

Recycling and waste collections policy

Joint Waste Solutions



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Introduction

The Joint Collection Authority (JCA) is made up of Elmbridge Borough Council, Mole Valley District Council, Surrey Heath Borough Council and Woking Borough Council and has a statutory duty under the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 sections 45 and 46 to arrange for the collection of household waste in its area and gives powers to specify:

- how waste should be stored separately so that it can be recycled
- the type and number of bins for storage of waste
- locations where bins should be placed for emptying

Joint Waste Solutions (JWS) is an organisation responsible for managing recycling and waste services from the JCA. It oversees a joint kerbside household waste collection service across all four authorities, alongside the collection contractor, Amey.

The collection contract covers all aspects of waste collection, including household waste, and recycling. food waste, garden waste, clinical waste, and bulky waste collections. It also covers the management of bin deliveries and replacements and the management of bring bank locations across the joint contract areas. A joint street cleansing contract, also operated by Amey is delivered across three of the partnership authorities, including Elmbridge, Mole Valley, and Surrey Heath.

Purpose

This policy document outlines agreed policies and procedures to support the collection system to avoid any uncertainty for service users and their representatives. It should be read in conjunction with our guidance notes '[Recycling and waste provision - guidance for property developers](#)' and '[Guidance for Managing agents – Purpose built flats and HMO's](#)'

Benefits gained from policies include:

Health and safety – through bin specifications, storage requirements to enable easy access and bins presented for collection in such a manner that is safe for both residents, members of the public and the collection crew.

Increased recycling and reduced waste – defining what items can be placed in each container and the procedure for the collection of excess recycling.

Equal opportunities in service provision – services are tailored to ensure that no resident is disadvantaged (to use any of the services provided) due to their property type, age, disability, or illness.

Service efficiency – through the consistent and fair allocation of bins and reduction in uncollected bins by defining collection procedures.

Recycling and waste policy charter

Our commitment

The council will:

- provide a service that helps residents reduce waste and recycle more
- provide a service that is value for taxpayers' money
- empty all authorised bins and materials correctly presented for collection on the stated collection day and return containers safely
- rectify genuinely missed collections on the same day if reported before midday and within 24 hours if reported after midday
- notify householders of revised collection arrangements well in advance
- reserve the right to refuse the collection of items that may cause harm or impact the health and safety of the council's collection crew
- ensure that everyone has access to services by providing a tailored service
- ensure that the collection crew leave a bin hanger or sticker on the bin advising residents of the reason for non-collection and pointing out the contaminating items
- endeavour to work with managing agents and landlords where possible to help resolve a recurrence of contaminations.
- respond to residents' concerns and advise them of how and when concerns will be resolved
- engage and educate residents through our websites, social media, leaflets, signage, and letters to enable them to use the services effectively

Our expectations

Residents and property managers will:

- present their waste and recycling bins at the designated location with the correct materials, on the scheduled day and time
- keep bin stores clean and free from fly-tipping
- provide access to crew on collection days
- report any missed collections within two days following the scheduled collection day
- use either the bulky waste service or visit the Community Recycling Centres (CRCs) to dispose of items that cannot be collected through the waste and recycling collection services or use appropriate commercial disposal routes
- contact the council and/or Amey (for Woking and Surrey Heath residents) for help and to report any other issues with the service

Policy 1: Bins and containers for houses

Bins and containers are provided by the council at a cost and can be bought from another provider. Bins purchased must have quality standards BS: EN840 to ensure that they meet the quality standards of our collection fleet and the lifting mechanism for a safe and efficient operation. Bins purchased must match the colour coding of that provided by JWS for consistency and to enable the crew to empty the right materials during collections.

Householders are responsible for storing, safeguarding, marking (to aid recognition) and cleaning their bins and containers. They are not to deface them or use them for any purpose other than that described in this policy.

