

Frequently Asked Questions

Omaha's next solid waste contract: using carts for collection

Omaha's goal is to update and modernize waste collection to a level used throughout the country. This will be done by using wheeled carts with lids and trucks that automate the collection process. Carts are required because the potential bidders have informed the City that they have no interest in, and would not bid (at least affordably) on a contract that uses manual collection like the City currently uses.

The answers to these frequently asked questions are what City staff is expecting in the next contract based on our research and discussions with potential bidders. The terms of the actual contract will likely differ in some ways.

1. Must we use a cart?
2. Why are the carts required?
3. Will there only be one size of cart?
4. What is the size (volume) of the cart?
5. What are the dimensions of the cart?
6. Will there be a service for the elderly and handicapped?
7. How many carts will I receive?
8. Who pays for the carts?
9. Who owns the cart?
10. Will the cart be delivered or do I have to pick it up?
11. Am I responsible for the cart?
12. What if my cart is damaged?
13. What if my cart is stolen?
14. Where should I store my cart?
15. What can I do about my homeowner covenants that won't let me store my cart outside my garage?
16. What if the cart's capacity isn't enough for my needs?
17. Can I buy a cart from a local retailer?
18. How can a cart be collected with on street parking?
19. Will there be a weight limit on the cart like the trash can weight limit now?
20. How will I dispose of my current trash cans when I get a cart?
21. When will the carts be delivered?

1. Must we use a cart?

Yes. All collection will use carts. There is a possibility that excess material may be allowed using bags but a cart must be out for collection.

2. Why are the carts required?

The collection vehicles have mechanical arms that dump the waste in the top of the truck, out of reach from the worker on the ground.

3. Will there only be one size of cart?

The Contractor's preference would be that all carts be the same size and manufacture. This makes providing, repairing, and maintaining carts less expensive. During the pilot, many residents expressed a preference for a smaller size cart so two sizes of carts will likely be bid.

4. What is the size (volume) of the cart?

The primary or standard size cart will be 96-gallons. Smaller sized carts currently manufactured are 64, 48, and 32. The City has not yet selected what alternative cart size may be available.

5. What are the dimensions of the cart?

Each manufacturer and each cart volume has different sizes. Here are the dimensions from three manufacturers.

	Width	Depth	Height
Company A			
96-gallon	29.75	35.75	43.25
64-gallon	24.25	31.75	41.75
48-gallon	23.50	28.75	37.50
32-gallon	19.75	24.25	37.50
Company B			
96-gallon	28.61	33.33	43.12
64-gallon	26.70	28.11	20.58
32-gallon	18.50	24.50	37.50
Company C			
96-gallon	26.00	34.50	46.00
64-gallon	24.00	27.00	41.50
32-gallon	19.00	23.75	27.50

6. Will there be a service for the elderly and handicapped?

Yes, the special collection service will continue for households where all residents are either age 70 or older, or have a medical need. The cart can remain up by the home and will be brought to the truck, emptied, and returned to its storage location.

7. How many carts will I receive?

Every home will be issued at least two carts. One for garbage and one for recyclables. If separate yardwaste collection is provided, a third cart will be issued.

8. Who pays for the carts?

The carts will be purchased by the successful bidder for the collection contract.

9. Who owns the cart?

The collection contractor will purchase the carts, however the City will own the carts at the end of the contract.

10. Will the cart be delivered or do I have to pick it up?

The carts will be assembled and delivered to every home by the contractor.

11. Am I responsible for the cart?

Yes each home is responsible for reasonably protecting and not abusing their carts.

12. What if my cart is damaged?

Repairs will be made at no cost to the resident for normal wear and tear. Damage caused by the resident's negligence, for example putting hot coals in the cart, will require payment to repair or replace the cart.

13. What if my cart is stolen?

The resident is responsible to file a police report. With a police report the cart will be replaced at no cost. Without a police report, the resident must pay for the cart to be replaced.

14. Where should I store my cart?

You may store the cart either inside your garage/shed, or you may store it outside in a convenient location to your home. The cart may not remain at the curb during the week. It must be brought back from the curb except on collection day.

15. What can I do about my homeowner covenants that won't let me store my cart outside my garage?

Associations are expected to be reasonable regarding storage of the carts, as everyone in the neighborhood will have the same issue. Shrubbery or a built screening fence may be a solution if storage in the garage or behind the home is not possible.

16. What if the cart's capacity isn't enough for my needs?

The City's goal is that a reasonable amount of service is provided equitably to all households. The City is examining how additional service can be provided at no cost or a relatively low cost. One option may be where the resident leases additional carts from the collection company.

17. Can I buy a cart from a local retailer?

No. Some retailers have started selling carts but these carts won't have the city's logo on the side and the colors won't match so the contractor will not empty these carts. Again, the City's goal is that a reasonable amount of service is provided equitably to all households.

18. How can a cart be collected with on street parking?

The mechanical arm of the truck is designed to reach out far enough to pick up the cart. If the cart is blocked it is possible for the driver to move the cart to a better location. In areas with very dense on street parking, a semi-automated collection truck may be used. Semi-automated collection trucks require that the driver, or a helper, brings the cart to the truck for collection.

19. Will there be a weight limit on the cart like the trash can weight limit now?

Any weight limit would be to prevent damage to the cart and would be upwards of 200 pounds. A cart full of grass clippings would fall within the weight limit.

20. How will I dispose of my current trash cans when I get a cart?

Some opportunity/method of disposal or recycling will be provided.

21. When will the carts be delivered?

Delivering carts to Omaha's 140,000 collection addresses will take many months. Therefore the switch to carts will be done in phases by a plan developed in conjunction with the new contractor. Carts will be delivered to an area just a few weeks prior to the area starting the new cart collection program.