Seattle Public Utilities
CAM 1301
Client Assistance Memo
spu
Seattle Permits
— part of a multi-departmental City of Seattle series on getting a permit

Solid Waste: Information for Developers

Updated June 2005

How does solid waste work in the City?

The method for handling solid waste in the city varies, depending on whether the building is a single family residence, or a multi-family or commercial building. As solid waste collection for single family residences requires minimal planning by developers, this publication addresses primarily solid waste generated in multi-family developments, commercial developments and mixed-use developments.

In the City of Seattle, solid waste generated in multi-family, commercial and mixed-use developments is disposed of primarily through the use of dumpsters or containers placed on private property, and emptied into a collection truck.

Garbage is taken to a transfer station and ultimately shipped to a landfill outside the City and dumped. The City is charged a weight-based fee for use of the landfill, and this cost is passed on to customers. Customers are charged based on the frequency of collection and the size of the customer's waste containers.

Recyclable materials are collected by City contractors and privately owned companies and sold to other companies that are able to reuse it to manufacture new products or materials.

Table 1 below indicates how each type of waste is handled.

Table 1: Overview of Solid Waste in Seattle

Waste is handled differently by the City, depending on the source and type of waste.

City of Seattle Waste Categories				
Source	**Yard Waste**	**Recyclable Materials**	**Hazardous Waste**	**Garbage**
Residential – Single Family	$, X	S, X	HHW	$, X
Residential – Multi-Family	$, X	S, X	HHW	$, X
Commercial – Small Business	P, X	S, X	P	$, X
Commercial/Industrial & Wholesale	P, X	P, X	P	$, X

$ = Service provided by City of Seattle contractor
S = Service provided by City of Seattle contractor at no charge
P = Service must be arranged from a private waste disposal company
HHW = Household Hazardous Waste: Must be disposed of at a Seattle Haz Site (no charge)
X = May be disposed of at a Recycling and Disposal Station

If online, place curser over table to access hotlinks

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What is the City trying to achieve in regulating solid waste?

The City regulates the disposal of solid waste to protect the health, safety and well-being of its residents. The City also regulates the disposal of solid waste in order to reduce costs for ratepayers. For example, the City has determined that mandating recycling will result in lower costs to ratepayers by reducing the amount of solid waste taken to landfills.

What is the source of the City's authority to regulate solid waste?

Seattle Municipal Code addresses solid waste in land use and zoning ordinances and utility ordinances. Some relevant code chapters and sections:

21.36 (Solid Waste Collection)
21.40 (Solid Waste Collection Rates and Charges)
21.43 (Infectious Waste Management)
21.44 (Standards for Solid Waste Handling)
23.45.006 (Multi-Family Zones)
23.47.029 (Mixed Use Zones)
23.48.031 (Seattle Cascade Mixed Use Zone)
23.49.015 (Downtown Mixed Use Zone)

What activities or projects are affected by the regulation?

The solid waste ordinances regulate the storage and collection of solid waste within the City, and placement of solid waste and recycling containers or dumpsters in multi-family, commercial and mixed-use developments in the specified zones.

In general, what are the applicant's responsibilities regarding solid waste?

The property owner is responsible for placing recycling and trash dumpsters in an unobtrusive location that is accessible by the collection contractors.

- Dumpsters will be stored on private property. Dumpsters may be placed on City property no longer than 24 hours prior to or following collection, unless a permit is obtained from the City's Street Use Section (684-5283).
- Dumpsters shall be located on the premises in a manner that is satisfactory to the customer and for collection by the contractor and shall meet the provisions of the Seattle Fire Code and American National Safety Institute.
- Dumpsters must be located on a flat, level, hard surface with level access to a paved street, alley or parking lot, unless the customer is willing to move the container out to the street for pick-up (this normally requires a level grade and smooth surface.)
- Dumpsters shall be placed so that they will not block building exits, driveways, alleys or abutting properties.
- There must be a minimum of 10 feet of lateral clearance in any alley for a sufficient distance where a truck may drive through without obstruction.
- Where there are solid waste containers on both sides of the alley, they must be placed in a manner to accommodate truck clearance of at least 10 feet.
- Any obstruction, hazard or nuisance may be removed by the City and anyone causing the obstruction will be charged the City's cost of removal plus a 15% administrative fee.
- All new and remodelled buildings must provide space on site for the storage of recyclable materials and garbage.
- Locations for residential dumpsters must be approved by a Senior Solid Waste Inspector.

What are the steps for addressing solid waste in a building permit application?

1a) Contact the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) to apply for your Building Permit, or

1b) Contact Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) Solid Waste if you have questions regarding solid waste.