Wheeled bins for rubbish and recycling

Houses are provided with wheeled bins for rubbish and recycling; each service area has a different bin capacity allocation depending on the size of the household. Please see **Table 1** for more information.

Table 1: Bin capacity allocations

Elmbridge

- Size of Household: Smaller (1-2 people)
Rubbish Capacity: 140L
Recycling capacity: 140L
- Size of Household: Standard (3-5 people)
Rubbish Capacity: 240L
Recycling capacity: 240L
- Size of Household: Larger (5+ people)
Rubbish Capacity: 360L
Recycling capacity: 360L

Mole Valley

- Size of Household: Smaller household
Rubbish Capacity: 140L
Recycling capacity: 140L
- Size of Household: Larger Household
Rubbish Capacity: 240L
Recycling capacity: 240L

Surrey Heath

- Size of Household: Smaller Household
Rubbish Capacity: 140L
Recycling capacity: 140L
- Size of Household: Larger Household (on request)
Rubbish Capacity: 180L
Recycling capacity: 240L

Woking

- Size of Household: Smaller household
Rubbish Capacity: 140L
Recycling Capacity: 140L
- Size of Household: Larger Household
Rubbish Capacity: 240L
Recycling capacity: 240L

Food waste containers

Householders are supplied:

- a 7-litre kitchen caddy for use indoors
- a 23-litre outdoor food waste bin

Garden waste

This is a chargeable opt-in service. Garden waste subscribers are provided 240-litre bins as standard. Smaller bins are available if requested but this is charged at the same rate. Depending on the service area, reusable sacks may be provided for properties that do not have adequate storage space after an assessment.

Exemptions to the standard bin provision

Most properties are suitable for the storage and use of wheeled bins. However, where this is not suitable the following criteria shall be used to establish exemptions:

- no place to put the bin
- there is space at the front of the property, but it shall cause an unacceptable obstruction on the highway
- there is suitable storage space at the rear of the property but there is no way of moving the bin to the boundary of the property for collection (e.g., only access is through the house)
- there is no rear access
- there is an excessive number of steps in a single flight
- there is no reasonable access to the refuse collection vehicle

Properties that fit the above exemption criteria will be assessed by JWS Officers on a case-by-case basis. Depending on the service area, sacks may be supplied for both rubbish and recycling.

Additional rubbish bins

Additional rubbish bin capacity shall be considered for households that include:

- child/children in nappies
- adults using incontinence pads or any other medical conditions that may require greater capacity

On request, a process to determine eligibility for an additional bin capacity shall be initiated, based on the information provided, a JWS Officer shall assess that:

- every reasonable effort is made to divert recyclables out of the rubbish bin into recycling
- extra waste is generated regularly

As part of the assessment, additional recycling bins, if deemed necessary, shall be provided at the same time.

To effectively manage and control additional rubbish capacity provision, the council shall regularly review the list of households with extra bins to establish continued need. On establishing a change in the circumstances, householders shall be notified and subsequently, their extra bins removed.

Householders should contact the council when there is no longer a requirement for the additional rubbish bin so that its removal can be arranged.

Households who feel their needs would be met by a **smaller bin** can request them. Issuing a smaller bin is a 'one-off' arrangement and a fee will be incurred when applying for a bin to be swapped. Requests for additional capacity from then on shall only be granted if the eligibility criteria for an additional rubbish bin are met.

Additional recycling and food waste capacity

When requested, additional recycling bins and food waste bins shall be provided or delivered for free for Surrey Heath residents and at a charge for Elmbridge, Mole Valley and Woking residents.

Side waste

Excess recycling shall always be accepted, as long, as it is contained within a clear sack so that the crews can see that it only contains recycling. If you have cardboard that will not fit into your recycling bin, it will be collected if it is left next to your bin in a dry, folded and tied bundle or a clear bag.

No refuse side waste is accepted.

Replacement of damaged/stolen bins and containers

Replacement, lost, stolen or damaged bins can be purchased from the council.

