



**Answers to Frequently Asked Questions  
Regarding Solid Waste Collection  
September 2014**

**Question:** How much is the garbage collection assessment for FY2015?

**Answer:** The cost for FY2015 will be \$182.37 for District I (an increase of \$8.88 for the year, or \$0.17 per week); and \$170.36 for District II (an increase of \$5.08 for the year, or \$0.098 per week).

**Question:** What is the level of service residents receive for the annual assessment?

**Answer:**

- twice weekly garbage collection
- once weekly recycling collection
- once weekly yard waste collection
- on-demand collection of bulky items (tires, appliances, furniture, batteries, etc.)
- on-demand collection of electronics

**Question:** Why do I have to call for a bulky item pickup; why can't I just leave the stuff on the curb?

**Answer:** Bulky items (e.g., appliances, furniture, tires, etc.) are not collected in the regular garbage or recycling collection vehicles. A different type of truck is used to collect those items. Customers need to call to schedule a collection so the hauler knows where to send the truck. Bulky item collection is free, but the customer must call 239-252-2380 at least 48 hours prior to their regular recycling/yard waste collection day to schedule a pickup.

**Question:** Why is the garbage collection assessment on my tax bill?

**Answer:** Section 197.3632 of the Florida Statutes provides for collection of the assessment on the non-ad valorem section of the tax bill. This is known as the Uniform Method of Collection and is widely utilized in

Florida. This is the most cost effective collection method available to the Board of County Commissioners. To use the property tax bill as the collection vehicle, Section 197.3632, Florida Statutes, requires the Board to follow the specific process outlined below:

- Adopt an intent resolution that sets the time, date and place of an advertised public hearing wherein affected property owners can comment on the fees and the process;
- Provide notification of the advertised public hearing by first class mail to each affected property owner;
- Conduct the advertised public hearing at the pre-determined time, date and place;
- Adopt the fee or fees to be assessed on the tax bill; and,
- Adopt a special assessment roll that identifies the rates and affected properties. This roll will be merged with the property tax roll for collection of the assessment at the time property taxes are collected.

**Question:** Wouldn't it save money and reduce the garbage collection assessment if garbage was picked up only once per week?

**Answer:** Collier County continuously looks for opportunities to reduce costs while providing best value service and once weekly garbage collection is one option that's been considered. The County's Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Department investigated the possibilities for cost savings associated with a reduction in the level of services; specifically, reducing the collection of garbage from twice per week to once per week. Studies indicate that once per week garbage pickup may save between \$12.00 and \$16.00 a year per household. This is clearly not a significant savings as compared to the loss of service. Charlotte County negotiated a similar decrease in the level of service and received only a \$16.00 reduction in their yearly assessment. However, many customers were not pleased with the loss of service, especially in rural areas. Charlotte County has since increased fees, above the savings originally recognized, to properly manage the collection of curbside waste.

Potential effects of changing to once per week pickup of garbage include increases in -

- the amount of garbage left curbside per pickup
- neighborhood litter
- the use of plastic bags set beside the waste containers
- animal intrusion into the waste containers and plastic bags set beside the waste containers,
- odors and potential rot in the waste containers due to accelerated decomposition during the hot summer weather
- the hours collection trucks are on the road to finish garbage collection

- the rate of contamination of single stream recycling containers
- the onsite odors, unhealthy storage of waste, and increased pest infestations from missed pickups (resulting in two weeks waste storage)

Collier County continues to provide twice per week garbage collection to facilitate operational excellence and best value services, while keeping Collier County a clean and beautiful place to live. Collier County residents currently receive one of the highest levels of service at one of the lowest costs in Florida –

- twice weekly garbage collection
- once weekly recycling collection
- once weekly yard waste collection
- on-demand collection of bulky items (tires, appliances, furniture, batteries, etc.)
- on-demand collection of electronics

The annual assessment in Collier County has been steady at \$173.49 for the past four years with no change since 2011. The cost for FY2015 will be adjusted \$182.37 for District I, and \$170.36 for District II. The increase for District I is \$8.88 for the year, or \$0.17 per week. The increase for District II is \$5.08 for the year, or \$0.098 per week.

