

City of Abbotsford Automated Curbside Collection Program



FAQ's

updated: February 26, 2021

When will the automated program begin?

Automated collection of curbside carts begins on Monday, April 19, 2021.

How will the curbside collection program change?

The curbside collection program will be changing to a cart-based, fully automated collection system. Residents will be provided with three carts; one each for garbage, recycling and compostables. These carts will be wheeled to the curb on collection day and automated trucks will pick-up and empty the contents. All waste will need to be contained inside the carts with the lids fully closed. Similar to the manual collection service, residents will continue to be responsible for storing the carts, sorting their material, and rolling the carts to the curb by 7:00 am on the scheduled collection day. See the “Excess Waste” section for more information on temporary yard waste collection services.

Why are we changing the program?

The City's goal is to provide efficient and cost-effective services to residents. The City reviews all its programs and services regularly and adjusts them periodically to ensure we are using the latest and most efficient technology, providing value for service, and meeting our goal to be an inclusive and sustainable community.

We understand that we need to provide similar services to our neighbouring municipalities and ensure our waste is managed efficiently, creating the least amount of impact on the environment as possible. The new program will allow the City to replace our aging collection vehicles and decrease our fleet's greenhouse gas emissions. An automated collection process will cut down on collection worker injuries and keep our city streets cleaner.

What are the benefits of the new automated program?

The new automated collection program will provide residents with easy to roll durable carts that do not require heaving lifting or dragging, will help keep neighbourhoods cleaner by keeping material contained, and will allow for customizable cart sizes based on your households needs. You will no longer need to purchase blue bags for recycling as all recyclables will be placed loosely and unbagged into your recycling cart. The City will also see improved worker health and safety by eliminating heavy lifting, and will see a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions generated by curbside collection vehicles.

Will apartments, condos, and townhouses be included in the new program?

No, multi-family properties will continue to make their own arrangements with a private waste hauler for the collection and disposal of all waste streams. The City's curbside collection program provides waste collection services for single family dwellings and duplexes only.

CARTS

When will I receive the carts?

Carts will be delivered to your home between February 1st and March 31st. An information package will accompany the carts that will provide information on how to use your new carts and other information on the new automated collection program. If you have not received your carts by March 31, 2021, contact the City at **604-864-5640** or **carts@abbotsford.ca**. Please note that we are not able to confirm delivery dates or times for specific addresses or neighbourhoods.

What sizes will my carts be?

Each single family home and duplex will receive one set of the following carts:

- 240 L Recycling Cart (blue cart);
- 240 L Compostables Cart (green cart); and
- 240 L Garbage Cart (dark grey cart)

Homes with a registered secondary suites outside the bear container area will receive one 360 L recycling cart in place of the 240 L recycling cart. Residents in the existing bear-resistant cart area (Upper Straiton) will receive three new 240 L bear-resistant carts and the City will collect the old bear-resistant carts after the new automated collection program starts.

Please do not place your new carts for curbside collection before Monday, April 19, 2021. Carts placed at the curb before that date will not be collected.

What are the physical sizes of the carts?

Cart Dimensions

Cart Size	Height		Width		Depth	
120 L	95.5 cm	37-5/8 in	48.6 cm	19-1/8 in	53.5 cm	21-1/16 in
240 L	109.9 cm	43-1/4 in	62.2 cm	24-1/2 in	69.9 cm	27-1/2 in
360 L	113 cm	44-1/2 in	63.8 cm	25-1/8 in	87.3 cm	34-3/8 in

How much will the carts hold?

Cart Size 	Recycling Capacity 	Compostables Capacity 	Garbage Capacity 
120 L	1.5 – 2 blue bags	1.5 standard garbage containers; or 1 – 2 big paper yard waste bags	1.5 – 2 black garbage bags
240 L (default cart size)	3-4 blue bags	3 standard garbage containers; or 2 - 3 big paper yard waste bags	3 - 4 black garbage bags
360 L	5-6 blue bags	4.5 standard garbage containers; or 3 – 4.5 big paper yard waste bags	5 - 6 black garbage bags

Will there be weight limits on what can go in the carts?

Yes. Overweight or carts that are too heavy create micro cracks in the plastic that develop into larger cracks and will decrease the life of the cart. The following weight limits will apply to each cart regardless of waste stream:

Weight Limits

Cart Size	Weight Limit	
120 L	50 kg	130 lbs
240 L	110 kg	240 lbs
360 L	165 kg	360 lbs

Why am I getting 240 L sized carts?

