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Automated Garbage Collection  
**ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**

**WHAT IS AN AUTOMATED GARBAGE COLLECTION SYSTEM?**

Automated collection refers to the system where an operator activates a mechanical arm on the side of the collection vehicle to lift and empty standardized collection containers.

**WHY DID THE CITY WANT TO CHANGE TO AN AUTOMATED GARBAGE COLLECTION SYSTEM?**

Automated collection is more efficient, environmentally-friendly, safer and more economical than manual collection. Research has shown that the existing manual style of garbage truck currently used can contribute to increased injury to City workers. Injured workers mean lost time at work and additional wages to get the work done. An automated truck also only needs 1 person to run it instead of 2. With having such a hard time finding employees to do this manual work, having this automated system will help us with employment as well.

**WHY THE NEED FOR STANDARDIZED COLLECTION CONTAINERS?**

The automated collection system requires standardized containers for pick up by the mechanical arm. Regular garbage containers cannot be picked up with the mechanical arm as they are not designed for this purpose. The lids on the standardized containers are designed to be left closed by residents and will open automatically as the container is dumped.

**WHEN DOES PICKUP BEGIN WITH THE NEW CONTAINERS/TRUCK?**

The first scheduled week with the new truck and containers will begin the week of June 5<sup>th</sup>. The containers must be out by 7 am on your scheduled pickup day to ensure that it is picked up.

**WILL MY SERVICE BE ON THE SAME DAY? IF NOT, WHAT ARE THE NEW GARBAGE PICKUP DATES?**

Starting the week of June 5<sup>th</sup>, the new schedule will be as follows for all residential pickup:

Monday-SOUTHWEST part of town. (All residential containers South of Main & West of Central)

Tuesday- SOUTHEAST part of town. (All residential containers South of Main & East of Central)

Wednesday -NORTHEAST part of town. (All residential containers North of Main & East of Central)

Thursday & Friday- NORTHWEST part of town. (All residential containers North of Main & West of Central)

Our ultimate goal is to get the Northwest part of town all picked up on Thursdays but with that area being our largest number of residential pick-ups, it will be a work in progress to make the efficiencies needed. In the first few weeks if you are located in this area and your garbage is not picked up on Thursday do not worry, we will be back to get it on Friday so please leave it out.

**All dumpster pick-up will remain the same day as they are currently picked-up.**

### **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK MY GARBAGE WAS MISSED?**

Please wait until 3:00pm on the day of your regular pickup before you call to let us know your garbage was missed. With this being a new process and routes changing, they may have a different plan for how they get your garbage. They may be going up one side of the street and come down the other at a different time depending on their route. There are cameras on the automated truck to help alleviate these issues.

### **WHAT ARE THE SIZE OPTIONS FOR THE COLLECTION CONTAINERS?**

The garbage collection containers will be issued in one size for residential collection: 65 gallons.

### **WHAT IF THE COLLECTION CONTAINER IS TOO SMALL FOR MY HOUSEHOLD?**

Research shows that the 65-gallon container is adequate for most residences, plus it will help encourage recycling. Did you know that the recycling center is able to accept glass again?! The 65-gallon container will hold 1 gallon more than what was allowed previously. (Before everyone was allowed 2/32-gallon containers). Using an efficiently sized garbage container helps ensure that less waste ends up in our landfills. It also helps reduce the municipal cost of collection and the regional disposal of waste. It is the responsibility of the home owner to take care of any excess garbage that does not fit in the garbage container. The transfer station (landfill) is open M-F 8 am-4:30 pm and 9am-12pm Saturdays May – October. If you are not able to take it to the landfill you can call the office and they can pick it up for a fee.

### **MAY I PURCHASE AN ADDITIONAL GARBAGE CONTAINER?**

Yes. You may purchase one extra container for \$75 (price may change as supplier costs fluctuate) and the cost to dump the extra container will be \$25 a month. The \$25 fee will be charged regardless of whether or not you put extra garbage out every week.

### **WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE VERY MUCH GARBAGE, DO I STILL HAVE TO DRAG OUT THE CONTAINER EVERY WEEK?**

No. However, if your garbage becomes smelly or potentially attracts wildlife, you may want it emptied every week. If you store your waste safe from wildlife for more than a week, you can place the container out only when it is full, if you prefer. You will still be charged the monthly garbage fee even if you decide to opt out on a week.

