

# City of Abbotsford Automated Curbside Collection Program



## FAQ's

### How will the curbside collection program change?

The biggest change is switching to a cart-based, fully automated collection system. Residents will be provided with three carts; one each for garbage, recycling and compostables. These carts are wheeled to the curb on collection day and automated trucks will pick-up and empty the contents. Similar to the manual collection service, residents will be responsible for storing the carts, sorting their material, and rolling the carts to the curb by 7:00am on the scheduled collection day.

### Will there be changes to the collection schedule?

Yes, your collection schedule will change. You will be provided with updated information when your carts are delivered. Each week you will put out two carts for collection according to your new schedule. Compostables will continue to be collected weekly. Recycling and garbage will be collected bi-weekly on alternating weeks.

### When will the automated program begin?

The new service begins on Monday, April 19, 2021.

### What are the benefits of the new automated program?

The City strives to meet the needs of residents while providing efficient and cost effective services. This new program will enable us to provide similar services to our neighbouring municipalities and ensure that our waste is managed efficiently, creating the least amount of impact on the environment as possible. The new program will also 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 improve neighbourhood esthetics by keeping materials better contained on collection days. Residents won't have to worry about losing their container lids on windy days. The easy-to-roll carts with attached lids will make it easy for residents to get material to curb, and the different cart size options will allow households to customize the size of their carts to best meet their waste needs.

### When will I receive the carts and what size will they be?





Carts will be delivered to your home between February 1st and the end of March. If you have not received your carts by March 31, 2021, please contact the City at 604-864-5514 or [carts@abbotsford.ca](mailto:carts@abbotsford.ca). 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 program. Each home will receive the following carts:

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

Residents in the existing bear-resistant area (Upper Straiton) will receive new bear-resistant carts and the City will collect the old bear-resistant carts.

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.

## 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

## Can I request a larger or smaller cart size?

Residents can request a different cart size after using the 240L carts for 90 days. During the 90 Day Challenge, you can try out the standard 240L sized carts and see if they work for your household. Research shows that the 240L sized carts will be sufficient for most residents 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. Additional information will be provided on how to submit a cart exchange request closer to the program start date. Residents will have a full three months during which they can request a different size cart.

Please note that requests received between **July 19, 2021 and October 19, 2021** will **NOT** be charged a cart administration fee.

Beginning October 20, 2021, a cart administration fee will apply for all requests to upsize or downsize carts sizes. Each property will only be able to submit one cart exchange request in a 12-month period. Staff are undertaking a financial analysis to determine what the administration fee will be and what cost will be applied to larger and/or smaller cart sizes. This information will be shared once it becomes available.

### What cart sizes will be available?

Cart Size	Recycling	Compostables	Garbage
120 L	✓	✓	✓
240 L (default cart size)	✓	✓	✓
360 L	✓	✓	✓
240 L Bear Resistant	✓	✓	✓

The annual solid waste collection fee is based on the 240 L cart size for all three waste streams. There will be an additional cost for upsizing to a 360 L cart or for requesting a bear-resistant cart outside of the current bear-resistant cart area. Staff are still working out the details on offering different cart sizes in the bear-resistant cart area. Information on the cost will be shared with residents as soon as it becomes available. Requests to upsize or downsize carts will not be accepted until July 19, 2021.

### Can I request a second cart for any waste stream?

Staff are working out the details on whether additional carts can be requested and what the additional cost would be. Information will be shared with residents when it becomes available.

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

Under the current curbside collection program, the Suite Registration Fee and the annual Infrastructure Fee paid for secondary suites under the City’s Building Bylaw does not include additional curbside collection services for the suite. However, staff are working out the details on whether additional service can be provided to registered secondary suites. Information will be shared with residents when it becomes available.

## 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

## 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

## Who owns the carts?

The City will own 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.

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

Please contact the City at 604-864-5514 or [curbside2021@abbotsford.ca](mailto:curbside2021@abbotsford.ca) to report a damaged, lost or stolen cart.

## 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 cart program.

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.

The City is currently reviewing a number of cart attachments available on the market that can be installed on the back of vehicles to allow residents to easily tow their carts to the curb. The attachments can be affixed to cars, trucks, ATVs, lawn tractors, etc. More information will be shared on these attachments once our review is complete.

## Do I take the carts with me when I move?

No. Each cart 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. When moving to a new home, leave your carts at your old 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.

## Can I get a bear-resistant cart?

If you live in the Upper Straiton area, the City will be providing you with three new 240 L bear-resistant carts. Residents outside of this area will be provided with the default 240 L carts that do not have the bear-resistant components. However, the City is looking into options for offering bear-resistant carts outside of the current bear-resistant area. Information will be shared with residents once it becomes available. If you are unsure if you are in the bear-resistant container area please call 604-864-5514 or email [curbside2021@abbotsford.ca](mailto:curbside2021@abbotsford.ca).

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 [wildsafebc.com](http://wildsafebc.com).

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

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

## Will my collection frequency change?

Yes. Under the new cart 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 collection day, you will have two carts at the curb (i.e., compostables and recycling, or compostables and garbage). 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.

## Will my collection zone or schedule change?

Possibly. The City is reviewing the current routes to ensure material is 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. You will be informed well ahead of time if there are any changes in your schedule. New collection schedule with updated collection zones will be delivered along with the carts. 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.

## 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. 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.

## 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
- 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 [curbside2021@abbotsford.ca](mailto:curbside2021@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. Drivers of collection trucks are unable to exit the vehicle at every stop in order to maintain efficient and safe work flows.

## Will I be able to put out paper yard waste bags or extra bags of garbage?

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 waste 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;
- Don't mow, let it grow. 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](http://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 will be communicated soon.

## What if I have unused extra garbage stickers?

We recommend using up any unused extra garbage stickers before the start of the new automated cart program. Extra garbage stickers can be purchased up until and including **March 31, 2021** at City Hall, ARC, and MRC, and can continue to be used on extra garbage bags placed at the curb up until and including **April 16, 2021** on regularly schedule garbage collection days. 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 cart program, residents will be provided with a total of 9 yard waste coupons in 2021. An initial 3 yard waste coupons will be 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 information package 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](http://abbotsford.ca/waste).

## 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 foam packaging, plastic bags, electronics, batteries, etc. must continue to be taken to a depot or other drop-off location (not placed in the recycling cart). The City is analyzing what it costs to collect glass with the new automated system and is hoping that this can be offered as an additional service if it is cost effective. Collection of curbside glass would be in a separate box container if implemented.

## 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.

## 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 closed will be collected.

## 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.)
- Create a pet waste composter

If you have a great idea for how to repurpose your used containers, please share them with us at [curbside2021@abbotsford.ca](mailto:curbside2021@abbotsford.ca)! The City of Abbotsford is currently looking into options for the collection and recycling of used containers. Please check back in summer 2021 for more information.

## Will glass be collected with the new program?

We will be reviewing this to determine if we can add this as an additional service.

## What other pick-up services are being added to the program?

We will be reviewing this to determine if we can add this as an additional service.

## 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.

## Who can I contact if I have more questions about the new program?

Please contact the Engineering & Regional Utilities department at the City of Abbotsford by calling 604-864-5514 or email [curbside2021@abbotsford.ca](mailto:curbside2021@abbotsford.ca). Up to date information can also be accessed online at [abbotsford.ca/curbside2021](http://abbotsford.ca/curbside2021).