

Chatham Borough 2024 Garbage Changes

The Borough will have an information session on the 2024 Garbage Changes Tuesday, May 9 from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm at Borough Hall in the Council Chambers. This session will also be available via Zoom and Facebook Live.

Starting January 2024, the Chatham Borough garbage collection program will undergo several changes.

1. Green bags will NOT be required to dispose of trash
2. Residents will instead dispose of their trash in Borough-provided garbage containers
3. Garbage collection will be once per week instead of twice per week
4. Residents' solid waste bills will be based on the size of the garbage container that they select

Q: Why is this change being made?

A: In recent years, we have faced a number of challenges with the Borough's green bags program. These challenges included a cost increase of over 70 % in just three years: the current labor shortage, safety issues with the manual collection of garbage, difficulty with the supply and quality of green bags, and risks of animals getting into those bags.

In a survey of Borough residents 70 % of those who responded said that we should discontinue the green bag program if it costs more than an alternative option.

As a result, the Borough decided to examine alternative approaches.

An analysis of these approaches by Borough staff and Council members concluded that the new approach would be less costly, more efficient, and safer.

Q: Why are these carts considered beneficial?

A: The roll out carts are made out of highly durable products. The carts can be used in tippers attached to trash and recycling trucks which reduces labor costs for collection by half. They are equipped with hinged lids, which keeps rainwater and pests out of the containers. Additionally, the cans come with ten-year warranties and have RFID chips, serial numbers, and bar codes so cans can be returned to a property after a severe storm event. The cans are on wheels and very easy to move over any terrain. All carts will be kept in a database maintained by the Borough in the event the cart is lost or there is breakage.

Q: How big are the cans, how many do I get, and what do they cost?

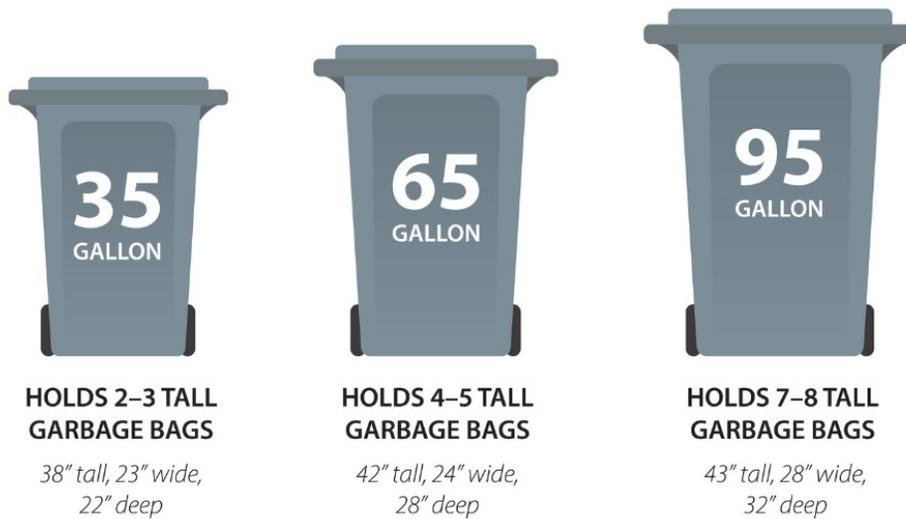
A: In keeping with the spirit of the current green bag "pay as you throw" approach, the cost will depend on the size of the container that you get.

Currently residents pay for solid waste (which includes garbage collection, disposal, recycling, mulch, and overhead costs) in two ways: through their annual solid waste bill and through the green bags. Under the new approach, residents will pay just the solid waste bill, but this entire bill will be proportional to the size of the container that they receive. For most residents, costs will be lower. Below are the approximate rates for 2024:

Large cart (95 gallon): \$704 per year (\$68 per month)

Medium cart (64 gallon): \$482 per year (\$40 per month)

Small cart (35 gallon): \$259 per year (\$22 per month)



Q: Is this really less expensive?

Overall, this program will be less expensive than continuing the green bags program. Remember, the rates above replace both your annual solid waste bill and the amount you pay for green bags. That said, because the cost is proportional to the bin size, it may be slightly more expensive for high volume users.

		With Green Bag Continuation (hypothetical)	New Approach
High User	<i>1 large can or 3+ large bags/week</i>	Solid waste bill \$392 Green bags +\$257 =\$ 649	Large Cart \$ 704
Medium User	<i>1 medium can or 2 large green bags/week</i>	Solid waste bill \$392 Green Bags + \$171 =\$ 564	Medium Cart \$ 482
Low User	<i>1 small can or 2 small bags a week</i>	Solid waste bill \$392 Green Bags +\$88 =\$ 480	Small Cart \$ 259

Q: What about the costs of the carts themselves?

The costs of the cart will be rolled into the Solid Waste fee. These carts will be purchased with a municipal bond, and the cost is amortized over several years. Even with this cost, the new program will be overall less costly than the green bags program.

Q: Does the bill include the Borough's costs of "tipping fees" at the dump?

Yes. All costs associated with the Borough's solid waste program are included in the calculations for the waste bills. The Borough's garbage program (mulch, recycling, and garbage) is part of a municipal utility - therefore all costs need to be charged to the utility and covered through the resident solid waste bills.

Q: I heard that instead of one bill per year you may be charging residents quarterly?

