

# LOCAL HAZARDOUS WASTE RATE - STRUCTURE CHANGE IN 2015

## Frequently Asked Questions for King County Ratepayers

Updated 1.22.15

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The Local Hazardous Waste Management in King County (Program) fulfills local government responsibilities under state law (RCW 70.105.220) for managing hazardous waste. The Program provides safe disposal of hazardous materials and wastes from residents and small businesses throughout King County, as well as a range of services and prevention programs to reduce exposure and risk from hazardous materials. The Program is funded by local hazardous waste (LHW) fees on solid waste (garbage) and sewer accounts, and nominal fees charged at transfer stations. Monthly LHW fees are collected on garbage accounts—currently \$1.08 for residents and \$11.24 for businesses.<sup>1</sup> The Program will be changing how these fees are charged to businesses and multi-family residential solid waste accounts.

The King County Board of Health (Board) sets the Program's rates. The Board was briefed on the Program's rate structure proposal at their April meeting. They adopted the new rate structure at their July meeting. The rates new rates will become effective April 1, 2015.

### **1. Why is a change being made to LHW solid waste (garbage) fees?**

The Program is interested in making its rates fairer by considering relative volumes of waste generated by different ratepayers. The current flat rate system isn't fair for businesses or multi-family residences that generate small amounts of solid waste because they are charged the same flat rate as companies and multi-family developments that produce large volumes of solid waste. Also, some multi-family residences pay different fees depending on how their accounts are structured with their garbage collection service provider. Under the new system, multi-family residences throughout King County will be charged in a consistent manner, using the same volume-based fee structure.

### **2. Who will be affected by the change in rate structure?**

Rate changes will affect commercial (business and multi-family residential) garbage accounts (7% of accounts countywide). Single-family residential accounts (93% of accounts) will not be affected. The new rate structure will be applied to all types of non-residential accounts including businesses, private enterprises, not-for-profit organizations, public agencies, schools, medical organizations and healthcare facilities. It will also apply to all multi-family residences including condominiums, apartment buildings, townhouses, and multiplexes.

### **3. How will rates change under the new structure?**

LHW rates are currently charged as a flat fee. Under the new structure, affected accounts (businesses and multi-family residences) will pay fees based upon the size of their garbage containers. Three rates have been established, reflecting small, medium, and large-size containers. Single-family homes will continue to be charged a flat fee.

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<sup>1</sup> See King County Board of Health Code 11.04.040.

[http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/BOH/~/\\_media/health/publichealth/documents/boh/code/BOHCodeTITLE11.ashx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/BOH/~/_media/health/publichealth/documents/boh/code/BOHCodeTITLE11.ashx)

#### 4. Will fees change for recycling, composting, or yard waste services?

This proposed change will not affect recycling, composting, or yard waste services.

#### 5. How much will my rates change?

If you are a business or multi-family residence, the answer depends on how much garbage you produce – fees are based on the size of your garbage container. Charges are applied per month for each type of garbage service you have based on container size.



Under the new structure, approximately 20% of accounts will pay less than they are now; 71% will pay about a dollar more, and about 8% will pay about \$35 more.

#### 6. Are there other changes associated with the new rate structure?

Yes. Fees will shift from being charged per account to being charged per “service,” so accounts that include multiple garbage collection services will be charged separately under the new structure.

**Example:** A business with a 10-gallon garbage can and a dumpster will pay LHW fees for both services. The business would pay \$1.46 per month (for the 10-gallon can service), and \$12.01 per month (for the dumpster service) – for a total of \$13.47 per month.

The per-service billing will be similar for accounts that cover multiple sites.

**Example:** A school district has an 8-yard dumpster at each of its five campuses, and a 12-yard roll-off container at a sixth site.

The school district would be charged monthly fees of \$12.01 x 5 (for each 8-cubic yard dumpster service), and \$46.15 (for the 12-yard roll-off container at the sixth site) – for a total of \$107.66 per month. If the school district currently is paying the LHW fee at each site, this is an increase of \$38.76 over their current fee.

Relatively few accounts currently bundle multiple services or sites, so the number of those who will be billed for more than one service is expected to be fairly small. A relatively small number of accounts (estimated to be fewer than 50) will see rates increase to above \$100 per month.

#### 7. How does the new rate structure change affect single-family residences?

The new LHW rate structure change does not apply to single-family residences. However, these residents will see a slight reduction in their LHW fee (a decrease of 24 cents each month), because the total cost to safely dispose of hazardous waste would be shared more fairly between small and large volume residential ratepayers.

**8. Will my garbage bill look the same?**

Yes, your garbage bill will look the same physically, but you may see a change in the amount you are billed for the LHW fee.

**9. Who do I contact for more information?**

For more information about the proposed garbage surcharges, contact Liz Tennant at [Liz.Tennant@kingcounty.gov](mailto:Liz.Tennant@kingcounty.gov) or (206) 284-7974.

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**About the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program**

The Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County (LHWMP) is a multi-jurisdictional program that focuses on reducing public and environmental exposure to hazardous materials.

Four government agencies, 37 cities, and tribal governments in King County are working together to help citizens, businesses, non-profit organizations, and government agencies reduce the threat posed by the production, use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes. LHWMP provides services to 1.9 million residents and 60,000 businesses throughout King County. Visit us on line at [www.HazWasteHelp.org](http://www.HazWasteHelp.org)



**Local Hazardous Waste  
Management Program  
in King County**

**Alternate Formats Available  
Voice: 206-263-3050  
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