

Frequently Asked Questions

Citywide Curbside Recycling Collection – Coming Soon!

Beginning in January 2010, all Olathe residential solid waste customers will have access to recycling at the curb. The City will provide residents with a 65-gallon blue recycling cart, and every other week collection. The cost of curbside recycling will be included in the base rate for solid waste service, along with weekly trash and yard waste collection and access to the City's year-round household hazardous waste facility.

Why is the City making this change?

Curbside recycling is being offered citywide to improve the efficiency of recycling collection and to increase the amount of waste diverted from the landfill.

Will I be required to recycle?

No, residents will not be required to recycle. We hope that residents will choose to recycle as a way to protect our environment and avoid landfill disposal costs. An added benefit is that by recycling, it will be easier to fit all of your trash in your 95-gallon gray trash cart, which will help the City realize the benefits of automated trash collection.

Is this new recycling program funded by tax dollars?

No, the City's solid waste services are self-funded by the programs and services we offer. Curbside recycling is being offered to all Olathe residents as part of the City's base rate for solid waste service. This charge appears as "sanitation" on your monthly City of Olathe Utility Bill.

Will there be an increase in cost for me as a resident?

It depends. If you were subscribing to the curbside recycling program, you were paying \$19.25 per month for solid waste service, so you will see a cost savings. Now, everyone will pay the same base rate, which is being adjusted to \$18.50 to include weekly trash collection, weekly yard waste collection, every other week recycling collection, and access to the City's year-round household hazardous waste program.

Why should I have to pay for recycling if I'm not going to recycle?

There is a long-term rate stabilizing benefit to recycling because landfill costs are increasing. The current cost to landfill trash is approximately \$30 per ton. The more we as a community recycle, the less we have to pay to dispose of this material in the landfill – and that benefits all residents.

When will citywide curbside recycling start?

The program will start January 4, 2010. The City will begin distributing recycling SmartCarts (blue, 65-gallon wheeled carts) to residents in mid-November.

Why carts instead of bins?

The City has transitioned to SmartCarts because they allow for automated collection, which is more efficient and reduces worker injuries. It's also an easier way for residents to recycle because the carts can be rolled to the curb instead of carried.

When will my recycling be collected?

Recycling will be collected every other week on your regular trash day. Your day of the week will not change.

Is my trash and yard waste collection service changing too?

These services will not change. Trash and yard waste will continue to be collected weekly.

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Why every other week collection?

Fewer trips of collection trucks down city roads has cost-saving and environmental benefits. It reduces gasoline consumption and wear and tear on roads. And unlike garbage, recyclables can be safely stored for several weeks without causing odor problems or health hazards.

Will I be charged for the cart?

No, residents will not be billed for the carts. One will be provided to each single family residence, by the City of Olathe Solid Waste Division. The carts will be property of the City of Olathe, but residents are responsible for proper care and safe storage of the carts.

What size are the carts?

The standard size cart that the City will provide to residents is a 65-gallon container, which is roughly two-thirds the size of the gray trash SmartCarts.

I don't think I have enough recyclables to fill up a 65-gal cart – is there an option to get a smaller cart?

Residents are encouraged to try the new 65-gallon cart when the program begins, but smaller carts are available. Studies have shown that most residents will need the larger size because:

- Recycling is easier so you end up recycling more.
- You will need storage for two weeks of recyclables since collection is every other week.
- Cardboard, even when flattened, is bulky and takes up a lot of room in the carts.
- In order to realize the benefits of automation, all recyclables have to fit in the cart.

How will I know which week to put out my recycling?

You will receive a postcard notifying you whether you are a “Red Week” or a “Blue Week”. An information packet, including a collection calendar, will be provided at the time your cart is delivered. At that time, you will also be able to find this information on-line at www.olatheks.org/oms/recycling or by calling 913-971-9311.

What items can I recycle?

You can recycle mixed paper, plastics #1-#7 (except Styrofoam), aluminum cans, tin (steel) food cans, cardboard, and chipboard (cereal boxes, paper towel cores). More specific information on acceptable/unacceptable materials is available on the City's website at www.olatheks.org/oms/recycling.

Do I need to separate different types of recyclables?

You do not need to separate. Recyclables may be commingled in your recycling cart.

What if my cart is lost or stolen?

Recycling carts are the property of the City of Olathe – if you lose a cart, you can replace it through the City of Olathe for a cost of \$65. Please notify the City of Olathe Police Department if you suspect your cart has been stolen. Call the non-emergency number at 913-971-7455.

What can I do with my 18-gal blue bin?

You can keep it and use it to store your glass bottles & jars until you take them to a drop-off recycling center, or load it up with items to take to the City's Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program. You could donate it to a school to use for their recycling program. Or, just place it in your new recycling SmartCart to be recycled.

Why doesn't the City recycle glass anymore?

The City continues to look for ways to collect glass with curbside recycling; however, at this time it is not possible. On a trial basis, the City has placed a container for glass bottles & jars at the Downtown Drop-off, located at Kansas Ave. & Poplar St. Please rinse and sort glass by color – clear, blue, green or brown. We are unable to accept any other types of glass (e.g., window glass, glass dishes).