

# FAQs – Multifamily Residential Service Standards

A glossary of commonly used solid waste terms can be found at the end of this document (or [here](#)).

---

## What changes to garbage and recycling collection for multifamily communities, apartments, and condos are being proposed as a part of the Residential Service Standards?

- 1. Clearer instructions and consistent signage across the region. New stickers for garbage and recycling bins and signs for garbage and recycling rooms/areas have been developed and should help people more easily identify what goes where.
- 2. Garbage and recycling will be right sized so bins will experience less frequent overloading. This could include, for example: adding more bins, increasing enclosure sizes, adding additional enclosures, or increasing frequency of pick up.

## Why are these changes being proposed?

- Twenty-five percent of people in the Portland metro area live in multifamily communities, apartments, and condos and face unique challenges when dealing with garbage and recycling. Garbage and recycling services for these properties have often not met the needs of their residents for many years and are not nearly as good as services provided to people living in single-family homes. The garbage and recycling bins can be inconsistent and confusing, and often there aren't enough of them. This results in loose garbage in and around garbage and recycling areas, which creates safety issues for both residents and haulers.
- The inconsistency and confusion have also led to a twenty-one percent contamination rate of the recyclable stream—which means that twenty-one percent of items put in the recycling bins do not belong there. Compare this to the single-family home contamination rate of nine percent.
- The new standards will help meet the needs expressed by people living in multifamily communities, apartments, and condos so they can effectively navigate their garbage and recycling system. It will also create safer conditions for residents and collection companies while decreasing the contamination rate of the recyclable stream.

## Why is this happening now?

- This project has been underway for the last five years, and changes will be implemented over the next seven years.
- In 2017, Metro (our regional government) completed a first-of-its-kind assessment on the volume of garbage and recycling generated by over 70 percent of multifamily properties in the region. They also looked closely at the types of waste being recycled or sent to the landfill from multifamily communities, apartments, and condos, and how the waste was collected.
- Metro collaborated with other cities, counties to complete an [analysis of garbage and recycling](#) in multifamily, apartment, and condominium buildings across the tri-county area. This report

outlined themes heard from 20 local government interviews, 54 interviews with residents and community-based organizations, multifamily-specific data from over 4,000 garbage and recycling accounts, and analysis of recycling contamination and recyclable items in the garbage stream. The study's data informed a series of recommendations that were reviewed by regional and local governments.

- These recommendations evolved into a Regional Waste Plan, which includes a vision, goals, and actions for improving garbage and recycling services in our region.

### **How do the multifamily minimum service standard changes connect to our region's overall waste plan?**

- These changes to service standards deliver on three actions under Goal #10 of the [2030 Regional Waste Plan \(RWP\)](#), which states: *Provide regionally consistent services for garbage, recyclables and other priority materials that meet the needs of all users:*
  - - **10.1** Provide comprehensive collection services and supporting education and assistance for source-separated recyclables, source-separated food scraps and garbage, in compliance with state, regional and local requirements, including the Regional Service Standard, Business Recycling Requirement and Business Food Waste Requirement in Metro Code.
    - **10.2** Implement minimum service levels or performance standards for all collected materials for multifamily and commercial tenants.
    - **10.3** Implement regional standards for collection container colors, signage and other related informational materials for single-family, multifamily and commercial services.
- The RWP sets the policy direction for the region's solid waste and recycling system. It is very different from previous plans in that its values, principles, goals and actions specifically reflect the needs and aspirations of members of our community who haven't historically had a strong voice in the development of environmental plans, policies and programs.

### **How often are regional waste standards and requirements updated?**

- Not frequently. Standards for multifamily communities, apartments, and condos have not been updated in over 20 years. Standards are normally updated when the region adopts a new waste plan or when significant changes in the garbage and recycling industry occur, such as a transition from small bins to standard wheeled carts, or changes to what goes into the recycling.

### **What do these new region-wide standards mean for the City of Tualatin?**

- We are working with our garbage and recycling hauler, Republic Services, to ensure that multifamily communities, apartments, and condos within our jurisdiction meet the new standards and service requirements.
- Most of the responsibility falls on Republic to enact these changes, which they are aware of and already working on.
- The City will bring an ordinance to City Council for potential adoption of these standards.

### **What does this require of different groups?**

- If you are a multifamily community, apartment, or condo resident or a community-based organization:
  - Nothing is required of you.
- If you are a multifamily community, apartment, or condo manager or owner:

- You will need to ensure that services at your property meet the new standards.
- If you are a garbage and recycling company:
  - You will need to provide the services required by the new standards for multifamily housing.
- If you are a developer:
  - You will need to ensure that your plans for waste enclosures will allow for these requirements to be met.
- If you are a local government:
  - A local government must comply with the requirements of the Regional Waste Plan's residential service standard.

