



Public Works Department
Sanitation Division

ROLLING
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DeKalb's Approach to Recycling & Solid Waste Management



Sanitation Collection Service Change Program Frequently Asked Questions

The DeKalb County Sanitation Division is containerizing garbage and consolidating its collection schedules to improve service delivery and efficiencies, as well as to simplify scheduling. Effective July 6, 2015, all garbage, recyclable materials and yard trimmings will be collected on the same day. In addition, the Sanitation Division will be providing green garbage roll carts to every single-family household in unincorporated DeKalb, and the cities of Brookhaven, Dunwoody and Lithonia receiving sanitation collection services from the County's Sanitation Division.

Key features of the one-day-a-week sanitation collection service change program

- **Residential customers will not experience a fee increase.** Improved efficiencies will reduce our costs to provide service, allowing us to keep sanitation fees at the same level they have been since 2006.
- **Standardized containers.** The standardized use of green 65-gallon county-provided garbage containers will ensure neighborhoods are cleaner and neater with the reduction of loose trash.
- **One-day-a-week garbage pickup.** Currently, garbage collection occurs twice a week for DeKalb County residents. On the first collection day, the Sanitation Division collects more than 66 percent of countywide garbage. This leaves a much lighter second-day collection.
- **Consolidated collection.** With consolidated collection, solid waste, recyclable materials and yard trimmings will be collected on the same day.
- **Additional benefits to county residents.** The program will include a renewed focus on recycling education for county residents, and additional roadside litter collection by Sanitation Division employees.

When will the one-day-a-week service change take effect?

The "go live" dates (**effective dates for one-day-a-week collection service**) are July 6, 2015 for customers who will have Monday as their new collection day, July 7, 2015 for customers who will have Tuesday as their new collection day, July 8, 2015 for customers who will have Wednesday as their new collection day, and July 9, 2015 for customers who will have Thursday as their new collection day. This one-day-a-week collection service will begin on July 6, 2015 even for customers who have not received a roll cart. These customers will be allowed to continue using their own garbage containers until they receive their county-provided roll cart. All roll cart deliveries should be completed by the end of August at the latest. Additionally, when roll carts are delivered, residents will receive a revised 2015/2016 sanitation holiday collection schedule, a sanitation collection procedures brochure and a brochure advising on roll cart use.



How will residents be notified of the various timelines for the program?

Door hangers with residents' new collection service day will be delivered beginning May 29, 2015. This project will take approximately three to four weeks. Residents will also receive direct mail correspondence/letter about the various program timelines. Letters will be mailed beginning May 29, 2015. When roll carts are delivered, residents will also receive a reminder of what their new collection service day will be. Various communications channels, including but not limited to, newspaper ads, public service announcements, DeKalb County Television (DCTV) promotions, media promotions, homeowners and community association newsletters and email blasts, social media, press releases, etc. will be used to disseminate information on the program.

When will carts be distributed?

Cart distribution will begin immediately after the completion of the door hanger notifications. This project will begin by July 6, and will last approximately six to eight weeks.

Can I continue using my current garbage containers?

No. Residents must use the county-provided 65-gallon garbage roll cart. We have specifically evaluated the use of these carts with specialized collection vehicles. These carts are authorized by the County and municipalities in which our customers live. Once the program is implemented, garbage will not be collected in any other container or cart. *See below for comments on townhome and condominium customers.*

What special garbage preparation and collection arrangements are in place for customers living in condominiums and townhomes?

Special arrangements regarding alternate garbage preparation and collection service procedures for residents of condominiums and townhomes will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. We will do our best to accommodate requests for smaller garbage roll carts and amended collection procedures due to roll cart storage limitations.

What if there isn't enough room in the cart for all the garbage?