Currently residents are billed annually for solid waste and quarterly for water and sewer. We are looking into a quarterly billing program under which residents would receive one bill broken into three categories: water, sewer, and solid waste. This will save the Borough the need to bill separately for solid waste, and allow residents to pay this bill quarterly instead of once per year.

Q: I already have trash and recycling cans. Can I refuse the Borough's carts and use my own?

A: No, only solid waste secured in the Borough-assigned carts will be collected.

If you no longer want or need your existing cans, the Borough will collect them and dispose them for you.

Q: Can I opt out of this program if I have other ways to dispose of my garbage?

No, all Borough residents are customers of the Solid Waste utility. However, you can opt for the smallest size bin, and will end up paying much less than you do now.

Q: What if I change my mind about the size of cart I want?

A: After 90 days, residents can contact DPW and request a different sized bin.

Q: What happens if my roll out cart is broken or damaged?

A: Just let us know! All carts come with a ten-year warranty and if they are broken during routine use (trash storage and collection), call DPW and we will replace it for you.

Q: Is the recycling program changing as well?

A: The recycling program is an entirely different program with a different provider. At this point, only the garbage program is changing.

Q: What about bulk?

A: Bulk waste will continue to be collected monthly. The Bulk program has always had restrictions, but these have not been enforced stringently in recent years. Due to increasing costs associated with disposal of items, the Borough has asked the vendor to strictly enforce existing bulk limitations and only pick up what is allowed under the bulk program. (See the Borough calendar for more details.) The Borough is also considering a program to allow residents to put out additional items for a nominal fee (likely \$3 - \$6 per item for furniture, appliances, etc.) This issue is still under discussion.

Q: What if I have a party or event that generates lots of extra garbage?

The borough is looking into allowing people to place additional garbage out on bulk days (for a small fee per bag) but this has not been finalized.

Q: Will my garbage collection days stay the same?

A: The Borough will be divided into three zones and garbage will be collected Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday under the new program. Please stay tuned for more details on this.

Bulk waste day will continue to be Friday, but which Friday will depend on which zone you live in.

Q: How do I pick my bin size?

The Borough will send communications to every resident with instructions on how to select the size. You will be able to use an on-line form, or call or e-mail the Borough to indicate what size you want. If we do not hear back, we will default to the medium container (65 gallon) for your household. Examples of the different sizes are on the main floor of Borough Hall.

Q: What are the next steps and what is the timing?

Residents will be asked in August or September to select their bin size, and the bins will be delivered by mid-December. The new program will commence January 1, 2024.

Q: How do I properly place the cart so that it can be collected?

These carts are used in many communities with much more challenging terrain than Chatham Borough. We will provide additional information regarding placement of carts, but in general below are the guidelines to follow:

A few placement tips to follow...

to ensure the collection of your garbage, recyclables or yard waste

- 1** There should be 3 feet between carts, yard waste bags and structures such as mail boxes, cars and lamp posts
- 2** Cart should be within 18 inches of the curb
- 3** Face the short metal bar toward the street
- 4** Position the cart on as level a surface possible, away from overhanging tree branches
- 5** Make sure lid is closed

Place your bin carefully & leave space on all sides!



Why does it matter?

Most collection trucks are automated with an electronic arm that grabs and empties the bin. This efficient process streamlines collection and prevents work-related injuries.

Q: I live on a steep slope/street with no sidewalk/busy street and I'm not sure about how to place the cart?

If you are not sure about cart placement, please contact DPW and we will help determine what works best at your home.

Q: I put out garbage twice a week and see this as a major degradation in service

Twice per week trash collection is undoubtedly more convenient for many residents. However, in a survey of residents, fewer than 20 % said they would be willing to pay more for twice / week collection, and given existing labor shortages, companies are not interested in providing twice weekly service.

Keep in mind that the new bins are very effective at containing odor and keeping out pests and water.

In addition, very few communities in New Jersey offer twice per week garbage collection. Below is a comparison of our proposed program to the solid waste program of some of our neighbors.

	Provided by	Frequency	Requirement	Bulk	Recycling	Leaves
Chatham Borough (proposed)	Borough government (contract with private hauler)	Weekly	Borough issued can – choice of 35, 65, or 95 gallon can.	Currently monthly. Exploring sticker program over certain quantity.	Weekly.	Raked to curb. Weekly during season.

	Provided by	Frequency	Requirement	Bulk	Recycling	Leaves
Madison	Borough government (contract with private hauler)	2x week summer 1x week winter	Max 40 lbs container.	Collected as part of normal pickup.	Separated, alternating weeks.	In containers (preferred) or raked to curb. Weekly during season.
Morris Township	Township government (DPW collects / disposes)	1x week	Township-provided cart (standard 95 gal but can request smaller cans)	Must call DPW to schedule.	Weekly in township-provided cart.	Ongoing during season.
Chatham Township	Residents arrange their own.	1x week unless homeowner arranges differently.	Depends on contract with private hauler.	Arrange with private hauler	Single Stream, Every 2 weeks.	None.
Florham Park	Residents arrange their own	Depends on hauler	Depends on hauler	Depends on hauler	Single stream, every 2 weeks.	Ongoing during season
Summit	City (contracts with a private hauler)	Weekly	Any container	Appointment only	Single stream, Weekly	Twice per year, must be bagged.
Morristown	City (contracts with private hauler)	2 x week	Max 32 gallon container	Weekly; sticker required for some items.	Dual stream on alternating Wednesdays	Leaves weekly during season. Brush 4x/year