**Will this increase my utility costs or raise my rent?**

- Minimum service volumes should not result in additional costs. However, if you live in a community that has not had enough garbage and recycling services to meet the needs of residents, new containers may be added, and the frequency of garbage and recycling collection may need to increase to ensure you have the right level of service. Your property owner or manager makes the decision about how the costs of garbage and recycling are shared. However, they are limited by state law in how much they can charge you ([Oregon Revised Statutes, Title 10, Residential Landlord and Tenant, Chapter 90.315](#)).

**Will it cost more to meet the new minimum service volumes?**

- Meeting the new minimum service volumes should not result in additional costs for most multifamily properties. First, these changes will make it easier for people in multifamily communities, apartments, and condos to dispose of the same waste they discard today in clearer, more organized and appropriate ways. Furthermore, most multifamily communities', apartments, and condos' commercial waste hauling rate structures already cover the new proposed ratios of garbage to recycling collection.

**When will the new changes go into effect?**

- The first change residents will see will be the new decals and signs for bins, launching in Summer 2021. The new decals and bins will be rolled out over the next two years, with full implementation required by December 31, 2023.
- The second change to go into effect is the minimum service level requirements. All properties will be required to meet the new minimum service levels by a specified date (TBD).
- Finally, within seven years, by summer of 2028, all multifamily, apartment, and condo community's roll carts and containers will meet the new color standards: blue for recycling, orange for glass, green for yard debris (if applicable), and gray or black for garbage.

**What will the new signage look like? What languages will they be in?**

- The new stickers and signs use images of the type of items that can be disposed of in each type of bin, so residents can correctly identify where to put their garbage and recycling. The sticker designs were informed by recent research using a Spanish-speaking audience and was user-

tested with residents of multifamily communities, apartments, and condos. The stickers will include English, Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, and Simplified Chinese languages.

**When will the new colored bins start showing up?**

- A seven-year timeline has been implemented for color standard implementation. This timeframe is cost-effective and gives garbage and recycling companies the most flexibility in meeting the requirement. It also takes advantage of the seven-year equipment depreciation schedule already built into our contracts with hauling companies. The exact date of when you might see the new containers will vary and is dependent on Republic Service’s bin replacement schedule.

**What else did you hear as a part of the larger analysis process?**

- We also heard concerns about how bulky waste is managed. We learned that the disposal of bulky items, such as sofas, chairs, appliances and mattresses, is a significant issue for multifamily, apartment, and condo residents. These items can create unsafe and unhealthy situations, encourage loitering, and block access to bins for residents and collection company employees. Bulky waste is handled inconsistently from building to building, and many residents don’t feel empowered to approach their property managers about these items. Due to high household turnover, multifamily households may generate this waste at a greater rate than single-family households.
- We don’t yet have a regional plan to address bulky waste disposal, but we know the issue will be addressed in the future. Community members, property managers, local governments across our region and garbage and recycling companies will be asked to identify the specific challenges around bulky waste and develop solutions that best address their needs.

.....**Solid Waste Terms**.....

**Bins**

In the Multifamily Recycling Report 2017 the word “bins” is used to refer to all equipment used to collect garbage, mixed recycling and glass recycling at multifamily sites.

**Bulky waste**

Means furniture such as sofas, chairs, dressers, console televisions, mattresses, appliances and larger size pieces of carpet and carpet pad; can include items not mentioned in the list that are too large to fit into bins.

**Contaminants**

Items found in the mixed recycling bin that are not recyclable curbside.

**Equipment**

Another word for “bins” referring to all receptacles used to collect garbage, mixed recycling and glass recycling.

**Garbage and recycling collection area**

A designated area to collect garbage and/or recyclable materials on a multifamily site; sites may have one or more garbage and recycling collection areas.

**Local government**

Means any city or county that is within Metro's jurisdiction, including the unincorporated areas of Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington Counties.

**Multifamily**

Apartment and condominium buildings with five or more units; may also include retirement communities, dormitories, moorages and mobile home parks. The Multifamily Recycling Report 2017 focuses on apartment and condominium multifamily sites, as apartments and condominiums are most likely to have shared garbage and recycling collection service.

**Service level**

The volume of garbage, mixed recycling and glass recycling service provided to multifamily sites.

**Signage**

Signage refers to stickers, decals, posters and signs posted on bins or in collection areas that directs users on how, or what, to place in the bins.

**Single-family**

Includes detached, single-family residences, duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes. June 2017 Appendix G Glossary Multifamily Recycling Report 2017

**Standard Recyclable Materials**

Means newspaper, ferrous scrap metal, non-ferrous scrap metal, used motor oil, corrugated cardboard and kraft paper, aluminum, container glass, high-grade office paper, tin/steel cans, yard debris, mixed scrap paper, milk cartons, plastic containers, milk jugs, phone books, magazines, and empty aerosol cans.

**Waste Characterization study**

The process by which the composition of different material streams (garbage, mixed recycling, etc) are analyzed.