

Questions and Answers – Black Cart Garbage Collection

About the Black Cart – General

- What is Black Cart garbage collection?
 - Black Cart garbage collection uses trucks equipped with automated mechanical arms to collect garbage from black, wheeled carts. Black Cart garbage collection is safer for both customers and garbage collectors because it reduces the risk of injury from heavy bags or sharp objects.
- Why are we switching to Black Cart garbage collection?
 - The black carts will improve garbage collection service for Calgarians by making it:
 - **Safer** for residents and collectors by eliminating the need for heavy lifting and potential exposure to sharp objects;
 - **Cleaner** by reducing litter in lanes and streets; and
 - **More efficient** by using single-operator trucks.
- Will I get a black cart? / Why won't I get a black cart?
 - Black Cart garbage collection will be available to most households that currently receive hand garbage collection from The City.
 - If you have a blue cart, you will most likely get a black cart.
 - If you don't have a blue cart but you do get hand garbage collection, Waste and Recycling Services will be looking into your specific situation before Black Cart collection begins.
 - *If someone asks whether or not they get manual collection, check MyProperty. If there is a collection day scheduled, they get manual collection.*
- I live in a condo. Will my building get service? How many carts will we get?
 - If you have a blue cart, you will most likely get a black cart.
 - If you don't have a blue cart but you do get hand garbage collection, Waste and Recycling Services will be looking into your specific situation before Black Cart collection begins.

Questions about collection

- When will I get my cart?
 - The service roll-out is planned to start in the fall of 2010 and continue into 2011.
- When should customers start using their black carts?
 - Once black cart roll out begins, The City will be communicating with citizens about how and when to use their carts.
 - Customers should start using their carts as soon as they arrive, and put them out on their next collection day.
- Will there be a change to my garbage collection day or location?
 - Garbage will continue to be collected on the same day of the week and from the same location.
- What's my garbage day?
 - *Available from MyProperty.*
- What can I put in it?
 - You can use it to throw out the same household garbage that you throw out now. Make sure this does not include hazardous waste or restricted items.
 - You can find out how to properly dispose of hazardous and restricted items at www.calgary.ca/waste
 - You should continue to use your blue cart for recyclables, and you can take extra recycling to community depots if needed.
 - As well, Waste & Recycling Services offers diversion programs like collection of leaves and pumpkins in the fall, and Christmas trees in January.
- What are the hazardous waste / restricted items / garbage you don't collect?
 - Please refer to the City website at [Calgary.ca/waste](http://www.calgary.ca/waste) (Direct link: http://www.calgary.ca/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_780_237_0_43/http%3B/content.calgary.ca/CCA/City+Hall/Business+Units/Waste+and+Recycling+Services/Garbage+Collection+Information/Residential+Services/Garbage+We+Dont+Collect+.htm)
- How much garbage can fit into a black cart?
 - Black carts are the same size and shape as the blue carts (240L).
 - They can hold up to four standard-sized garbage bags (66cm x 91cm).
- What do I do with excess?
 - First, make sure your cart is filled and all your recyclables are in your blue cart.
 - You must fill your cart all the way before leaving excess bags.
 - You can save excess garbage and put it out the next week, or
 - Place excess garbage bags 30cm (1ft) from the cart and they will be collected by hand.

Questions about cost

- How much will this service cost me?
 - The black cart is just a different way of collecting garbage.
 - There will be no extra cost to residents or taxpayers for black cart garbage collection.
 - Black cart garbage collection is also an opportunity to save money on garbage bags, because you can put small bags right into the cart.

- What about the charge for excess bags I heard about on the news?
 - Waste and Recycling Services was asked to present a report on a possible fee to pick up extra garbage.
 - That report is separate from the Black Cart program, and right now it is just for Council discussion.
 - Under this system, called “Tag-a-bag”, The City would collect everything that fits in your cart at no additional cost. If you had extra garbage, you would buy tags and attach one tag to each extra bag in order for it to be collected.
 - A tag-a-bag program may be implemented in 2012. Prior to any program implementation, Council would approve the program and associated rates as part of business and budget planning for 2012-14.

- Why do I have to pay \$4.20* a month? (*Waste Management Charge)
 - The Waste Management Charge helps offset the costs of disposing and managing residential garbage at The City's three landfills.
 - The funding is used for capital projects and upgrades to existing infrastructure to meet all regulatory and permit requirements to protect the environment and public health.
 - Single family homes that receive weekly hand garbage collection from The City of Calgary are charged \$4.20 per month for waste management.

Questions about yard waste

- What happens in the spring and fall, when I have lots of yard waste?
 - The City is aware that organic material makes up a large part of household waste, particularly during the summer and fall when there is a lot of yard waste.
 - Finding solutions for organic waste is part of the strategy to divert 80 per cent of Calgary's waste out of the landfills by 2020.
 - Waste and Recycling Services is currently working on an organics master plan.
 - It will also be looking at various options to help with yard waste.
 - The timing of these options is currently unknown.

- Here are the options that are currently available for getting rid of extra yard waste:

Grass

- Instead of throwing out your grass, we encourage you to consider leaving it on your lawn, where it will add nutrients to the soil and help retain water. There is information about how to do it at www.calgary.ca/recycling (Direct link: http://www.calgary.ca/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_780_237_0_43/http%3B/content.calgary.ca/CCA/City+Hall/Business+Units/Waste+and+Recycling+Services/Recycling+Information/Residential+Services/Organics+Recycling/Grasscycling.htm).
- You can also add grass clippings to plant beds as mulch.

Leaves

- The City runs a Leaf and Pumpkin collection program each fall where you can drop off bags of leaves and Halloween pumpkins at designated locations for composting.