If a replacement bin or container is needed due to mishandling or misuse by the collection crew, it shall be provided and delivered free of charge following an investigation.

Unauthorised extra bins

The collection crew shall only empty bins that are supplied or approved by the council. Any other bin, including those marked as being from another council area, shall not be emptied. It shall be left for the householder to organise disposal.

Policy 2: Collection procedure for houses

Collection frequency

The collection frequency is shown in **Table 2**. For further details on items collected as part of this service, visit the [Joint Waste Solutions website](#).

Table 2: Collection Frequency

[in the following list we detail:

- **Collection service:** Collection frequency]
- **Rubbish:** Fortnightly
- **Mixed recycling:** Fortnightly (alternate week to rubbish)
- **Garden waste:** Fortnightly (opt-in paid service)
- **Food waste:** Weekly
- **Textiles:** Weekly
- **Small electricals:** Weekly
- **Bulky waste:** Paid for service to be arranged

Collection time

Bins must be set out by **6.00 am** (**6:30 am** in Elmbridge) on the day of collection or the night before. Bins are required to be put out only on the day of collection (or late the evening before) and not left out any longer than necessary.

Collections are normal on all bank holidays except Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day. The council shall notify householders of revised collection arrangements over the Christmas period.

On occasions, the council may change collection days or fully suspend the waste collection service due to a major occurrence (e.g., during heavy snow). On such occasions, the council shall make every effort to ensure the waste collection service is maintained and shall provide up-to-date information on its website.

Where the council is unable to recover any missed waste collections due to a major factor, householders shall be asked to keep their rubbish and recycling until the next scheduled collection day.

Collection point

On the day of collection, bins and containers are to be placed at

- the curtilage, which is the area within the property boundary and at the edge of the property boundary adjacent to the highway but not on the highway or
- any other reasonable point within or adjacent to the premises determined by the council that shall enable safe and efficient collections.

If bins are to be placed on a path or public highway for collection, they should not obstruct cars, pedestrians, or other vehicles and should be returned to the storage point soon after collection.

Circumstances when bins may not be emptied

For the health and safety of the collection crew and the public, it is required that bins:

- are presented with their lids closed for the mechanical emptying process
- are not overfilled preventing the lids from closing
- are not excessively heavy

The following applies:

- The council reserves the right not to empty any overfilled or overweight bin. On such occasions, the collection crew shall attach a **bin hanger or a sticker** to the unemptied bin explaining the reason for non-collection.
- To ensure collection, residents should remove excess and heavy items from the bins before the next scheduled collection day.
- On occasion when an incorrect bin is presented it shall not be emptied. It shall be left until the next scheduled collection day for that type of waste.
- Any bin which has been damaged and therefore could pose a health and safety risk to the collection crew shall not be emptied. In such circumstances, it is the responsibility of the householder or management company (for communal properties) to contact the council for a replacement bin.
- Any waste jammed in a bin that does not fall out following the normal mechanical emptying process shall be left in the bin. The householder must loosen the materials to ensure the bin is fully emptied on the next scheduled collection day.
- Colder temperatures mean that the contents of bins may freeze, making it difficult for the crews to fully empty them. Crews will re-attempt collections, however, it may not be possible to empty the bins until your next scheduled collection day once the temperatures have risen.

Properties with access issues

The council shall assess properties identified with access issues individually, and each case shall be considered on its own merits.

In such cases, alternative rubbish and recycling collection provisions may be considered.

Rural properties

The council requires that rural properties present their rubbish and recycling bins and containers at the safest and nearest point to the highway. Collection vehicles shall not drive on roads without a hard surface (on unmetalled roads). JWS Officers shall contact the householder to agree to a suitable collection point.

Assisted collections

Most householders can place their wheeled bins and containers at the boundary of their property for collection. However, some residents, due to ill health and disability, may require assistance with presenting their bins and containers for collection.