The current cost for this level of service in the City of Naples is \$248.10. Nearby counties offer various levels of service that are lower than that offered in Collier County. Lee County, for example, offers once-per-week garbage collection and their annual assessment is \$219.78. The assessment in Broward County is \$488.84.

**Question:** I am a snowbird and only live in Collier County three or four months of the year. Can the annual assessment for garbage collection be reduced for my property since I only use the service for part of the year?

**Answer:** Solid waste collection services are provided for each habitable unit on a property within the unincorporated area of Collier County. The costs for these services are recovered, not as a tax, but through the rates, fees, and charges as regulated by the Board of County Commissioners. The level of occupancy of individual units does not reduce the annual fee. Property owners who are not permanent residents make individual choices as to when they are in residence, but for the county, collection services must continue to be provided and paid for every service day.

**Question:** My cart is split/has a broken wheel/was stolen; how do I get a new one?

**Answer:** Call 239-252-2380 and a customer service representative will arrange to have a new cart delivered to your home.

**Question:** I have a large family. Can I get a second trash/recycling cart?

**Answer:** Yes. A second recycling cart will be provided free. A second trash cart may be purchased.

**Question:** Do the solid waste collection vehicles used in Collier County run on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)?

**Answer:** Not yet. The Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Department is working with one of the two franchisee haulers, Waste Management Inc. of Florida, to build a CNG fueling station and to begin replacing its diesel vehicles with CNG vehicles. The implementation of this project will not only reduce the amount of emissions, but reduce the dependency on oil. This project is anticipated to begin in the third quarter of FY2015.

**Question:** Are there any CNG fueling stations in Naples?

**Answer:** There are no public CNG fueling stations in Naples. There are two private CNG fueling stations in Ft Myers. There are four public CNG fueling stations on Florida's east coast in Miami Gardens, Ft. Lauderdale, and two in Pompano Beach. There are three CNG fueling facilities in the Tampa area, and one near Orlando.

**Question:** Any more thoughts to the State mandated recycling goals relative to local projects disposing in-county?

**Answer:** In FY2013, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection calculated Collier County's recycling rate at 60 percent. To reach (or exceed) the state's recycling goal of 75 percent by 2020, the Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Department is working on recycling program enhancements, and new pilot recycling programs to increase recycling in both the residential and commercial sectors. In FY2015 the county will be permitted to begin the deployment of its new artificial reef program. The artificial reef project will reuse 18,000 tons of clean concrete that will contribute to the county's recycling rate.

**Question:** Not sure what you are seeing in your volumes, but what perspective can you provide on your numbers for yard waste disposal? I have had some people tell me that commercial landscapers are disposing their chipped up yardwaste on private property, likely avoiding tipping charges at commercial/county disposal sites, and maybe being undermined by cheaper

rates where people are allowing disposal on residential/Estates lots. Are you having any downturning trends on volumes of this kind of material?

**Answer:** Waste Management, the franchise hauler for District I, the largest of the two collection districts, reports that yard waste collection tonnages have been consistent over the last four years, and the trend through the first six months of 2014 is on track to be in the same line. Tonnages are –

- 2010: 11,088
- 2011: 11,093
- 2012: 11,768
- 2013: 11,858
- 2014 through June: 5,924

Waste Management staff recently (September 2014) meet with the Public Utilities Division's Ordinance Enforcement staff to discuss yard waste collection and the topic of commercial landscapers was brought up. It's been observed that some commercial landscapers are leaving the yard waste at the homeowner's property for collection, rather than transporting the yard waste to the landfill or another disposal location. As long as the yard waste is properly prepared, it will be collected. At issue is yard waste that is dumped on vacant lots. But the problem does not appear to be affecting collected tonnages.