Composting

- You can also compost your grass, leaves and other yard waste in a composter.
- The City subsidizes backyard composters, so you can buy them for just \$25 from Green Calgary (www.greencalgary.org)
- (more information on composting at http://www.calgary.ca/portal/server.pt/gateway/PTARGS_0_0_780_237_0_43/http%3B/content.calgary.ca/CCA/City+Hall/Business+Units/Waste+and+Recycling+Services/Recycling+Information/Residential+Services/Organics+Recycling/Subsidized+Backyard+Composters.htm)

Throwing yard waste out

- If you choose to throw out yard waste, put it in bags, then in the black cart.
- Bags that won't fit in the cart can be left 1 foot (30cm) from the cart.

Other questions

- I don't have room for another cart, what now?
 - The carts require just a bit more space than a garbage can. They are 59.1 cm (24 1/4 in.) wide, 74.4 cm (29 5/16 in.) long and 106.6 cm (42 in.) high.
 - The cart is weather proof, so it can be left outside – it doesn't have to stay in your garage.
 - If you have collection from the back lane, you can leave your cart in the lane throughout the week, provided it is not obstructing traffic. At 7 a.m. on collection day, simply move your cart so that it has at least a metre of space on either side and a foot of space behind. Make sure to move the cart back to the edge of your property or inside an enclosure by 7 p.m.
 - *If none of these options work:* I will create an SR and W&RS will contact you.

- I'm not sure if I am physically able to move the cart.
 - There may be solutions that aren't too different from how you get your garbage out now.
 - The cart is weather proof, so it can be left outside.
 - If you have collection from the back lane, you can leave your cart in the lane throughout the week, provided it is not obstructing traffic. This way, you can take small bags to the cart as needed throughout the week.
 - At 7 a.m. on collection day, simply move your cart enough so that it has at least a metre of space on either side and a foot of space behind. Make sure to move the cart back to the edge of your property or inside an enclosure by 7 p.m.
 - *If none of these options work* I will create an SR and W&RS will contact you to discuss options.

- I don't want it.
 - The black carts will improve garbage collection service for Calgarians by making it:
 - **Safer** for residents and collectors by eliminating the need for heavy lifting and potential exposure to sharp objects;
 - **Cleaner** by reducing litter in lanes and streets; and
 - **More efficient** by using single-operator trucks.
 - The City's plan is to introduce black cart garbage collection to every home that currently receives manual garbage collection.
 - Tell me about your specific concerns. I may be able to help.

- I don't want to advertise that my house is empty with the black cart left out.
 - If this is a concern, you can consider not putting your cart out before you go away, or asking a neighbour to help you by setting it out and/or bringing it back in.

- What do I do with my old garbage cans?
 - The department is currently researching best practices from other cities that have made this transition, and will let people know in advance what they can do with their old cans.
 - If you are interested in keeping your garbage cans, it's possible to use them for extra storage.

- I have a garbage enclosure/opening in my fence. The black cart won't work for me.
 - Black carts effectively contain garbage and keep birds and animals out, so there won't be a need for enclosures with the new system.
 - It will be up to you whether to remove your enclosure, modify it so that it can store your carts during the week (though The City cannot collect carts from enclosures) or use it for another purpose (storage, etc.)

- Can I get another cart?
 - No, only one black cart will be provided per household.
 - If you find that you consistently have more garbage than will fit in your cart, we encourage you to:
 - make sure you are recycling as much as possible in your blue cart or community depot;
 - consider composting your organic waste, which can reduce your amount of garbage by 30 per cent. The City subsidizes backyard composters. They cost just \$25 and can be purchased from Green Calgary (www.greencalgary.org)
 - If you still have extra garbage, place excess garbage bags 1 foot (30cm) from the cart and they will be collected by hand.

- Can I get a bigger/smaller cart?
 - Not at this time.
 - 15,000 households have been involved in a black cart pilot since 2008. When the participants were surveyed, the vast majority of those residents said they preferred this size of cart.

- What happens if my cart gets damaged or stolen?
 - Customers can call 3-1-1. Waste & Recycling Services will repair or replace the cart at no charge in most cases.

- I live in a windy area and am concerned that my cart will tip over.
 - The carts are very sturdy and weather proof.
 - A black cart pilot project has been running in six communities since 2008, and we have not had reports of this being an issue.

- What if someone dumps their garbage in my bin – who takes it away? How will you monitor this?
 - With the black cart system, Waste and Recycling will continue to pick up extra bags that are left beside a full cart.
 - If you suspect illegal dumping, please call 3-1-1 to report it.

- What about charges for extra bags?
 - Waste and Recycling Services was asked to present a report on a possible fee to pick up extra garbage.
 - That report is separate from the Black Cart program, and right now it is just for Council discussion.
 - Under this system, called “Tag-a-bag”, The City would collect everything that fits in your cart at no additional cost. If you had extra garbage, you would buy tags and attach one tag to each extra bag in order for it to be collected.
 - A tag-a-bag program may be implemented in 2012. Prior to any program implementation, Council would approve the program and associated rates as part of business and budget planning for 2012-14.
 - If we implement the Tag-a-bag system later on there will be bylaw officers assigned to deal with issues like illegal garbage dumping.

- What happens to your staff? Will there be layoffs?
 - It is anticipated that there will be a reduction in current staffing levels for residential collection once the full conversion to automated collection has been completed. We will do our best to minimize the impact on our staff by:
 - Carefully managing seasonal staff. We have already started to reduce seasonal hiring.
 - Giving employees opportunities to work in other areas.
 - Carefully managing whether or not we fill positions when staff retire or leave for other reasons.