The resident must contact the council and **an assessment** shall be carried out. Upon the council being satisfied that assisted collections are warranted, the collection crew shall start collecting, emptying, and returning the bins to the agreed single collection point for all containers. Similar arrangements may also be put in place for temporary assistance. However, if circumstances change, the householder must inform the council.

It is the resident's responsibility to ensure that, on the day of collection, the collection crew have unobstructed access to the bins (for example, gates are unlocked by **6.00 am (6:30 am for Elmbridge)**). If the crew cannot access the bins, they shall not be emptied until the next scheduled collection day.

The council regularly reviews the assisted collections register to assess the continuous need for the service.

Missed collections/ bins not emptied

The council's collection service aims to empty all bins and containers presented for collection. However, if a bin is missed on the scheduled day of collection, residents should report this to the council on the day of the collection and the following conditions shall apply:

- Provided bins and containers were placed at the right collection point, on the scheduled day and at the right time, missed bins reported before midday shall be returned for collection on the same day. Any missed bins reported after midday shall be returned for collection the following day.
- The collection crew shall **not** return to empty the bins and containers if the council is notified after the end of two working days following the scheduled collection day.
- The collection crew shall also **not** return to empty the bin if the missed collection was due to resident error. The bin shall be emptied on the next scheduled collection day provided the error has been corrected.

Excess waste

Excess waste – rubbish

Rubbish left by the side or on the bin (excess waste) shall not be collected. A standard wheeled bin (please see **Table 1**) is believed to be sufficient to hold rubbish generated by an average household over a two-weekly collection period.

Excess rubbish shall only be picked up in the following instances:

- where the council has failed to collect waste as normal
- where a specific arrangement has been agreed between JWS, the contractor and the resident or
- where the service has been suspended due to unusual circumstances such as severe weather conditions

If excess rubbish is put out at any other time, a note shall be attached to the bin to explain the reason for non-collection.

On request or when reported by the collection crew, the council shall provide information and advice to the householder about how to reduce the amount of rubbish being produced and what more can be recycled.

Excess recycling

Excess recycling shall be collected provided it is presented appropriately in a tied **clear** (not a black or coloured bag) plastic bag to keep paper and cardboard dry. If you have cardboard that will not fit into your recycling bin, it will be collected if it is left next to your bin in a dry, folded and tied bundle or a clear bag.

The collection crew shall report householders presenting excess recycling regularly to the JWS officer. The JWS officer shall then contact the householder to explore the reasons for ongoing excess recycling and if required provide an additional recycling bin as per the policy for bins provision.

Policy 3: Blocks of flats and houses of multiple occupancies (HMOs)

Bins and containers

The council in consultation with developers and managing agents determines the type, size and number of rubbish, recycling, and food waste bins on a case-by-case basis by considering the following:

- type of property and the number of units
- capacity and storage requirements
- limitations on access to collection vehicles

In general, communal bins are provided for blocks of flats to store refuse, recycling, and food waste. The exact capacity and storage requirements for the development in question are determined as part of the planning application process. For more information, refer to the '**Recycling and waste provision - guidance for property developers**'.

To reduce contaminations in communal recycling bins, all new bins must have **reduced aperture** or **must be reverse bins** with **lockable lids**.

Bin storage areas

Bin storage areas are the responsibility of the landlord/managing agent. They are expected to ensure that:

- bin stores are kept clean and tidy
- lids of bins stored outdoors are cleared regularly of bird feathers and droppings, particularly of pigeons, to prevent infection that can cause fungal and respiratory infections
- there is clear signage about materials that can be recycled to minimise contamination (signage is provided by the council)

- bulky waste is **not** left in the bin stores as these are classed as fly-tipping and it will not be cleared by the crew
- bins are accessible to the collection crews on the day of the scheduled collection

Where access to a bin is blocked by loose rubbish or bulky items, rubbish and recycling bins shall not be emptied until the obstruction has been removed.