The City's own curbside participation studies and disposal data show that the 240 L cart size will meet the waste needs of most households in the curbside program. We also did extensive research with other municipalities who have adopted a similar cart-based program and their experience shows that the 240 L carts are large enough for the majority of households for all three waste streams.

Can I request a larger or smaller carts size ahead of time?

No. Property owners will be able to request a different cart size after using the 240L carts for 90 days. During the *90 Day Challenge*, you can try out your carts and see if they work for your household. Research shows that the 240L sized carts will be sufficient for most households to manage waste from all three waste streams. If you find you still need a bigger cart, or would like a smaller sized cart, you can submit a cart exchange request beginning July 19, 2021.

Cart exchange requests submitted prior to this date will not be accepted. Staff are undertaking a financial analysis to determine what costs will be applied for larger or smaller cart requests. Cost information will be shared in the coming months once it becomes available.

See the “Excess Waste” section for more information on temporary yard waste collection services.

Can I request a second cart for my recycling, compost or garbage?

Beginning July 19, 2021, property owners will be able to request a second compostables cart that is either 240 L or 360 L in size. Second carts for recycling or garbage collection will not be available. Staff are undertaking a financial analysis to determine what costs will be applied for second compostables carts. Cost information will be shared in the coming months once it becomes available.

Can I get a second set of carts for my basement suite?

No. Under the manual curbside collection program, the Suite Registration Fee and the annual Infrastructure Fee paid for registered secondary suites under the City’s Building Bylaw does not include additional curbside collection services for the suite. This will not be changing under the new automated collection program. However, to help with the transition to the new program, homes with registered secondary suites will be receiving a 360 L recycling cart in place of the standard 240 L recycling cart. We recommend that tenants work with their landlord or property manager to determine how to allocate waste allowances among the suites. See the “Excess Waste” section for more information on temporary yard waste collection services.

Will a second set of carts be provided for garden suites or coach houses?

Yes. Under the manual curbside collection program, a second curbside collection service can be provided for a secondary detached dwelling on the property. This will not be changing under the new automated collection program. If you are currently paying for a second curbside collection service for your coach house, garden suite, or second detached home, you will receive two sets of carts delivered to your property. If you would like to add a second curbside collection service for your coach house, garden suite or second detached home, or confirm services for these dwellings, please contact the City at **604-864-5640** or **carts@abbotsford.ca**.

What cart sizes will be available on July 19?

Cart Sizes Available

Cart Size	Recycling	Compostables	Garbage
120 L	X	X	X
240 L (default cart size)	X	X	X
360 L	X	X	X
240 L (bear-resistant)	X	X	X

Staff are undertaking a financial analysis to determine what costs will be applied for upsizing or downsizing carts sizes, adding a second compostables carts, and requesting a bear-resistant cart. Cost information will be shared in the coming months once it becomes available.

Who owns the carts?

The City owns the carts and will be responsible for the maintenance of the carts. The carts will be assigned to each household and will stay with the property. The carts will be equipped with identification tags to provide GPS location coordinates to the assigned address so it is important that the carts stay with the assigned property and not moved. If you move, your carts stay at the house.

How will I differentiate my cart from my neighbours?

All carts are identical so having your address on your carts will make it easy for you and your neighbour to distinguish the carts. Carts are designed to have a white box on the side of the cart where we recommend you use a permanent marker to write your address.

Do I take the carts with me when I move?

No. Each cart is equipped with identification tags to provide GPS location coordinates to the assigned address so it is important that the carts stay with the assigned property. When moving to a new home, leave your carts at your old home and use the carts that are already at your new home. The previous owner or tenant in your new home should leave their carts behind. If there are no carts when you move in, please contact the City to request a set of carts at **604-864-5640** or **carts@abbotsford.ca**.

Where should I store my carts?

Each household will need to decide the best storage method for their home, but we recommend storing them inside a garage or other secure location. If this is not an option for you, you could store them in an outside location where they can be easily moved to the street on collection day. It is important to note that only empty carts should be left out unsecured to avoid creating wildlife attractants. Carts containing waste should be stored inside a garage or other secure storage area, and should not be placed at the curb overnight.

How do I get my carts to the curb if I have a long driveway?

