$77.54	\$21.71	\$7.56	\$106.81	\$101.23	\$5.58	5.5%

• Non-fuel

Non-fuel costs include garbage hauler personnel, trucks, and operations. A garbage truck, including the lifting mechanism, may cost upwards of costs almost \$200,000. Drivers must have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL), a commitment to safety and often a background check. CDL drivers are in high demand and are often paid more than \$25 per hour. Routing, space for truck and cart maintenance and storage and personnel check-in and lockers are included in operations costs.

Non-fuel costs may increase with the Consumer Price Index (CPI), up to three percent (3%) per year.

• Fuel

Fuel costs are a separate portion of the collection costs in the City's garbage contract. The fuel cost remains constant unless the average price of fuel rises above \$3.50 per gallon.

• Billing

Customer service functions and billing comprise the "Billing" portion of the contract costs. Billing costs may also rise with the CPI, up to 3% per year.

• Bulkies

All customers receive collection of several bulky items with their garbage service at no additional cost. Small EOW customers and Small Weekly customers have collection of two (2) bulky items per year at no additional

cost; 64-gallon and 96-gallon customers have collection of three (3) bulky items per year at no additional costs. Bulky item collections costs may increase yearly with the CPI.

- **Disposal Costs**

Disposal costs are a function of the total tons of garbage delivered to the REC and the tipping fee that is charge by the REC for disposal. The 2021 tipping fee is \$84 per ton, the 2022 tipping fee will be \$87 per ton. The 2023 tipping fee will be \$99 per ton.

- **CEC**

The CEC is the County Environmental Charge. This charge applies to trash collection and disposal service, fuel surcharges, account start-up or cancellation fees and any other administrative fees. The Ramsey County CEC rate is 28% for residential customers and 53% for non-residential customers. The Haulers remit this tax directly to the County.

- **MSWT**

The MSWT is the Minnesota Solid Waste Tax. This is a sales tax on solid waste management services provided by a waste hauler to a customer. Solid waste management services for the State tax are defined as collection, transportation, processing, and disposal services. The MSWT rates are 9.75% on solid waste services to residential customers, and 17% on services to commercial and industrial customers. The Haulers remit this tax directly to the State.

What is the Administrative Fee for Garbage and Recycling charged on the property taxes?

The residential garbage and recycling programs each have an annual administrative fee that is paid by property owners and collected through the Ramsey County property taxes. These fees cover the cost of carts, program administration, public space recycling, clean-up and anti-litter programs, education, and outreach.

The 2022 annual garbage fee is \$28.08 per unit for 1-4-unit properties. In addition to the purposes above, this fee also funds the payment of hauler late fees and bad debt as specified in the Agreement with the Consortium.

2022 annual recycling fee is \$60.24 per unit for 1-3-unit properties and \$38.16 per unit for properties with 4 or more units. In addition to the purposes above, the recycling fee also pays the cost of recyclables collection and processing.

Appendix A Relevant Sections of State Statutes

Minnesota Statutes Chapter 115A is known as the "Waste Management Act." Most of the laws governing solid waste management are contained in this Chapter. Some of the sections specifically pertaining to city solid waste programs are excerpted below.

115A.03 DEFINITIONS. (partial list)

Subd. 5. Collection. "Collection" means the aggregation of waste from the place at which it is generated and includes all activities up to the time the waste is delivered to a waste facility.

Subd. 21. Mixed municipal solid waste. (a) "Mixed municipal solid waste" means garbage, refuse, and other solid waste from residential, commercial, industrial, and community activities that the generator of the waste aggregates for collection, except as provided in paragraph (b).

(b) Mixed municipal solid waste does not include auto hulks, street sweepings, ash, construction debris, mining waste, sludges, tree and agricultural wastes, tires, lead acid batteries, motor and vehicle fluids and filters, and other materials collected, processed, and disposed of as separate waste streams.

Subd. 24a. "Problem material" means a material that, when it is processed or disposed of with mixed municipal solid waste, contributes to one or more of the following results:

- (1) the release of a hazardous substance, or pollutant or contaminant, as defined in section [115B.02, subdivisions 8, 13, and 15](#);
- (2) pollution of water as defined in section [115.01, subdivision 13](#);
- (3) air pollution as defined in section [116.06, subdivision 4](#); or
- (4) a significant threat to the safe or efficient operation of a solid waste facility

Subd. 25. Processing. "Processing" means the treatment of waste after collection and before disposal. Processing includes but is not limited to reduction, storage, separation, exchange, resource recovery, physical, chemical, or biological modification, and transfer from one waste facility to another.

Subd. 36a. Waste management method chosen by a county. "Waste management method chosen by a county" means:

- (1) a waste management method that is mandated for waste generated in the county by section 115A.415, 473.848, 473.849, or other state law, or by county ordinance based on the county solid waste management plan developed, adopted, and approved under section 115A.46 or 458D.05 or the county solid waste management master plan developed, adopted, and approved under section 473.803;

Subd. 36b. Waste reduction or source reduction. "Waste reduction" or "source reduction" means an activity that prevents generation of waste or the inclusion of toxic materials in waste, including:

- (1) reusing a product in its original form;
- (2) increasing the life span of a product;
- (3) reducing material or the toxicity of material used in production or packaging; or
- (4) changing procurement, consumption, or waste generation habits to result in smaller quantities or lower toxicity of waste generated.