Loose excess rubbish and recycling left on the floor or on the containers (above head height) in communal areas shall not be collected.

If you are planning to update your bin stores, please refer to our guidance notes '**Recycling and waste provision - guidance for property developers.**'

Collection frequency

The standard collection service for communal properties is outlined in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Collection frequency for flats

[in the following list we detail:

- **Service:** Frequency]
- **Rubbish:** Fortnightly
- **Mixed recycling:** Fortnightly (alternate week to rubbish)
- **Food waste:** Weekly (communal bins)

Garden waste

This is a chargeable opt-in service; however, we do not provide a communal garden waste service.

The management company of a block of flats can sign-up for a garden waste service under a single address in the block for the communal spaces/gardens. Individual residents can also sign up if they have their specific patch of green space, this shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Where a subscription is paid for, collections will take place fortnightly as per the household services.

Policy 4: Collection of other recyclable materials

All street-level properties are provided with a scheduled weekly collection of textiles and small Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE).

Some service areas provide communal collections of textiles and WEEE, please visit the [Joint Waste Solutions website](#) for further information. For a communal service, the collection instructions/methods vary depending on site-specific factors and are therefore assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Textiles

What we can collect

Textiles collected include clothes, tights and underwear, home textiles including towels and sheets, pairs of shoes, belts, and bags.

We will not collect single shoes and stuffed items like cushions and duvets.

How it should be presented

A single carrier bag of textiles per household can be collected weekly and must be

- clean and dry
- placed in a transparent plastic bag

We will not collect textiles in a black bag.

WEEE

What we can collect

Small electrical items collected include irons, toasters, kettles, power tools, and radios. Household batteries including mobile phone and laptop batteries.

We will not collect low-energy light bulbs, TVs, and large appliances (above 35cm x 40cm).

How it should be presented

Items must be placed in a small transparent plastic bag, tied up and placed next to the recycling/rubbish/food waste bin on collection days.

Loose electrical items or items placed in black sacks shall not be collected.

Policy 5: Contamination

Contamination occurs when items other than **acceptable items** for the service in question are placed in a bin. For more information, visit the [Joint Waste Solutions website](#) for our guide on '**which bin is which**'.

Putting materials other than those prescribed by the council into the bins contaminates the content of the collection vehicle reducing the quality of material for recycling, which can lead to the entire load being rejected by the recycling processor.

Procedure for contaminated bins

When collection crews identify contamination in a bin the following shall take place:

- the bin shall not be emptied
- the crew shall record the type of contamination found in the bin and the address of the property
- a notification (sticker or bin hanger) shall be left on the bin explaining the reason for non-collection and pointing out the contaminating item(s)
- the householder shall be required to remove the contaminant(s) before the next scheduled collection day
- the householder may be contacted if repeat issues occur

For communal bin areas, the managing agent must ensure that contaminants are removed. The council shall endeavour to work with managing agents and landlords where possible to help resolve any recurrence of contaminations.

Please refer to our '[Guidance for Managing agents – Purpose built flats and HMO's](#)' for more information.

Policy 6: Garden waste collection service

The council offers all householders who are not able to compost their green garden waste on their premises, an opt-in subscription-based garden waste collection service.

The subscription fee covers 12 months from the day that the garden waste bin is delivered to the residents in Mole Valley, Surrey Heath, and Woking. In Elmbridge, a standard payment applies irrespective of the time of joining and it covers 1 April to 31 March.

Residents across all joint contract areas can subscribe to the garden waste collection service online via the [Joint Waste Solution website](#). You can also call your local council if you are an Elmbridge or Mole Valley resident. Surrey Heath and Woking residents can call Amey on 03332 340978. The full terms and conditions are available on the [Joint Waste Solutions Website](#) and the council websites.

Containers and collections

Garden waste is collected in 240-litre bins or from smaller bins (available on request). Bins are charged at the same rate. Depending on the availability of storage space at the property and with the prior agreement of JWS, reusable sacks may be provided. Surrey Heath does not provide reusable sacks for garden waste.