The carts have large sturdy wheels and a stable base making them easy to move on pavement, gravel, grass and even through the snow. Some residents might choose to store the empty carts at the end of their driveway (on their property) chained to a fence or a tree, or inside a secure enclosure. On collection day, the carts would need to be unlocked and moved to the edge of the road. This approach would be similar to how residents are bringing material to the curb for the current collection program, except that when you bring material to the curb under the new program you put it into carts rather than leaving the bags or containers at the curb. In the new program, recycling material will need to be placed loose into the cart. Residents can transport the material to the cart in bags and then empty the bags into the cart for collection. Blue bags will not be accepted in the new automated collection program.

What do I do if my carts get damaged, lost or stolen?

Please contact the City at **604-864-5640** or **carts@abbotsford.ca** to report a damaged, lost or stolen cart.

Will there be changes to what can go in the recycling, compostables and garbage carts?

No, the materials in each stream will remain exactly the same as the current collection program. Recyclable items such as glass bottles and jars, foam packaging, plastic bags, electronics, batteries, etc. must continue to be taken to a depot or other drop-off location and not placed in the recycling cart.

Will I still be able to use blue bags for my recycling under the new program?

No. Reusable containers are more environmentally friendly and create less waste, reducing the amount of material going to landfill or needing to be recycled. They also take the onus off the resident to purchase the bags in order to participate in the curbside recycling program. There are also post-collection health and safety impacts as these bags need to be manually opened at the recycling facility in order to access the recyclable material. Plastic bags, when included in the sorting line, also negatively impact the recycling process by getting tangled in the sorting

equipment, requiring a shut-down of the sorting line in order to clean the equipment. For these reasons, Recycle BC requires the City to phase out the use of single use blue bags for the collection of curbside recycling. All recycling will be required to be placed loosely and unbagged in the recycling cart.

Will I still be able to use garbage bags for my garbage under the new program?

Yes, bagged garbage can be placed in the garbage cart. All types of garbage bags will continue to be accepted providing all material is contained inside the cart.

Will glass be collected with the new program?

We will be reviewing this to determine if we can add this as an additional service. Please check back in the fall of 2021 for more information.

Will a large or bulky item collection service be added to the program?

We will be reviewing this to determine if we can add it as an additional service. Please check back in fall 2021 for more information.

BEAR-RESISTANT CARTS

How do I know if I live in the bear-resistant cart area?

There are approximately 250 homes in the current bear-resistant cart area located in the Upper Straiton area on Sumas Mountain. These homes have been receiving semi-automated curbside collection services using carts provided by the City over the past several years. If you are currently using carts to place your material at the curb, this likely means you are in the bear-resistant cart area. If you are unsure, please contact the City at **604-864-5640** or **carts@abbotsford.ca**.

If I live in the bear-resistant cart area will I be getting new carts?

Yes. Homes in the bear-resistant cart area in the Upper Straiton area on Sumas Mountain will receive three new bear-resistant carts; one each for recycling, compostables and garbage. The new carts will be delivered before March 31, 2021 and the old carts will be collected in Spring or Summer 2021. The City will be contacting property owners in this area with additional information in the coming months.

Can I get a bear-resistant cart if I don't live in the designated bear-resistant cart area?

Yes, but not until after July 19, 2021. Property owners will be able to request to exchange their standard 240 L cart for a 240 L bear-resistant cart for any waste stream. Bear-resistant cart exchange requests submitted prior to this date will not be accepted. Staff are undertaking a financial analysis to determine what costs will be applied for bear-resistant carts. Cost information will be shared in the coming months once it becomes available.

It is important to note the carts are “bear-resistant” and not “bear-proof”. Please use bear smart practices with all waste carts. More information on managing wildlife attractants can be accessed online at wildsafefbc.com.

Will I need to unclip my bear-resistant carts when I place them at the curb on collection day?

Yes. Under the manual collection program, material is collected using a semi-automated collection system where collection staff are able to unclip the carts before emptying them. Under the new automated collection program, collection staff will not be able to leave the collection truck at each collection point. This means that starting April 19, 2021, any bear-resistant carts placed at the curb will need to have the clips unclipped for collection. The clips should be secured by residents at the end of the collection day to prevent bears and other wildlife from accessing the carts.

Will bear-resistant carts be available in the 120 L or 360 L size?

No. Bear-resistant carts are only available in the 240 L size.

BILLING & COSTS

How much will the new automated collection service cost?

Solid waste user fees at \$220 per house have been the same since 2012 and are part of your municipal property taxes. The City also receives approximately \$1 million in annual revenue from the contract with Recycle BC for the collection of curbside recyclables. Staff are undertaking a financial analysis to determine the effect of the various cart options on program costs. Cost information will be shared in the coming months once it becomes available.