### **WHAT KIND OF GARBAGE CAN I PUT IN THE CONTAINER & CAN I THROW LOOSE TRASH IN THE CONTAINER**

V.C.M.C. § 15-05-04 provides that only garbage and rubbish as defined by section 15-05-01 may be placed in city-supplied containers. Generally, this includes but is not limited to animal, fruit, or vegetable waste that results from the preparation, use, cooking, and consumption of food; accumulations of decayable household waste matter; packages and containers used in the storage, preparation, consumption, and serving of food; any other matter of any nature whatsoever which is subject to decay; and paper, cardboard, boxes, crates, barrels, small furniture, feathers, metal cans, wood, glass, bedding, clothing, crockery, and similar materials that are not subject to decay. You may use any kind of garbage bags in a variety of sizes from small to large. Garbage and rubbish should be bagged and tied. This will prevent garbage and rubbish from becoming airborne as well as help keep your container cleaner. Anything that is placed inside the container must be able to fall freely when dumped. Please ensure that you do not stuff the container tight with garbage. Items that MAY NOT be placed in city-supplied containers include but are not limited to ashes, yard waste, trees and shrub trimmings, tires, construction and demolition debris, street cleanings, dead animals, commercial and industrial waste, hazardous waste, liquids, sewer sludges, manure, septic tank pumping's, pesticides and unrinsed pesticide containers, waste oil, asbestos, infectious waste, rocks and concrete, car batteries, and electronics including televisions.

**WILL THE AMOUNT OF GARBAGE I AM ALLOWED TO PUT OUT FOR COLLECTION CHANGE?**

You will be allowed to fill the new collection container. There are only two restrictions: 1) The lid on the container must be able to close completely (do not overfill the container). 2) The weight cannot exceed 130 pounds (previously limited to 50 pounds each) so that damage is not caused to the container by overweight loads.

**ARE THERE WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS FOR THE COLLECTION CONTAINERS?**

Yes. The maximum weight load for the container is 130lbs. Please keep in mind that excessive weight in your garbage container could result in damage to the container, this would not be the responsibility of the City.

**WHAT DO I DO WITH PET WASTE?**

Pet waste is allowed in the garbage container, as long as it is double-bagged and securely tied.

**WILL THE NEW TRUCK WORK IN AN ALLEY?**

Due to the width and dead ends of some alleys, the automated garbage truck cannot work in all alleys. In most locations, container pick up will be from the Street or Avenue. The collection routes will continuously be reviewed to ensure that efficient service is provided to your residence.

**WILL I BE ABLE TO USE MY OLD RACKS TO HOLD THE NEW CONTAINERS?**

You will no longer be able to use the racks that were used previously due to the automatic arm on the new garbage truck. Also, your container may not be fastened or attached to anything on your pick-up day.

**WHERE SHOULD I STORE MY CONTAINER?**

V.C.M.C. § 15-05-04 requires that containers must not be stored on any street, alley, boulevard, sidewalk, or other public right of way, with the exception of times designated for collection, and container lids must remain securely closed at all times to facilitate proper collection, to prevent accumulation of precipitation and moisture, and to prevent access by vermin and other insects and animals.

**HOW WILL I KEEP TRACK OF WHICH COLLECTION CONTAINER IS MINE?**

The collection container will be inventoried and each one assigned to an individual address. The containers will be marked with a barcode, so the City will be able to track the containers and determine where a container belongs if one gets mixed up. With the North Dakota winds, it is recommended that you write that number down so you can easily identify your container. Please do not mark on your container.

**WHAT IF MY NEW CONTAINER BREAKS?**

The containers are designed to withstand all seasons, including our cold winter temperatures. In the event that your container is damaged, please contact the Operations Department for repair or replacement to be arranged. Any associated fee would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, depending upon the cause of the damage.

**WHAT IS THE COST IF MY CONTAINER IS DAMAGED, LOST OR STOLEN?**

The cost to replace the container is \$75.00. (may change as supplier costs fluctuate). This cost is the responsibility of the home owner if the container is lost, stolen or damaged through no fault of the City or its employees. New containers may be purchased at City Hall/Public Works during business hours Mon-Thurs 8 am-5 pm, Friday 8 am-4 pm.

**IS THE AUTOMATED GARBAGE TRUCK HARD TO OPERATE AND WILL IT INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF DAMAGE TO MY PERSONAL PROPERTY?**

The automated garbage trucks operate much differently than the City's current garbage trucks but will not cause an increase of damage to private property. Training will be provided to all operators to ensure safe operation of the new truck. As long as the containers are out at least 3 feet from any obstruction there should not be any damage to any personal property.

**WILL I SET OUT MY NEW CONTAINER IN THE SAME PLACE AS I CURRENTLY PUT MY GARBAGE CONTAINER?**

The collection routes have been reviewed and revised as necessary to maximize the efficiency of the automated collection system and address areas that the new truck will be able to safely do the route. If your collection locations change, you will be notified. We have sent letters out to people who we are already aware need a location change. Please ensure there is a 3 ft. clearance around the container and that the front of the container is facing the road (wheel side of the container toward the house).

**WHAT DO I DO WITH MY OLD CANS?**

Feel free to use them for leaves, recycling or anything else you may want to use them for. If you no longer want your current garbage can, you're able to bring the old cans to the transfer station (landfill) to get rid of them free of charge. The transfer station is open Monday-Friday 8am-4:30pm and Saturdays from 9am-12pm May until October. Metal ones are able to be taken to the recycling center across the street to the North of the transfer station 24/7.

