

Eureka Universal Garbage/Recycling Collection Programs



Frequently Asked Questions

July 2015

What are the curbside collection services?

Under the City ordinance, each resident will be given a bundled collection service for one monthly rate which includes the following services:

1. Curbside Weekly Garbage collection.
2. Curbside Bulky Item collection (2 pickups/year up to 2 cubic yards for appliances, furniture, bagged garbage, etc).
3. Curbside Weekly Recycling collection (96 gallon rolling cart).

In addition, a **voluntary** Curbside Weekly Greenwaste collection service will also be available for an extra cost of \$3.73/month.

Each resident will receive a rolling garbage cart and a rolling recycling cart. All of your services will be picked-up on the same day, but an appointment is needed before Bulky Items can be collected at the curb. Each address will be able to use the curbside Bulky Item collection service twice a year for no extra charge (please call Recology at 707-442-5711 for cost of additional pickups).

How much does curbside garbage/recycling services cost?

Recology has a metered service with 5 different garbage cart service sizes, from 20 gallons to 90 gallons. The metered service was put into place to reward devoted recyclers. The more you recycle, the smaller the garbage cart you need, and the less you pay. The rate for all services (except Greenwaste) is estimated at between approximately \$21.25 to \$71.73 per month. If you are a senior (age 65 or older), there is a 20 gallon service that has a significantly lower rate which is \$11.14/month

Why did curbside garbage and recycling collection become mandatory in Eureka?

In 1989, the State of CA passed legislation called AB 939 which mandated that all cities and counties must reduce their waste by 50% by the year 2000. Non-compliance with this Assembly Bill can result in an issuance of a compliance order and an imposition of a fine up to \$10,000/day. In part due to this program The City of Eureka has been able to reach 56%.

Why has curbside garbage collection become mandatory instead of just recycling?

Mandatory recycling service without garbage service was considered, however curbside garbage collection was made mandatory primarily because Eureka has a serious illegal disposal problem in our alleys, parks, gulches, bay, vacant lots and even our street corners. The mandatory program has the potential to significantly reduce unsanitary conditions in Eureka resulting from illegal disposal and backyard trash buildup, a problem which is currently causing environmental degradation, blight and public health concerns throughout the city.

In addition, we found that other communities were not successful when trying this, because residents who had curbside recycling service without curbside garbage collection service tended towards using their recycling cart for their garbage. Because the recycling processing facility has strict contamination limitations, when there is too much garbage in the recycling carts, entire loads of recycling become fouled and unrecyclable, and must be landfilled. Also, when these contaminated recycling loads must be landfilled, we pay the disposal and transportation costs to send it to the landfill, which not only hurts our waste diversion rates, but ends up costing us more money to run the program.

Did Eureka try other waste reduction programs before deciding on mandatory service?

Yes. The City of Eureka tried many programs in our efforts to comply with AB 939 before resorting to mandatory curbside garbage/recycling. Since 1991, the City has administered a wide variety of waste reduction programs, including a voluntary curbside recycling program, and four (4) free neighborhood recycling drop stations in the City. In 2002, the city was strongly encouraged to pursue a mandatory collection program by representatives of the CA Integrated Waste Management Board because we were not able to meet the State waste reduction mandate.

Instead, the City invested in other less demanding remedies at that time, including an expanded recycling buy-back facility in Eureka, increased public education, business waste audits, public sidewalk recycling bins, subsidized home composting bins, zoo waste recycling, dual-stream recycling collection, a regional food waste diversion facility (feasibility study), and other measures. Since 2006, the Waste Board became increasingly concerned about Eureka's failure to meet State waste diversion mandates, particularly because these newer diversion programs did not bring the City into compliance. At that time, they insisted that Eureka pursue a mandatory collection ordinance. The ordinance was eventually adopted by the Eureka City Council on June 3, 2008.

I rent. Who is responsible for paying for the service?

Ultimately it is the responsibility of the property owner, however as a renter it is dependent upon your lease agreement.

Who owns the totes/carts?

Recology of Eureka owns all the equipment used to carry out the programs. If you move, please leave the cart behind for the next resident.