Those who participate in our curbside recycling program usually have ample space for weekly garbage collection. Recycling conserves landfill space and has many other benefits. Recyclable materials will be collected on the same day as garbage, but by a different collection vehicle. Clean recyclable papers, glass and plastic can be placed directly into the familiar blue bin, or a new recycle cart that we expect to phase-in during the latter part of 2015. To subscribe to our FREE Residential Curbside Recycling Program, please call our Customer Service Division at 404-294-2900 to have recyclable materials delivered to your home. Garbage should be bagged, securely tied and placed inside the cart. If the cart is inadequate to accommodate all garbage, excess bags of garbage should be placed next to the cart for collection. Placing excess bags of garbage on top of the cart may prevent the cart from being tipped/serviced.

What are my options if I don't want a county-provided garbage roll cart?

All residents are required to use county-provided garbage roll carts. However, residents in condominiums and townhomes who are challenged for roll cart storage space will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and will have the option of placing their garbage in durable plastic bags and placed curbside for collection.

Am I able to receive a smaller garbage roll cart?

Requests for garbage roll cart sizes other than the standard 65-gallon roll cart will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Please contact our Customer Service Division at 404.294.2900 for more information.



How will service change for residential customers?

Each residential customer will be issued a green 65-gallon garbage roll cart. Garbage, yard trimmings and recyclable materials will all be collected on the same day. Customers are responsible for placing their garbage containers curbside on their respective collection day and returning it to storage after collection. **Garbage placed in the cart must be in a plastic bag and securely tied.** Carts must be placed in an easily accessible location at the curb.

What are the main roll cart and service change benefits?

- Carts are less likely to blow over or roll into the street.
- Carts minimize trash bags from being torn open by dogs or other animals.
- Carts are designed with wheels to improve ease of movement to the street.
- Neighborhoods will be more aesthetically pleasing due to the use of one type of garbage cart.
- Residents will no longer have to purchase containers or carts for their household garbage.
- Carts minimize litter being created from improperly prepared garbage or cans without a lid.
- Improved operational efficiencies due to a reduction in the number of collectors and vehicles needed to collect garbage.
- Reduced Sanitation Division employee injuries due to the automated process of tippers being used to lift carts and their contents.
- Same-day collection for solid waste, recyclable materials and yard trimmings will keep the streets neater, and eliminates confusion about the designated collection day.

What is semiautomated and fully automated garbage collection?

In semiautomated collection, garbage containers are emptied using a vehicle-mounted mechanical tipper. The collector retrieves the container from the location where the resident placed it at the curb, and walks it to the tipper with a mechanical device to lift and unload the container. A fully automated collection system uses a mechanical arm on a garbage truck. During collections, the driver operates the mechanical arm from the cab. A robotic arm retrieves the cart, unloads the contents, and returns the cart to its original location. Some neighborhoods and streets have parked vehicles obstructing access of the robotic arm, reducing the effectiveness of these vehicles. When the robotic arm cannot reach the cart, the driver of the truck is required to exit the cab to manually retrieve the cart.

How will the Sanitation Division's schedule of service work?

Residents will be given a green roll cart. On their designated collection day, residents must roll their carts to the curb by 7 a.m. The Sanitation Division will service the cart by sunset or nightfall on the scheduled collection day. Once the cart is emptied, residents should roll their carts back to their storage location. Residents should not leave roll carts on the street overnight.

What is a tipper?

A tipper is a mechanical lift operated by hydraulics, and used to empty the roll cart.

Who owns the garbage cart and what happens if it is damaged or stolen?

Carts are the property of DeKalb County's Sanitation Division, and are provided to customers free of charge. Each cart has a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) wafer, which identifies the household to which the cart



was assigned. The Sanitation Division will repair any damaged lids, wheels or handles. If the cart is not repairable, it will be replaced. However, it is the responsibility of the customer to keep the inside of the cart clean and free of loose garbage.

Can the cart be used for other purposes?

No, your cart is assigned to your address for garbage collection only. The Sanitation Division will maintain location information to ensure that carts are in their assigned locations. Carts should not be used to move heavy objects.

Should I place my garbage in bags prior to placing in the roll cart? Yes. All garbage must be placed in bags and securely tied prior to being placed inside the cart. This will keep the cart cleaner, minimizes odors and insects, and prevents loose material from falling into the street.

Why does the lid on the cart need to be closed?

