

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

# Every Other Week Residential Recycling Collection

City of Spokane  
Rev. March 29, 2021

### How is the residential curbside recycling program changing?

The City of Spokane's Solid Waste Collections Department is changing the **recycling collection schedule** for residential customers to every other week starting the week of May 3, 2021. The new schedule still will allow for robust recycling for residents.

### Will my pickup day for recycling change?

No. Recycling collection will continue the same day of the week as your current service but will be done every other week instead.

### When is the schedule change happening?

The service change begins the **first week of May**.

### What prompted this change?

The Mayor and City Council approved this change in the fall of 2020 to help manage escalating costs of the recycling program **without charging customers more**. Between 2013, when the City launched single-stream recycling, and 2020, the cost to manage recyclables increased from **\$14,000 to \$1.4 million**. (That's 100 times more.)

Those increased costs are the result of:

- More garbage in the recycling carts, causing the costs to process material to rise.
- And a dramatic drop in the prices received for selling recyclables. Those commodity prices were greatly influenced by China's decision to no longer purchase most recyclables from the U.S. because of high contamination rates.

### Will I need a bigger blue cart?

You might, but you should wait to see before ordering one. Studies show that most residents only put their 68-gallon carts out every other week or put them out when they are less than full. Your current cart might work just fine. If you need a larger one, you can call 3-1-1, and a 96-gallon cart will be delivered. Bigger carts will be ready for delivery in June.

### Will I have to pay more for a larger cart?

No, your garbage bill will not change if you elect for a larger cart. The reason the city is going to every other week collection is so that you won't have to pay more to recycle.

### Can I pay for an extra dump on a non-collection week? If so, what is the cost?

Extra pick ups on a non-collection week will not be available at this time. You can always take extra recyclables to the free drop off area at the Waste to Energy facility. It is open seven days a week, excluding major holidays, from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### **When will larger carts be available?**

96-gallon carts will be available in June. You can order carts from 3-1-1. A larger cart will be delivered to your address, and the old 64-gallon recycling cart will be picked up. We ask residents to give the new schedule a try before asking for a larger cart. You might not need one. Drivers will pick up extra recycling left at the curb until larger carts are delivered. Extra pick ups will be not be available on a non-collection week.

### **What can I do with recyclables if they don't fit in my bigger cart?**

If you are putting in only what belongs, and it is still full before your collection day, here are a few options:

- Make sure to flatten all boxes to give you room. Larger boxes should be cut down to 2 foot by 2 foot.
- You can subscribe for a second recycling cart. The cost would be \$16.88 a month (2021 rate). It would also be picked up every other week on your regular service day.
- You can take recyclables to the Waste to Energy facility's free drop off area.

### **How will I find out which week my carts will be emptied?**

The city is updating its GIS map to include every other week collection information by address. You will receive information and a calendar of your scheduled pick up weeks before the change to remind you when to put out your cart. Information may be mailed to you, emailed to you, left on your cart and included in social media posts and can be found at [myspokane.org](http://myspokane.org).

### **I live in an apartment complex. Does our pickup schedule change?**

It's possible. If your complex uses blue wheeled carts to collect recyclables, pick up will change to every other week. If, on the other hand, your complex uses larger dumpsters for recycling, your collection schedule will remain the same.

### **I am a resident already paying for an extra cart. Will my service day change too? Will I pay the same?**

Yes, you will also go to every other week pickup. You can request the larger, 96-gallon carts and will not pay any more than you are now.

### **Is this service change only impacting City of Spokane residents?**

Yes. Curbside recycling customers for the rest of Spokane County already have every other week pick up; the every other week schedule has been active for years in these areas.

### **I have a Clean Green yard and food waste cart. Will that be picked up every other week too?**

No. Green yard and food waste carts will continue to be picked up every week.

### **Is the collection schedule for commercial locations that pay for recycling going to change?**

It's possible. There is no change to recycling services or rates for commercial accounts that use dumpsters. Commercial sites that use recycling carts will move to every other week service.

### **Are non-commercial locations that pay for collection going to have a rate adjustment (Extra blue cart, more recycling carts than are complimentary based on dumpster size, etc.)?**

There are a handful of these accounts that this change will impact. Those residents will be contacted individually with what those changes will mean to their service.

### **Will what I put in my blue cart change?**

No, the list of acceptable items remains the same.

Always recycle these:

- Plastic bottles, jugs and tubs
- Aluminum and steel cans
- Newspaper, cereal boxes, magazines, mail and flattened cardboard boxes
- Glass bottles and jars

Always leave out:

- Plastic bags and wrap
- Milk cartons and juice boxes
- Shredded or plastic-coated paper or bags
- Foam packing
- Food or liquid
- Hoses, chains, cords or rope

### **How to Recycle Right**

Recycling right requires a few easy steps:

- Only put in items that are empty, clean and dry.
- Make sure items are loose in the cart.
- Don't guess about what goes in the cart. If it isn't on the list, don't put it in the cart.
- Know Before you Throw!

### **How do I make room in my cart so I can make it last two weeks?**

There are ways to maximize the space in your blue cart:

- Make sure you are only putting in what is accepted. Save room by only including what belongs.
- Collapse cardboard boxes and crush aluminum cans.