Garden waste is collected every two weeks and operates all year round (including bank holidays). The council reserves the right to suspend collections over the Christmas and New Year period, provided service users are notified in advance.

On the day of collection, bins/sacks should be placed at the boundary of the property or at a specified point agreed by the council by 6.00 am (6:30 am in Elmbridge). The bin lid must be closed for collection and excess garden waste shall not be collected.

The garden waste should not be compacted to ensure complete emptying of the bin during the mechanised emptying process. Frozen garden waste makes it difficult for the crews to fully empty them.

Crews will re-attempt collections, however, it may not be possible to empty the bin until the next scheduled collection day. Where possible, residents may help by trying to loosen the contents before crews collect your waste.

Contamination

The garden waste collection service is for grass cuttings, hedge trimmings, leaves, twigs, and branches (up to 3 inches or 7.5cm thick). The service is **not** for soil stones, rubble food waste, pet litter wood or sawdust.

Bins containing the wrong materials shall not be emptied. Residents should remove contaminating materials to ensure emptying on the next collection day.

Policy 7: Bulky household waste collection service

The council provides an on-demand chargeable bulky waste collection service to householders. Bulky waste includes large items such as electrical appliances, furniture, doors, flooring, mattresses, and white goods.

To book bulky waste collections and for contacts of organisations that collect reusable household items for refurbishment please visit the [Joint Waste Solutions website](#). You can also take bulky items to the [Community Recycling Centres \(CRCs\)](#).

Bulky waste presentation and collections

Only items listed during the original request are collected and must be presented for collection by **6 am** (or the **collection time slot** provided at the time of booking) on the agreed day.

Items must be left at the normal collection point, or another reasonable location agreed upon at the time of booking and presented in a manner that would not cause any obstruction or danger to the public.

Failure to place bulky items out ready for collection by the specified time on the specified day counts as a collection. The collection crew shall not return to pick up the items unless the collection is rebooked.

The council reserves the right to refuse the collection of items that may cause harm or may impact the health and safety of the council's collection crew.

Policy 8: Healthcare waste collection service

Healthcare waste is waste produced during human or animal healthcare, or related research activities. It covers both offensive and clinical waste.

Offensive waste

Offensive waste is healthcare waste that is not contaminated with infectious substances or hazardous drugs and typically consists of:

- incontinence pads
- sanitary products
- dressings, bandages
- stoma bags
- catheter waste (contents emptied down the toilet)
- stomach feeding equipment
- home dialysis waste (empty intravenous bags)

Offensive waste may be bagged in **yellow sacks** and does **not** require separate collection, specialist treatment, or disposal, so can be placed in the normal rubbish bin. Residents are advised to bag and dispose of their offensive waste in their normal rubbish bins.

Clinical waste

Clinical waste is healthcare waste that comprises materials that are contaminated with infectious or hazardous drugs, and they include:

- swabs and wound dressings/bandages, which are contaminated with infectious or hazardous substances
- wound vacuum drains (pumps)
- sharps and needles

Your doctor or nurse will advise if your waste should be collected separately.

The council provides an on-demand and free clinical waste collection service for **domestic properties only**. To request a separate weekly collection for the safe disposal of your clinical waste please visit the [Joint Waste Solutions website](#) and complete the clinical waste collection form. The service is monitored and reviewed regularly to prevent wasteful journeys and to establish a continued need.

Clinical waste is collected separately (as they need specialist treatment or disposal) in the following containers and must be placed at the agreed collection point and time as instructed:

- **orange sacks** – for infectious or potentially infectious material
- **sharps box** for used sharps and needles
- **purple** or '**yellow sacks with purple stripes**' – for cytotoxic waste

Clinical waste generated by healthcare professionals in the home of a patient will not be collected by the council. Unwanted and out-of-date medicines should be taken to your local pharmacy.

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