**WILL THE NEW TRUCK WORK ON A HILL?**

Yes, the automated garbage truck will work on the hills and terrain within the City of Valley City.

**WILL THE NEW SYSTEM REDUCE AVAILABLE ON-STREET PARKING & WILL THE NEIGHBOR'S CAR INTERFERE WITH MY NEW CONTAINER BEING COLLECTED?**

No. A basic 3 ft. rule will apply: the new collection containers should be placed 3 ft. from the curb and other nearby obstacles. The automated truck is capable of picking up collection containers in close quarters. As a standard, the 3 ft. rule applies: place your container 3 ft. away from the curb, other containers, overhangs, or a vehicle. You may put your container in your driveway.

**WILL THE GARBAGE TRUCK OPERATOR PICK UP MY GARBAGE CONTAINER IF THE LID IS OPEN A LITTLE BIT?**

The lid for the garbage container needs to be closed to be able to be tipped into the truck. Having the lid open, even slightly, allows garbage to escape when it is being lifted in the air to be dumped. Leaving the container open even a little, also encourages animals to get into the garbage.

**IS THIS AUTOMATED GARBAGE SYSTEM BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?**

Automated collection is more efficient, environmentally-friendly and more economical than manual collection. In addition, providing standardized containers to all residents improves curbside aesthetics by presenting a cleaner, uniform appearance and provides less opportunity for windblown debris and litter at the curbside. Additionally, the automated trucks serve more homes in a day – which means fewer truck hours on the road and less emissions.

**WHEN I MOVE, DO I TAKE MY CONTAINERS WITH ME?**

No. Please leave the City-issued container(s), in clean condition, at your address. If you are moving to a different address in Valley City, there should be a container there when you arrive.

## **I AM MOVING INTO A BRAND-NEW HOME IN VALLEY CITY; HOW DO I GET A GARBAGE COLLECTION**

**CONTAINER?** When a resident applies for utilities on a brand-new home at City Hall/Public Works, a collection container will be assigned and delivered with a set of instructions.

### **WHO COLLECTS THE GARBAGE?**

A City of Valley City employee from the Sanitation Department will operate the automated garbage truck that picks up residential garbage. Although the automated collection system is more efficient, no impact on City employee numbers is anticipated. Any efficiencies in crew schedules will allow work to continue on other priority work and projects for the City.

### **HOW MUCH MORE IS THE AUTOMATED COLLECTION SYSTEM GOING TO COST ME?**

The automated collection system will not increase the cost to our customers. The city worked with USDA for a grant for just over 30% of the cost of the new truck and the containers.

### **HOW SHOULD I KEEP MY CONTAINER CLEAN & WILL THE COLLECTION CONTAINER BE WILDLIFE RESISTANT / SQUIRREL PROOF?**

Here are some ways to prevent odors or conflicts with wildlife:

- Wash your container out regularly with a mild non-toxic detergent.
- Place your garbage into garbage bags inside your container.
- Keep your container stored in a location protected from wildlife access.
- Keep the lid closed at all times, the standard automated collection container is as wildlife-resistant as it can be with the lid closed.
- If you currently store your garbage container in a location that is safe from wildlife, that location will also be fine for the new collection container. Garbage odor is an attractant to wildlife.
- Most of the items that cause odor in your garbage are your food scraps and food soiled paper.
- To reduce odor, rinse food-soiled containers. (Better yet – check to see if it is able to be recycled!)
- If you don't have a secure inside location to store your container, freeze or keep indoors any material that might attract wildlife and then put it out on collection day.
- The collection containers have a lid that closes relatively firmly, as long as the container is not overfilled.
- The lid is to stay closed when the container is placed out for collection. The lid will open automatically when the garbage truck empties the container.
- Do not place anything in your garbage that an animal might be able to smell from a distance.

### **WILL THE TRUCK BE ABLE TO PICK UP MY CONTAINER IN THE WINTER MONTHS & IF SO, WHERE DO I PUT MY CONTAINER?**

The automated garbage truck is designed to be able to pick up containers in all seasons. During the winter, residents should put their container where they normally put them during the rest of the year, as long as the container is:

- sitting on the ground or asphalt (not on a snow bank)
- at least 3 ft. away from other obstructions, such as a vehicle
- not blocked by any other obstruction that impedes the tipping arm of the truck

### **HOW WILL I HANDLE MY NEW COLLECTION CONTAINER IN THE WINTER?**

The collection container should be easier to use in the winter than your current standard garbage container. The wheels on the containers are designed to be easily maneuverable through all seasons, including through snow in the winter. If your container is not overloaded, it should be easy to wheel.

This Q&A will also be located on our website [www.valleycity.us](http://www.valleycity.us)