Who decides the rates?

The City's contracted service provider, Recology, submits a rate proposal package every

year in April. City staff carefully reviews this rate proposal package to protect the public's interest by ensuring that any rate change recommendations are accurate and reflect actual costs. After review, staff makes a rate recommendation for passage by the City Council. Please note that our collection rates are highly influenced by disposal costs which have been rising dramatically due to fuel cost increases, rising insurance costs and other factors. We currently must transport our waste by truck to out-of-County landfills because our local landfill is no longer available due to environmental concerns. Any new rates, if needed, typically go into effect by July 1 each year.

If I don't recycle, can I have a lower rate?

No. The choice to put your recycling cart out on a weekly basis is yours. Please keep in mind however, that Eureka will not be able to meet the AB 939 mandate without everyone in the community putting in an effort. In addition, the more you recycle, the smaller garbage cart you will need which means less disposal cost to you. Recycling is an inexpensive way to keep Eureka's collection rates down, which benefits everyone.

I take my garbage to the dump myself once a month and it is cheaper for me to do it that way. Why should I have to participate in this program?

State law and Eureka ordinances require that household garbage be removed at least every seven days. Keeping household garbage on your premises beyond that time is not only prohibited, but it has the potential for creating health and safety issues for you and your neighbors. Also, even though you must subscribe to curbside collection, the Transfer Station remains open for all of your other disposal needs such as cleaning out garages, etc.

I do not produce garbage. I recycle everything. Do I have to participate in this program?

If you can demonstrate that your household recycles, composts and diverts "virtually all" of your waste, you can ask the City of Eureka for an exemption. This is done by filling out a personal waste diversion inventory on a form provided by the city, and you must sign a legal declaration under penalty of law verifying that your answers are a true representation of the facts. Residents will be responsible for paying for garbage service until this approval is obtained. To obtain a copy of the exemption form, please contact Donna Wood at the City of Eureka at 707-268-1858 or at dwood@ci.eureka.ca.gov.

What happens if I don't pay my garbage bill?

Unless you are granted an exemption, the garbage company will bill you. If you do not pay, several alert/warning notices will be sent to the property owner over the course of about 2 months. The property owner is ultimately responsible for payment. If the bill is still not paid, then a collection process will begin. If the bill is still not paid after this process, the City of Eureka will put any of your outstanding balances, along with late payment penalties from both City of Eureka and Recology, onto your property tax bill. Garbage/recycling services will not be interrupted and bills for service will continue to accumulate.

I'm on a fixed budget and cannot afford garbage service. Is there any relief for someone like me?

Recology has several options. First, if you are a senior (age 65 or older), there is a 20 gallon service that has a significantly lower rate which is \$11.14/month. So make sure to mention your age if you qualify. Second, Recology has a metered service with 5 different garbage cart service sizes, from 20 gallons to 90 gallons. The metered service was put into place to reward devoted recyclers. The more you recycle, the smaller the garbage cart you need, and the less you pay.

I am afraid that I will be not strong enough to handle putting multiple totes to the curb myself.

The carts were designed to be very easy for most people to handle. Recology does recognize that there are some situations where moving the carts will still be difficult. In these cases, special arrangements can be made on a case by case basis by calling Recology at 442-5711.

Does having mandatory recycling service mean that I cannot take my cans, plastic bottles and glass bottles to a buy back facility for the CRV cash refund?

No. There are four buy back centers in the City of Eureka. You will always be able to take your CRV material to a buy-back facility to receive their redemption value. Some people may even find that they make enough from turning in their CRV material to pay for garbage service. The curbside recycling service will allow people to recycle items that many buyback centers do not accept like jars, plastic milk jugs, and detergent bottles. It's these recyclable items that have no redemption value that are often discarded in the garbage.

Who gets the money from my recyclables?

The processor (Solid Waste of Willits) sells and collects money for all recycling that is brought to its facility. It pays a portion of that money to the City of Eureka, which is used to offset the costs of the new programs. The rest stays with the processor.

What can I recycle? How do I use my cart?