Will it cost more if I upsize any of my carts to a 360 L size?

Possibly. There will be no change in cost for households that use a 360 L recycling cart. Staff are undertaking a financial analysis to determine what costs will be applied for upsizing a garbage cart or compostables cart to the 360 L size. Cost information will be shared in the coming months once it becomes available.

Will it cost more if I add a second compostables cart?

Possibly. Staff are undertaking a financial analysis to determine what costs will be applied for second compostables carts. Cost information will be shared in the coming months once it becomes available.

Will it cost less if I downsize any of my carts to a 120 L size?

Possibly. There will be no change in cost for households that request or use a 120 L recycling or compostables cart. Staff are undertaking a financial analysis to determine what costs will be applied for downsizing a garbage cart to the 120 L size. Cost information will be shared in the coming months once it becomes available.

Can I opt out of the curbside collection service?

No. The curbside collection service is a mandatory service for all single family homes and duplexes in Abbotsford, in accordance with the Solid Waste Collection Bylaw, 2013.

THE COLLECTION SCHEDULE

Will my collection schedule change?

Yes. Under the new automated collection program, recycling will change to every other week collection and will alternate with every other week garbage collection. Compostables will continue to be collected weekly. This means that on each scheduled collection day, you will roll two carts to the curb (i.e., compostables and recycling, or compostables and garbage).

Will my collection zone change?

Possibly. The City has reviewed the current routes to ensure material will be collected in the most efficient way under the new system. There may be changes to which collection zone your home is in or which days your curbside material is collected.

Will my collection schedule still move ahead one day following each statutory holiday?

Yes. Under the manual collection program, the collection schedule moves ahead one day following each statutory holiday recognized by the City. This will not change under the new automated collection program.

How can I find my collection schedule and zone for the new program?

We recommend downloading the Abbotsford Curbside Collection App (available for free from the App Store or Google Play) to have instant access to your collection schedule and to keep up to date on collection schedule changes. Your new collection schedule will also be included in the Curbside Collection Guide that will be delivered to your home along with the new carts.

CURBSIDE CART PLACEMENT

Where do I set out my cart for collection?

Putting your carts out the right way on collection day ensures your carts will be collected safely and on schedule. The placement of carts is very important because the automated truck's mechanical arm needs sufficient room to pick up and empty the cart. All material must be placed in the cart with the lid completely closed. Overflowing carts and material placed outside of the carts will not be collected. General instructions for cart placement include:

- Place wheels against the curb and the arrows on the lid pointing to the street;
- Do not block the sidewalks, roadway or bike lanes;
- Leave 1 m (3 ft) of space on all sides of your carts;
- Leave 3 m (10 ft) of clearance above your carts; and
- Keep carts away from obstructions like parked cars, poles and utility boxes.

Homes that do not have a sidewalk or curb should have carts placed at the end of the driveway, adjacent to the roadway. City staff will be addressing problematic areas ahead of the start of the new program to determine the most suitable areas for cart placement. If it remains an issue or you are unsure of where to place your cart, please contact the City at **604-864-5640** or **carts@abbotsford.ca**.

Please do not place your new carts for curbside collection before Monday, April 19, 2021. Carts placed at the curb before that date will not be collected.

What happens if a car or something else blocks access to my carts at the curb?

The City will be using collection trucks with mechanical arms to pick up and empty recycling, compost and garbage carts at the curb. The mechanical arm requires adequate space to reach, grab and lift the carts to empty them. Placing carts with enough space at the curb means your cart will be able to be picked up and emptied safely, and will ensure collection stays on schedule for you and your neighbours. Carts that are blocked by obstacles (e.g., parked cars, power poles, utility boxes, fences, downspouts, garages, etc.) will result in material not being collected.

Collection trucks will not return to collect material from carts that were blocked due to an obstruction. In order to maintain efficient and safe work flows, drivers of collection trucks are unable to exit the vehicle at every stop.

Can I continue to use my own containers for collection?

No, all Abbotsford residents receiving curbside collection services from the City are required to use the new automated carts for collection. Carts from other municipalities, regional districts or retailers are not compatible with the City's collection trucks and will not be collected. Only material inside the carts, with the lid fully closed will be collected.

See the "Excess Waste" section for more information on temporary yard waste collection services.

Why do I have to have my carts out by 7:00 am on collection day?

