



Environmental Services
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Fort Collins Solid Waste Collection and Recycling Services Ordinance

The City of Fort Collins enforces a “Pay-As-You-Throw” (PAYT) ordinance that governs trash and recycling services for single-family homes within city limits. This includes every home that subscribes to trash service and has its own trash cart – apartment complexes or locations that jointly share dumpster service are not covered under this ordinance. Whether or not trash service is contracted by a Home Owners’ Association (HOA), single-family homes within an HOA are covered by the PAYT ordinance.

Requirements under the ordinance:

- Residents must be offered recycling service for no additional charge
 - A wheeled cart must be made available to collect recyclables
 - While a cart deposit may be charged, there cannot be an ongoing fee for a recycling cart
- Residents must have the option to choose between three service levels for trash (32, 64, and 96-gallons of trash service).
 - Residents must be notified of these options at least once / year
- The cost for service must be based on the volume of trash service subscribed to
 - 32 gallons of trash service = \$1x, 64 gallons of trash service = \$2x, 96 gallons of trash service = \$3x
- A hauler must charge extra to collect any trash set out in excess of the subscribed-to trash volume
- Haulers are allowed to charge a service surcharge of up to 25% of the cost of the smallest trash cart service.

If you have any questions or observe violations of the PAYT ordinance, please contact:

Caroline Mitchell, Environmental Planner: cmitchell@fcgov.com or 970-221-6288

For full ordinance language, please see

https://www.municode.com/library/co/fort_collins/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=CH15LIBURE_ARTXVSOWACORESE
and https://www.municode.com/library/co/fort_collins/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=CH12HEEN_ARTIICODIRERURE.
More information is available at fcgov.com/recycling.

Why does Fort Collins use the PAYT trash rate system?

Volume-based trash rates create greater cost equity among households regarding the amount of waste they generate; i.e., there is no price break for being a large-volume customer. It has been demonstrated that having a financial incentive for saving money on trash bills motivates many people to try recycling, as well as other waste reduction strategies such as using a mulching lawn mower and composting. Properly implemented, the PAYT Ordinance plays an important role in helping the City of Fort Collins reach its adopted goal of diverting its waste stream from landfill disposal.

Additional notes for HOA managers:

Managers of group accounts such as HOAs have a legal obligation to ensure that residents are given a full and uncensored choice to select the level of trash service that best fits their households’ needs. The City Code (Section 12) prohibits an HOA manager from selecting a single, blanket level of service for the entire HOA, and instead requires that all levels be offered and available to each resident. An HOA representative who negotiates trash contracts must be able to verify: every customer is freely given a choice of service levels (i.e., weekly volume of trash) from which to select prior to contracts being negotiated; that variable rates are applied; and, that extra charges are made for garbage set out for collection when it exceeds subscription levels. The Code further requires those arranging group accounts to retain copies of informational material sent to residents about their trash selection choices, so that they are available for audit by the City at its discretion.