2) In certain cases, solid waste staff may attend a Pre-Submittal Conference (PSC) if:
   - Your project is seeking an approval of a solid waste plan that is an alternative to the prescriptive code;
   - Your project includes a trash compactor;
   - Your project involves a multi-family residential or mixed-use structure with 10 or more residential units.

3) Submit your building plans to DPD. If necessary, solid waste staff will review your plans to determine if they meet the code or can be approved as an exception to the code.

4) After your building permit has been approved and the construction is underway, SPU may visit your construction site to assure construction waste is being disposed of properly.

5) As the construction nears completion, you must request solid waste service. See Contacts below.

Recycling for commercial buildings is not provided by the City of Seattle. However, commercial buildings must provide adequate space for recycling containers.

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Paper and yardwaste recycling is now mandated by the City. Recycling can often save money by reducing Solid Waste fees. For information on recycling from commercial buildings, see contacts below.

To establish residential solid waste and recycling service, you will be required to sign a container agreement form with SPU Solid Waste.

6) Once your residential or mixed-use building has been issued a Certificate of Occupancy, you must call SPU Solid Waste and ask them to notify the waste contractor(s) to begin your solid waste and recycling services.

What information will the developer need to provide?

The developer needs to tell SPU how the solid waste is to be collected.

- What is the address of the building?
- What type of building is it? (Single family, multi-family, mixed use, commercial, etc.) How many residential units are there?
- What is the estimated volume of solid waste that will be generated at this location? (See below for publication Estimating Solid Waste Container Requirements.) Will a trash compactor be used?
- How will the trash containers get from their storage location to the pick-up location?
- How will the trash collection trucks access the garbage or recycling container?

What are the requirements of a project?

- Developers are required to assure that solid waste (garbage, recycling) containers, or dumpsters, can be accessed up by the garbage or recycling contractor's trucks.
- Developers are required to demonstrate how dumpsters will be moved from their usual storage locations to the point where they can be picked up by the trash or recycling contractor's trucks.
- Developers are required to properly dispose of waste generated during construction.

Reduce delay! Things to watch out for that have caused problems in the past.

- Changing the plans after they have been approved by the solid waste reviewers can result in inaccessible dumpsters. Be sure to verify revised plans with SPU Solid Waste.
- Accessibility of trash containers and dumpsters. The code cannot always anticipate every obstacle that a truck may encounter attempting to reach the dumpsters. It is important to consult with a solid waste reviewer to assure that your dumpsters are accessible!
- It is equally important that the loaded dumpsters can be readily moved by hand or by mechanical means from the storage location to the pick-up location. This requires a smooth, level surfacefor rolling the dumpster to the street or alley for pick-up.
- Trash compactors can save money by reducing the number of trash pick-ups or dumpsters required for your property. However, regulations require that kitchen or food waste be picked up weekly, regardless of whether or not your dumpster is full!

Contacts:

- **Who to contact first**
  The initial contact for a project will normally be Seattle's Department of Planning and Development.
  http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/dpd/
  (206) 684-8850
- **Who to contact for specific types of questions**
  For solid waste questions, please contact:
  Liz Kain
  SolidWaste.spu@Seattle.gov
  206) 684-4166

  To establish solid waste or recycling service for residential and multi-use buildings, contact:
  SPU Customer Service
  (206) 684-7665

  To establish Solid Waste Service for commercial buildings, contact:
  Commercial buildings (North*) Rabanco
  (206) 332-7777
  Commercial buildings (South*) Waste Management (206) 762-3000
  *Indicates North or South of Royal Brougham Way/Jackson Street

  For information on recycling for commercial buildings, contact:
  Resource Venture
  (206) 389-7304 or check "Recycling" in your Yellow Pages

  To obtain a permit to store a dumpster on the street for an extended period:

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Seattle Department of Transportation,
Street Use (206) 684-5283

- **Who to contact for issue resolution**
  If your solid waste issue is not being resolved in a timely manner, please contact:
  Tim Croll, Community Services Director
  Timothy.Croll@Seattle.gov
  (206) 684-7934

References (hardcopy or web-based)

- **Publications**
  Estimating Solid Waste Container Requirements - Request copies by emailing:
  SolidWaste.spu@Seattle.gov
- **Key Web Sites**
  Department of Planning and Development (DPD)
  http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/dpd/
  Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) Solid Waste
  http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/util/services/
  Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
  http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/stuse_permits.htm
  Resource Venture
  http://www.resourceventure.org/
  Seattle Municipal Code
  http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/code1.htm
  (enter code selection)
  Seattle Haz Sites
  http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/util/services/HHWaste/instructions.htm
  Recycling and Disposal Stations
  http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/util/services/transfer/default.htm

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