Please reference [Curbside Recycling Guidelines](#)

Do I have to take lids off and clean my recyclable containers before I put them in the recycle cart?

It is important that all recyclable containers be as clean as possible to keep contamination levels low. The recycling processor suggests that all containers be rinsed out to minimize vermin. In addition, all food containers should be washed out thoroughly. Though this service is designed to be as convenient as possible to the user, the recycling industry has strict contamination limitations. When there is too much contamination, particularly food waste in the recycling carts, items may become fouled and unrecyclable, and must be landfilled. When these contaminated recycling loads must be landfilled, we pay the disposal and transportation costs to send it to the landfill, which not only hurts our waste diversion rates, but ends up costing us more money to run the program.

What if I have more recycling than what can fit inside a cart?

We want to encourage you to recycle as much as you can, so if you periodically have more cans, bottles and plastic than what can fit in your recycling cart, bag the extra and place it next to your cart. If it is extra cardboard, you can also place it next to your cart, but make sure it is broken down and flattened. (Note: for efficiency reasons, we ask that you not put out cardboard in sizes larger than 2 x 3.) If you are a big recycler and always produce more than what can fit in your cart (you should be able to close the lids), call Recology at 707-442-5711 and they will deliver an extra cart.

Is Styrofoam recyclable?

Styrofoam cannot be placed in your recycling container. There are some places that will recycle your Styrofoam packing peanuts if you bring it to them. Consult the SBC phone book recycling guide for these locations.

Why is there a cost for Greenwaste pick-up?

The cost of this optional program is \$3.73 per month. Although not as high as garbage disposal, the compost facility does charge a fee for disposing our green waste there. The cost covers this fee and pays wages, fuel, etc., and was determined knowing that there will be a wide variability of its use. Some people will put green waste out every week, some only once a month, depending on the season and size of the property. To help keep costs down, if a green waste service is discontinued before six months have passed an additional fee will be charged to collect the cart.

I don't need Greenwaste service so why do I have to pay for it?

You will not be required to enroll in the green waste collection service. It is voluntary.

What if I have more than what can fit in a Greenwaste cart?

Bag your extra and call Recology to let them know that the driver should look for extra green waste on your pick-up day. If you have a property that produces more green waste that can fit in your cart on a regular basis, you can sign up for a two cart service. Another alternative is to use one of your annual "bulky item" pick-ups.

What happens to the Greenwaste I put in my cart?

Most of the greenwaste material will be composted. Some of it may go to a cogeneration plant to make energy.

Is there anything I cannot put into my Greenwaste cart?

Everything that comes out of your yard can go into your cart. We do ask that painted wood, treated wood and wood with nails not be mixed with your green waste. And no food waste please. The city does offer backyard compost bins for sale for your food waste.

I understand that I now get Bulky Item pickup service twice a year.

How many Bulky Items can I put out at once?

You can put out up to 2 cubic yards per service. That is about the size of 2 refrigerators.

How often can I use the Bulky Item service?

You can use the service two times per year but you will need to call Recology at 707-442-5711 to make an appointment before you put it out on the curb.

What can be picked-up as a Bulky Item?

Just about everything with a few exceptions. Refrigerators, large appliances, TVs, couches, mattresses, lawn mowers (fuel and oil drained first) are a few examples of what can be picked up curbside in our new program. You can also use your Bulky Item pick-up for yard waste from landscaping projects. Please be mindful to bundle or box loose items so that they can be pick-up easily. We can also take up to nine tires at a time.

(Note: There are many free waste tire and electronic waste collection events throughout the year. You may want to wait for one of these events, and use one of your two annual Bulky Item collection opportunities for other large items. Call the Humboldt Waste Management Authority at 707-268-8680 to find out when the next collection event will be scheduled in Eureka).

Is there anything that cannot be picked up as a Bulky Item?

Yes. There are a few items which cannot be put in with Bulky Items. These include large tree trunks and root balls, hazardous waste of any kind, cars, un-drained car parts, treated wood, and no more than 9 tires at a time.

If I have more questions, who do I call?

Please call Recology of Eureka at 707-442-5711. They can either answer your questions or direct your call to someone who can.