



CURBSIDE COLLECTION of Trash, Recycling, and Yard Waste: Potential Service Changes, Guidance and Recommendations related to COVID-19

(Updated 3/27/20)

All curbside collection programs for waste and recycling remain operational at this time. Please continue to separate and recycle as usual. You do not need to change how you are doing anything.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR HAULING SERVICE

1. **NOW:** Waste haulers may be limiting extra services like collecting bulk items or excess trash or recycling that is outside of the cart. For example, they may not collect bulk materials or flattened cardboard boxes that are left outside of the cart. For specifics on your program, please check with your city or hauler directly.
2. **NEXT:** There may be further changes to your curbside services as things change over the coming days. For example, there may be a delay in the startup of the seasonal yard waste collection service. Further, it may become necessary for waste hauling companies to take measures to collect materials on reduced schedules. Haulers have proposed a potential need to combine yard waste with trash, because of a shortage of drivers, but in order to do that they must first be granted official exemption from the state law requiring yard waste to be collected separately and composted.
3. **LAST RESORT:** According to haulers it is unlikely but possible that they would need to collect trash and recycling together on the same day in the same truck. However, this would not apply in counties where there is an ordinance requiring the separation of materials. Also, municipal hauler contracts usually require separation of recyclables, which means that cities and their haulers would need to negotiate and amend contract terms in order for such extreme measures to be made.

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE AT HOME

Maintain your green standards: If services are eventually reduced and/or if you would like to make extra efforts to maintain your green-standards, consider the following measures:

- **Yard waste and food scraps:** The following suggestions are general best practices, regardless of whether curbside service is running as normal or experiencing disruptions due to the virus.
 - **Back yard composting:** Now is the time to start composting your yard waste and food scraps in a corner of the backyard if you have the space. There are many great guides available online about how to get started. Check out the Illinois Food Scrap Coalition (IFSC) resources on [backyard composting](#).

- **Green-scaping & lawn mulching** – mulch leaves into the garden beds and leave grass clippings on the lawn. Google either of these terms to find a wealth of guidance online.
- **Drop-off options:** Check with your county recycling program manager to find an IEPA permitted drop-off location that can take your organics (food scraps/landscape waste) for composting. See the [IFSC map of compost facilities](#). Call ahead to confirm that they are open to the public for landscape waste drop-off.
- **Do not burn** your landscape waste or any other waste please, despite any ill-informed advice to do so. See the EPA information on the [hazards of burning waste](#). We do not want to fill the air with smoke at a time when people are struggling with respiratory-related illnesses. Instead, please mulch these organic materials properly, so that they will break down through a natural emission-free process.
- **Recycling:** If there are extreme disruptions to recycling service, you can stockpile your clean recyclables in a corner of the garage or basement until this is over. If you chose to do this, keep in mind that you will need to feed the volume in over time when service returns, so as not to overwhelm the system.
- **Waste reduction and rethinking:** Return to the thrifty measures taken by our elders in times of national or global emergencies and rethink your consumer habits. Up your game with innovative ways to minimize your discards. Reuse everything you can. Reduce your consumption by considering your purchases, including the packaging they come in. Shop for food-items that are less perishable and invest in appliances that are durable and repairable. Do your part in helping maintain the viability of our resource recovery system.

Illinois State Update on Waste and Recycling in Relation to COVID-19

On Friday, 3/20/20 the Governor of Illinois, J.B. Pritzker, issued an executive order for residents of Illinois to stay at home. This order allows essential infrastructure and associated employees to continue to travel for work related functions. Waste and recycling services are specified as essential infrastructure in the order.

Not allowed: Landscape waste or yard waste was banned from Illinois landfills in 1990 with Public Act 85-1430. As of the date of this document (3/26/20), no official approval has been given by the state for the combining of yard waste with trash.

Allowed changes to service: As of 3/23/20, recycling and waste haulers have been granted extended hours of operation as well as higher weight limits in trucks and trailers, in order for them to continue the essential service of collecting waste, yard waste, and recycling.