The order in which material is collected on each route can change without notice. The City is expected to collect your waste on your scheduled collection day between 7:00 am and 5:00 pm but the specific time for your home is not defined. Material should be set out no earlier than 5:00 am and prior to 7:00 am on your scheduled collection day. This requirement is the same under the manual collection program.

If you put out your material after 7:00 am and the collection truck has already passed your home, it will not be considered as missed collection and the truck will not return to collect your material.

EXCESS WASTE

Will I be able to put out paper yard waste bags?

Yes. To help property owners determine the best size of compostables cart for their property, the City will be providing collection of extra yard waste between April 19, 2021 and July 16, 2021. During this period, your green cart will be collected weekly on regular collection days, and extra yard waste will be collected on specified collection days on a bi-weekly basis. This additional service is being provided help you transition to the new cart-based program and will not continue after July 16, 2021. We are still working out the collection schedule for this service. Maximum yard waste requirements of 10 bags/containers or bundles will remain the same. You can use your old containers labelled with a green Compostable Waste sticker or paper yard waste bags for this extra collection service. Updated schedule information will be shared online at abbotsford.ca/carts as it becomes available. We recommend downloading the Abbotsford Curbside Collection App, to keep up to date on your collection schedule, including the extra yard waste collection dates. Beginning July 19, 2021, all waste, including compostables, will need to be fully contained inside a cart with the lid completely closed. Overflowing carts and material placed outside of the carts after this date will not be collected.

Will I be able to put out extra bags of garbage or recycling?

No. In order to maintain efficient and safe work flows, the drivers of the collection trucks are unable to exit the vehicle at every stop. All garbage and recycling will need to be fully contained inside a cart with the lid completely closed. Overflowing carts and material placed outside of the carts will not be collected.

What do I do with the rest of my waste if my carts are full?

Residents are encouraged to place as much material with curbside recycling and compostables so that we can minimize the amount of waste going to landfill. Some other tips to help maximize space in your carts include:

- Break down and flatten boxes;
- Stomp on milk jugs and other bulky plastic containers;
- Let grass grow 2 to 3 inches tall, then leave the grass clippings on the lawn to release water and nutrients back into the soil;
- Consider using a backyard composter or mulcher for leaves and grass clippings;
- Use a yard waste coupon to drop off extra yard waste for free at Net Zero Waste Abbotsford; or
- Hold on to extra material until your next scheduled collection day.

Excess recycling, compostables or garbage can also be dropped off at many locations in Abbotsford. Use the Waste Wizard (abbotsford.ca/wastewizard) to find a drop off location near you. Requests for upsizing carts will be accepted starting on July 19, 2021. Information on costs for upsizing carts is being updated.

What if I have unused extra garbage stickers?

We recommend using up any unused extra garbage stickers before the start of the new automated collection program. Extra garbage stickers can be purchased up until and including March 31, 2021 at City Hall, Abbotsford Recreation Centre, and Matsqui Recreation Centre, and can continue to be used on extra garbage bags placed at the curb up on regularly scheduled garbage collection days until and including April 16, 2021. Extra garbage stickers will not be able to be purchased after March 31, 2021, and refunds will not be provided for any stickers not used after April 16, 2021.

Will there be changes to the yard waste coupon program?

To help with the transition to the automated collection program, residents will be provided with a total of 9 yard waste coupons in 2021. An initial 3 yard waste coupons was provided with the curbside collection schedule mailed out in early December 2020. An additional 6 yard waste coupons will be provided as part of the Curbside Collection Guide included when carts are delivered to your home. Each coupon will continue to be valid for one free yard waste drop off of a load equivalent to a 5x8 ft utility trailer to a maximum weight of one tonne. More information on the yard waste coupon program is available at abbotsford.ca/waste.

OLD CURBSIDE CONTAINERS

What should I do with my old curbside containers?

All existing curbside containers should continue to be used until the automated program starts on April 19, 2021. Once the automated program begins, there are a number of creative and environmentally friendly ways to repurpose the old containers and keep them out of the landfill:

- Repurpose as a rain barrel or backyard composter;
- Use for extra storage of yard waste, tools, animal feed, potting soil or mulch;
- Collect your recycling depot items for efficient drop off (ex., film plastics, glass, electronics, refundable beverage containers, etc.);
- Construct a planter for root vegetables (ex., carrots, potatoes, etc.); or
- Create a pet waste composter.

If you have a great idea for how to repurpose your used containers, please share them with us at carts@abbotsford.ca!

The City of Abbotsford is currently looking into options for the collection and recycling of used curbside containers. Please check back in summer 2021 for more information.