



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT AUTOMATED COLLECTION

March, 2009



Easier › Cleaner › Greener

1. Q. What is automated collection?

A. Automated collection is a system where garbage, recycling, and yard waste carts are emptied using a mechanical arm on the truck, instead of workers lifting and emptying cans and bags by hand. It's easier for residents - the carts are easy to wheel and there's no more bagging recyclables and yard waste. It's easier for the hauler – with reduced workplace injuries and shorter collection times. And it's cleaner because the cart lids stay firmly closed, reducing litter. It's also greener - research shows that people recycle more material using the carts. Plus, newer trucks mean fewer emissions and better air quality.

2. Q. Why change from the existing manual collection system?

A. With our current garbage and recycling collection contracts coming due across the Central Okanagan, we needed to look at new ways to improve waste collection services. Labour shortages have meant missed pick-ups for many homes. Prices for fuel, labour and injury claims are driving costs up. The new program uses automated collection trucks to overcome these challenges. For example, waste haulers lift upwards of 10 metric tonnes of waste into their trucks each day. With the automated collection program, haulers can be almost any age or stature. And, given the escalating costs for fuel, labour and injury claims, the projected costs for manual collection would have risen substantially.

At a Glance

What: New garbage, recycling and yard waste collection program.

When: Starts spring 2009

How: Each home will receive 3 carts that will be collected using trucks with automated arms to empty carts into trucks.

Who: All Central Okanagan homes currently on curbside collection.

3. Q. How will it work?

A. Each home will be supplied with three easy-to-use wheeled carts; one for garbage, and larger ones for recycling and yard waste. For garbage, simply place bagged garbage into the cart and roll it to the curb or the edge of the road on your regular collection day. For recycling, no more bags are needed – simply place your recyclables directly into the cart and set out every other week on your regular recycling day. Yard waste will be collected on those weeks that are not slated for recycling pick-up from March through November. For yard waste, no bags are needed – just place your yard waste directly into the cart. The hauler then empties the carts using trucks equipped with mechanical arms.



4. Q. Do you want to watch how it works?

Learn more by watching our new video online that shows how the trucks and carts work and what others who have tried it had to say about the program. Visit the Regional District website at www.regionaldistrict.com and under Quick Links, select Automated Waste Collection Program.

5. Q. Why have solid waste management costs increased under the new automated system?

There are three reasons for the increase in solid waste management costs for homes on the new automated collection program.

Collection Costs: Our previous waste collection contracts were based on pricing that was set in 1999. Increases in operational costs, including fuel and labour, have driven waste collection costs up across North America. As a result, waste collection costs would have increased under any type of waste collection system. Collection costs increases have increased by up to \$56.98 per year under the new contract.

Based on discussions with the collection companies, the collection costs for automated collection are very similar to collection costs for manual pick-up. In addition, many collection companies informed us that they were not planning to bid on a manual collection contract due to labour shortages, worker injuries and the continual rising costs associated with it.

Container Costs: The cost for the new reusable carts includes a one-time delivery charge, the cost of the carts, and an annual maintenance charge.

The one-time delivery charge is \$6.85 for households in the City of Kelowna and \$9.81 for households outside the City of Kelowna.

The cost of the carts is \$157.65, which is being paid for over a period of between five and ten years depending on municipality. As a result, approximately \$15.00 to \$32.00 will be charged over the next five to ten years.

The annual cart maintenance charge is \$1.08 for households in the City of Kelowna and \$1.44 for households outside the City of Kelowna.

Charges for cart delivery and cart maintenance are lower for City of Kelowna residents because of higher population density and closer proximity to the cart storage and maintenance facility.

Recycling Program Costs: In the past, the sale of recycled materials has reduced the cost of the program. Therefore, the current economic downturn means we don't get as much revenue from the sales of our recycled materials, driving up the cost of the program. Our recyclables are no longer worth as much in the commodities markets, reducing the revenue that helped cover the costs of processing the recyclables. As a result, households in every municipality are required to pay approximately \$20.00 per year more for the recycling program.

6. Q. How big are these containers?

A. There are two main sizes of containers. The size designated for garbage is 120 litres, roughly equal to two regular sized garbage bags. The yard waste and recycling containers are 240 litres, about the size of four standard recycling or yard waste bags.

7. Q. Will my scheduled collection day change?

A. No it will not change. Garbage and recycling collection will continue as per your regular schedule. Yard waste will be collected on alternate weeks from recycling collection from the beginning of March to the end of November. A detailed schedule will be sent to you in early 2009 in the Living Greener calendar and will also be attached to the carts when they are delivered to your home.