Subd. 38. Yard waste. "Yard waste" means garden wastes, leaves, lawn cuttings, weeds, shrub and tree waste, and prunings.

115A.02 LEGISLATIVE DECLARATION OF POLICY; PURPOSES.

(a) It is the goal of this chapter to protect the state's land, air, water, and other natural resources and the public health by improving waste management in the state to serve the following purposes:

- (1) reduction in the amount and toxicity of waste generated;
- (2) separation and recovery of materials and energy from waste;
- (3) reduction in indiscriminate dependence on disposal of waste;
- (4) coordination of solid waste management among political subdivisions; and
- (5) orderly and deliberate development and financial security of waste facilities including disposal facilities.

(b) The waste management goal of the state is to foster an integrated waste management system in a manner appropriate to the characteristics of the waste stream and thereby protect the state's land, air, water, and other natural resources and the public health. The following waste management practices are in order of preference:

- (1) waste reduction and reuse;
- (2) waste recycling;
- (3) composting of source-separated compostable materials, including but not limited to, yard waste and food waste;
- (4) resource recovery through mixed municipal solid waste composting or incineration;
- (5) land disposal which produces no measurable methane gas or which involves the retrieval of methane gas as a fuel for the production of energy to be used on site or for sale; and
- (6) land disposal which produces measurable methane and which does not involve the retrieval of methane gas as a fuel for the production of energy to be used on site or for sale.

115A.80 DESIGNATING SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES; LEGISLATIVE FINDING.

In order to further the state policies and purposes expressed in section 115A.02, and to advance the public purposes served by effective solid waste management, the legislature finds and declares that it may be necessary pursuant to sections 115A.80 to 115A.89 to authorize a qualifying solid waste management district or county to designate a solid waste processing or disposal facility.

115A.81 Subd. 2. Designation. "Designation" means a requirement by a waste management district or county that all or any portion of the solid waste that is generated within its boundaries or any service area thereof be delivered to a processing or disposal facility identified by the district or county.

115A.83 WASTES SUBJECT TO DESIGNATION

Designation applies to the following wastes:

- (1) mixed municipal solid waste; and
- (2) other solid waste that prior to final processing or disposal:
 - (i) is not managed as a separate waste stream; or

(ii) is managed as a separate waste stream using a waste management practice that is ranked lower on the list of waste management practices in section 115A.02, paragraph (b), than the primary waste management practice that would be used on the waste at the designated facility

115A.552 OPPORTUNITY TO RECYCLE.

Subdivision 1. County requirement.

Counties shall ensure that residents, including residents of single and multifamily dwellings, have an opportunity to recycle. At least one recycling center shall be available in each county. Opportunity to recycle means availability of recycling and curbside pickup or collection centers for recyclable materials at sites that are convenient for persons to use. Counties shall also provide for the recycling of problem materials and major appliances. Counties shall assess the operation of existing and proposed recycling centers and shall give due consideration to those centers in ensuring the opportunity to recycle. To the extent practicable, the costs incurred by a county for collection, storage, transportation, and recycling of major appliances must be collected from persons who discard the major appliances.

Subd. 2. Recycling opportunities.

An opportunity to recycle must include:

- (1) a local recycling center in the county and sites for collecting recyclable materials that are located in areas convenient for persons to use them;
- (2) curbside pickup, centralized drop-off, or a local recycling center for at least four broad types of recyclable materials in cities with a population of 5,000 or more persons; and
- (3) monthly pickup of at least four broad types of recyclable materials in cities of the first and second class and cities with 5,000 or more population in the metropolitan area.

Subd. 4. Nonresidential recycling.

Each county shall encourage building owners and managers, business owners and managers, and collectors of commercial mixed municipal solid waste to provide appropriate recycling services and opportunities to generators of commercial, industrial, and institutional solid waste in the county.

115A.9301 SOLID WASTE COLLECTION; VOLUME- OR WEIGHT-BASED PRICING.

Subdivision 1. Requirement.

A local government unit that collects charges for solid waste collection directly from waste generators shall implement charges that increase as the volume or weight of the waste collected on site from each generator's residence or place of business increases.

Subd. 2. Volume requirement.

If a local government unit implements a pricing system based on volume instead of weight under subdivision 1, it shall determine a base unit size for an average small quantity household generator and establish a multiple unit pricing system that ensures that amounts of waste generated in excess of the base unit amount are priced higher than the base unit price.

Subd. 3. Alternative.

A local government unit may satisfy the requirements of this section by establishing at least three price categories for collection of household mixed municipal solid waste to include, for households that generate small volumes of waste, a waste collection unit that is smaller than and priced lower than for other generators if the local government unit:

- (1) operates or contracts for the operation of a residential recycling program that collects more categories of recyclable materials than required in section [115A.552](#);

- (2) has a residential participation rate in its recycling programs of at least 70 percent or in excess of the participation rate for the county in which it is located, whichever is greater;
- (3) is located in a county that has exceeded the recycling goals in section [115A.551](#); and
- (4) generates, by all waste generators in the city, an amount of mixed municipal solid waste that is managed by incineration, production of refuse-derived fuel, mixed municipal solid waste composting, or disposal that is no greater, in proportion to the total amount of waste managed as listed above by all waste generators in the county in which the city is located, than it was for calendar year 1993.