Lids should remain closed to keep animals and birds out of the cart, and prevent rain water from accumulating inside the cart.

Where should the cart be placed for collection?

The cart should be placed at the curb and out of traffic where it is clearly visible and accessible to collectors. The area immediately surrounding the cart should be unobstructed to ensure that a mechanical arm can lift the cart onto the truck. For easy collection, please do not place the container in contact with mailboxes, utility poles or parked cars.

What should I do if my new roll cart is inadequate to accommodate my garbage?

Excess bags should be placed next to the roll cart for collection. Placing excess bags of garbage on top of the cart may prevent the cart from being tipped/serviced.

What should I do with paper bags for recycling and yard trimmings each week?

Recyclable materials and yard trimmings will be collected on the same day, using different vehicles. However, as you currently do, please continue to prepare recycling and yard trimmings separately. Simply place your yard trimmings and recyclable materials at the curb next to your green garbage roll cart. Yard debris must be bundled and tied, and placed in biodegradable bags or your old garbage bins for collection.

Will the Sanitation Division still provide a bulky item and appliance pick up service?

Yes. A separate vehicle will be dispatched to collect appliances; other bulky items such as furniture, mattresses and televisions will continue to be collected with household garbage. Please contact our Customer Service Division at 404 294-2900 for information on what items are acceptable and to arrange a pick up. Additionally, information on special collection service is contained in the Collection Procedures Brochure, which can also be accessed by visiting www.dekalbsanitation.com OR www.rolling-forward-to-one.com.

Will sanitation collection service fees for residential customers increase?

No. Residents' sanitation fees will remain the same, just as they have since 2006.



How can the elderly or disabled get their carts to the street if they live on a hill or have a physical disability?

“Back-door” collection service will be available for disabled or elderly customers, whereby collection service team members will retrieve garbage containers from qualified residents’ roll cart storage areas. A predetermination will need to be made and approved in order to activate “back-door” collection service. Please contact our Customer Service Division at 404-294-2900 or sanitation@dekalbcountyga.gov for more information.

Will customers incur a cost associated with roll cart use?

All customers will receive a standard 65-gallon garbage roll cart. Customers wishing to downsize to a 35- or 45-gallon garbage roll cart can do so at no extra charge. However, customers wishing to switch to a 95-gallon garbage roll cart will incur a one-time \$15 upgrade fee. Additionally, any customers wishing to upgrade from the complimentary 18-gallon blue recycling bin to a blue 65-gallon recycling roll cart will incur a one-time \$15 upgrade fee.

How will this change affect Sanitation Division employees?

Handloading garbage is hard work and a repetitive, high-labor task. The Sanitation Division’s current collection methods require collectors to pick up, on average, two 32-gallon containers or bags of garbage each day from 1,000 residential households. The collector must completely pickup and place the heavy garbage into the hopper. Garbage containers and bags often contain hidden sharp objects; insects are attracted to garbage as a potential food source; and wet surfaces can cause a collector to slip or fall, with all these circumstances placing our employees in situations where they can be hurt. Carts and the use of semi or fully automated collection trucks will significantly reduce exposure to these risks. Preventing workplace injuries keeps employees on the job, and will allow us to continue providing reasonably priced waste collection services to our customers.

Will this change in service require layoffs?

No. All Sanitation Division employees will keep their jobs. However, some job duties may change to reflect other needs within the division. In addition to collecting materials from our commercial and residential customers, the division maintains mowing the sides of county and state roadways, coordinates cleanups of illegal dumping sites, maintains natural areas, and participates in some stream restoration projects. Any reduction in the number of collectors or drivers will be redirected to other efforts that promote beautification throughout the County.

How can I seek clarification on any issue pertaining to the sanitation collection service change?

Our customer service team is delighted to answer any questions or address any concerns you may have. Please contact our Customer Service Division at 404-294-2900 or sanitation@dekalbcountyga.gov for more information. Additionally, information on the sanitation collection service change can be found by visiting www.rolling-forward-to-one.com OR www.dekalbsanitation.com