8. Q. When does automated collection begin?

A. Automated collection of garbage, yard waste and recyclables is scheduled to begin in early 2009. The service will be "phased in", which means that different areas will have slightly different start dates. The roll out starts on the Westside in early February, followed by Peachland, then Lake Country and wraps up in the City of Kelowna in late spring. When the carts are delivered to your home, you will be able to start using them right away. You will also receive lots of information about how to use the carts well in advance of the program starting in your neighbourhood.

9. Q. What will I be able to put into each cart?

A. You will be given three carts: one for garbage, one for recycling and one for yard waste. The materials accepted are the same as in the present collection system. All recyclables – paper, cardboard, tin cans, and plastic containers and film – can simply be put into the cart mixed together, no bags and no sorting required. Similarly, yard waste, like grass clippings, garden plants and prunings, can simply be tossed loosely into the yard waste carts – no bags required. Recycling and yard waste **should not** be placed in plastic bags but placed loosely into the specified carts. (Loose wet garbage must still be put in bags before placing in the garbage carts.)

Save on bags!
With the new program, you no longer need to buy blue and clear bags for recyclables and yard waste. In our pilot test areas and other areas that have switched to automated collection, residents estimated savings of \$30-\$55 a year because they no longer needed to buy bags.

10. Q. Where will I place these new carts for pickup?

A. Simply place your new carts in the same location as your existing cans for garbage, recycling and yard waste as shown below:



11. Q. What do I do with my old garbage cans when the program starts?

A. Your existing cans can be used for other home projects or extra storage. However, if you have no other use for the cans, there may be special curbside collections for the containers and/or drop-off locations at the Westside and Glenmore Landfills. The cans will be recycled. Please call OK Environmental Waste Services for more information at 250-868-3211.

12. Q. What if I sometimes have more garbage or recycling than fits in the cart?

A. While the new bins are roughly equal to two regular sized green garbage bags, if you have more garbage or recycling than fits into the cart, there are some options. If you occasionally need to set out extra garbage, **tag-a-bag** stickers can be purchased to place on additional garbage bags. These bags will be picked up at the same time the garbage cart is emptied. The maximum weight for a garbage bag cannot exceed 23kg (50lbs) and it must be of standard size: up to 26" by 36". Up to two extra garbage bags will be picked up only if they display a **tag-a-bag** sticker and are NOT placed within a regular garbage can. For more info about tag-a-bags or where to buy them, visit our website at:

http://www.regionaldistrict.com/departments/waste/waste_garb_tagabags.aspx

For recycling there are three recycling depots where you can take extra recyclables at no charge. Visit our website at:

http://www.regionaldistrict.com/departments/waste/waste_recy_depots.aspx

It is important to remember when filling any of the carts that materials should not be packed down but should be placed loosely in the cart. The cart will not empty properly if the materials are tightly packed in.

13. Q. What if I sometimes have more yard waste than fits in the cart?

A. With the new program, you'll receive yard waste collection every other week from March to November. All yard waste will have to fit into the yard waste cart and the lid must close completely. Additional or larger yard waste carts will not be provided and no extra bags or bundles of yard waste will be collected. (Note: This system has worked very well in other communities and in the pilot project that was conducted in the fall of 2007. Participants loved the yard waste collection system because they didn't have to save their yard waste for months at a time – they could put the extra yard waste out for the next collection every two weeks. They also loved that they didn't have to buy bags or stuff the yard waste into the bags.)



The following materials will be collected in the yard waste cart: leaves, grass clippings, weeds, plants, flowers, and branches less than 5 cm (2 inches) in diameter and less than 1.0 m (3 feet) in length. Yard waste is to be put into the carts loose, and cannot be bagged.

Residents that are not on automated collection during the spring yard waste collection will be permitted to put 240 litres (3 to 4 standard bags) on the curbside for collection, every other week, starting in March. If you have an excess of yard waste, it can be dropped off year round at either the Westside or Glenmore Landfill in the yard waste pile free of charge (up to 250kg). Alternately, private collection companies will collect unlimited amounts of yard waste for a fee – visit our website at www.regionaldistrict.com for a list of collection companies.

14. Q. What if I do not want a yard waste cart?

A. If you do not need or wish to have a yard waste cart, the extra cart will be picked up. However, the cost for collection service will remain the same. (*Please note: yard waste will no longer be allowed in the garbage or recycling carts*). Call OK Environmental Waste Systems for cart collection 250-868-3211.

15. Q. What if my cart is lost, stolen or damaged?

A. OK Environmental Waste Systems will replace, at no charge, lost or stolen carts and repair or replace carts that are damaged through normal use. Call 250-868-3211.

16. Q. What if I want to change the size of my cart?

A. Our first priority is to deliver more than 150, 000 carts to over 50,000 homes throughout the Central Okanagan and to ensure there are enough carts and resources to facilitate future changes. You can request a cart change out from Ok Environmental Waste Systems 250-868-3211. We ask that you try the carts before requesting a change. Upgrading your recycle cart can be done free of charge, however there will be a \$72.00/year user-fee (except Lake Country \$50.00/year) to upsize to a larger garbage cart. At this point, upsizing your yard waste cart is not an option.

