


# Consumer Guide

## Residential Solid Waste Services



Garbage, recycling, yard waste, compost

The UTC regulates the rates and services of private and investor-owned utility and transportation companies. Contact the Consumer Protection Division:

 1-888-333-WUTC (9882)

 [consumer@utc.wa.gov](mailto:consumer@utc.wa.gov)

 [utc.wa.gov/fileacomplaint](http://utc.wa.gov/fileacomplaint)

 P.O. Box 47250 | Olympia, WA 98504



### BILLING AND RATES

#### How can I learn more about my company's rates?

In company tariffs, which outline their UTC-approved rates, services, terms and conditions of service. Find company tariffs at [utc.wa.gov/solid-waste](http://utc.wa.gov/solid-waste) or contact your company for a copy.

#### How is my garbage rate determined?

Many factors affect the cost of garbage services, such as disposal fees; equipment costs; drivers' wages; taxes; compliance with local regulations; and administrative expenses. If these costs change and your company decides to adjust their rates, they must seek approval from the UTC. You will receive a notice of the company's intent to increase rates with an offer for you to comment on the proposed increase. This is your chance to be involved in the UTC's decision-making process.

#### Can the company charge me for a late payment?

Yes, if the company has a late payment charge in its tariff.

#### How can I lower my solid waste bill?

Contact your company to learn about options. By recycling and composting, you may be able to reduce your garbage amount and move to a smaller container. To find out more, contact your company or call the Washington State Department of Ecology at [1-800-732-9253](tel:1-800-732-9253) or visit [ecology.wa.gov](http://ecology.wa.gov).

### COMPLAINTS

#### How do I file a complaint against my company?

Contact the company first and try to resolve the complaint. Ask to speak with a supervisor. If you are still dissatisfied, contact us. File a complaint by using the information at the top of this page.

UTC Consumer Protection staff will contact the company on your behalf and attempt to resolve your dispute.



## DEPOSITS

### Do I have to pay a deposit for solid waste services?

Customers may have to pay a deposit before service begins if:

- Your service was canceled for non-payment in the last 12 months.
- You owe an unpaid, overdue balance to any solid waste collection company.
- You received two or more delinquent notices from your last company in the last 12 months.
- Another occupant at your address has an overdue bill owed to the company.

### How much will the deposit be?

The deposit amount depends on the type of service you have and the company's billing cycle. For example: You sign up for one-can weekly service. If the company's monthly rate for service is \$80, your deposit will be \$120.

### When will I get my deposit back?

If you pay your bill on time for 12 months, the company must refund the deposit, plus accrued interest, with a check or credit to your account within 15 days when:

- you end your service, or
- you have not received more than two delinquent notices in the last 12 months.

### What if I am unable to pay a deposit?

The company must allow you to make payment arrangements for a deposit by:

- paying one-half of the deposit before receiving service, then
- paying the remaining balance in two equal payments over two months.



## SERVICES

### Can the company skip a pickup due to poor weather conditions?

Yes. You can set the missed solid waste out for the next scheduled pickup at no extra cost.

### Can a solid waste company refuse service?

Yes, if:

- The customer does not follow state, county, or municipal laws concerning solid waste services, such as not using a proper container.
- Payment is overdue for the same type of service.
- Another occupant at your address has an overdue bill with the company without satisfactory payment arrangements for the overdue bill, and the company has proof that you are helping the customer avoid payment.
- Solid waste containers are not accessible from the street, alley, or road.
- Solid waste cans exceed capacity or weight limits outlined in the company's tariff.
- You deceptively obtained service.

NOTE: A company cannot refuse service if the previous occupant has an unpaid bill.

### How can I dispose of hazardous waste?

Do not put hazardous waste in your regular garbage. There are special handling standards for the collection and disposal of these materials in federal, state, and local rules. Contact your county for assistance.