17. Q. Do I need to buy the carts?

A. The cost of the carts is included in the annual fee for collection service. The carts will remain the property of your municipality or local government, registered to your specific property and address and will stay with that address should you move.

18. Q. What colour are the carts?

A. The carts will all be dark grey with different colour lids. Garbage cart lids will be grey, recycling will be blue and yard waste will be green.

19. Q. Will any employees be replaced with an automated collection system?

A. No employees will be replaced under the automated collection system. The main reason for using an automated collection system is because of the labour shortage in the Central Okanagan, which is not expected to change in the near future. Because of the shortage of workers, the waste collection companies had difficulty recruiting and retaining employees. Automated collection does not require any heavy manual lifting, which means many more people are able to do the work (younger and older employees of both genders).

20. Q. What if I want to opt out of the automated collection system and continue with manual collection?

A. Municipal and Regional District by-laws require that all single-family dwellings participate in the waste collection system as they have in the past. The City of Kelowna and the Districts of Peachland, Westside and Lake Country have a no opt-out policy. In very exceptional situations, Regional District of Central Okanagan Electoral Area residents may be granted an exemption, however you cannot apply for this exemption until the roll-out of the automated collection program is complete in early June. For more information contact the Regional Waste Reduction Office at 250-469-6250 or recycle@cord.bc.ca.

21. Q. Are you concerned about maneuvering the carts due to a physical disability?

A. The wheeled carts are in many ways easier to roll than lifting a garbage container. However, for residents that are unable to maneuver the carts and have no one living in the home that is able to do so either, a program is in place to provide assistance or a service level change. A request for assistance must be submitted through the Regional Waste Reduction Office using the Application for Service Level Change. The application is available at the Regional Waste Reduction Office, on the web at:

http://www.regionaldistrict.com/departments/waste/waste_other_progrep.aspx or you can request it be mailed to you. For more information, please call 250-469-6250 or e-mail recycle@cord.bc.ca.

22. Q. There was a pilot project conducted in the area last fall. What were the results of that test?

A. A pilot project was conducted to test how an automated collection program would work in our communities, as well as test residents' preference for the size of the waste carts. A secondary objective of the pilot project was to determine the levels of residents' interest in having regular bi-weekly yard waste collection.

The 13-week pilot project ran from September 17 to December 14, 2007. Five hundred and five homes and businesses were chosen from three areas in the region that could present the greatest challenges to haulers and/or residents, including: limited storage space in small multi-family units, long drive-ways, steep terrain, narrow streets with tight turn space, mixed use (small business and residential), back alleys, large lot sizes and homes, and multi age and socio-economic backgrounds.

- 94% strongly supported the new collection system
- 2% somewhat supported and 3% were neutral about the new collection system
- Only one respondent (0.5%) somewhat disagreed and one respondent (0.5%) strongly disagreed with the new collection system
- 84% saved money (an estimated \$35-60 per year) because they did not have to buy bags
- Residents consistently recycled 50% more than with the blue bag program

- Residents placed out almost double the amount of yard waste than they had with the previous system

The following are some of the comments that were received from the participants during and after the pilot project:

- *This is such a time saver, as I would have had to take lawn cuttings etc to the dump three times.... I'd gladly pay \$30 to \$50 for this service. Many thanks! (Ross)*
- *Finally! Something the gov't does makes sense. (Gillian)*
- *The yard waste bin is the best thing since sliced bread. We love it! (Mike)*
- *I think this is a great, long overdue idea! (Survey respondent)*
- *I love this system. It's easy, clean and efficient (Survey respondent)*

Here are some additional benefits of the Automated Collection System:

Service Improvements

- Residents don't need to buy plastic recycling and yard waste bags or replacement garbage cans.
- New wheeled carts are extremely durable and convenient to use.
- Residents don't need to worry about weight limits (especially for yard waste).

Worker Benefits

- Less manual lifting and handling of garbage improves worker safety and reduces injuries and sick leave.
- Men and women can make vehicle operation a life-long career.

Environmental Benefits

- The new carts result in less litter in lanes and streets. Lids always remain on the cart.
- Collection is faster so there is less air pollution and road wear.
- New trucks meet EPA standards, reducing nitrogen oxide emissions by 95% and particulate by 80%.
- More people recycle more materials because they don't have to buy blue bags (50% more in pilot project in 2007).
- Less yard waste goes into garbage because yard waste is collected separately and composted.
- No more plastics bags are needed



Please contact the Waste Reduction Office if you have additional questions about the new Automated Collection System.

Phone: 250-469-6250

Email: recycle@cord.bc.ca