



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Frequently Asked Questions – Containers

1. **Question:** Why is the user fee for trash containers \$70?

Answer: The Automated Refuse Container Replacement fee was enacted on January 1, 2008 when the City returned to its pre-1994 policy whereby residents are responsible for purchasing and providing a serviceable refuse container to receive City-provided waste collection service. The \$70 automated refuse container user fee equates to \$7 a year for the 10-year anticipated useful life of a container, or \$0.58 per month. The \$70 user fee was established as a fair and reasonable fee that does not exceed the cost of providing the container. Collection and disposal of waste is provided to eligible households at no charge.

2. **Question:** How much is a second trash, recycling, or greenery container? How much is a third container?

Answer: Additional black trash containers are \$70 each. Additional recycling containers are provided at no additional charge, up to a maximum of three. Greenery containers are provided only to those homes on the City's pilot automated greenery collection routes at this time. Once funding is available to purchase an inventory of greenery containers for all residents, the first two containers will be provided at no charge, the third for \$25, and the fourth for \$50. Delivery is available for a \$25 fee per container.

3. **Question:** Why am I charged a \$25 delivery fee per trash, recycling, or greenery container if the containers are going to the same address?

Answer: The delivery fee covers all the costs associated with the delivery of the container including the assembly of the container and removal of any non-functioning container. In addition, the inventory maintenance tasks related to deploying and returning containers is included. To avoid the delivery fee, residents may choose to pick up containers at the 8353 Miramar Place facility weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

4. **Question:** Why do I have to pay for a trash container that the trash truck broke?

Answer: Upon conversion to automated collection beginning in 1994, the City provided households with a single automated container at no charge funded by the projected savings from the collection method conversion. As of January 1, 2008, all additional and replacement black trash containers are to be provided by the resident at their own expense. Trash containers (approved brands: Rehrig Pacific ROC-35, ROC-65, ROC-95-U or Toter EVR Universal Cart 64- or 96-gallon) may be obtained either from the City of San Diego (858-694-7000) or from a home improvement store. Collection and disposal of waste is provided to eligible households at no charge.

5. **Question:** What can be done to avoid bugs and rodents in my trash, recycling, and greenery containers?

Answer: Residents should bag their trash, sanitize their container twice a month, ensure no liquids pool or dry on the bottom making an attractive breeding ground for pests, and keep the lid closed tightly.

6. **Question:** *What things can I do to lengthen the life of my automated trash, recycling, and greenery containers?*
Answer: *Keep your container in a safe area, out of the sun, and do not load containers with more than 300 pounds of material. If your container is less than half full, consider not setting it out for collection. The container body is less likely to develop cracks over time if there is resistance in the container mid-way where the automated arms grab the container. Place the containers three feet apart. Also make sure your trash is bagged and when possible place your container on level ground. Please note that the average life expectancy of containers is 10 years.*
7. **Question:** *Can I replace my broken wheels? A broken lid?*
Answer: *Depending upon the age and model of your container, the City may have wheels and/or lids in stock for your use. This is an excellent way to prolong the useful life of your container if the body of the container is still in good shape. Call 858-694-7000 to ask for a call back from our container supervisor if parts for your specific container are available for you to pick up, free of charge, at the Environmental Services Operations Station at 8353 Miramar Place weekdays between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM.*
8. **Question:** *If the City owns the trash, recycling, and greenery containers, why do I have to pay for them?*
Answer: *The City provided the first trash, recycling, and in some cases greenery container to each residence at no charge. The replacement black automated container has a \$70 user fee if obtained through the City of San Diego. Alternately residents may obtain a City approved replacement black trash container from a home improvement store (approved brands: Rehrig Pacific ROC-35, ROC-65, ROC-95-U or Toter EVR Universal Cart 64- or 96-gallon). At the current time, there is no fee for recycling containers, up to a maximum of three. Automated greenery containers are available to homes on pilot automated yard waste collection routes. A delivery fee of \$25 per container will apply when delivery is requested.*
9. **Question:** *Will you replace my broken black trash container if I bought it from a home improvement store?*
Answer: *If a resident purchased a black trash container from a home improvement store and it breaks, then the City is not responsible to cover the cost of replacing the container when it fails. Residents using containers obtained from another source should be aware of the warranty provided by the private store or vendor where the cans were purchased.*
10. **Question:** *Will you replace my manual greenery container?*
Answer: *Unfortunately, the city does not replace manual greenery containers. Residents using containers obtained from another source should be aware of the warranty provided by the private store or vendor where the cans were purchased.*
11. **Question:** *Can you waive the delivery fee?*
Answer: *Unfortunately fees enacted by the City Council cannot ever be waived. A waiver would constitute a gift of public funds and violation of the adopted fee. Residents may avoid delivery fees by picking up automated containers from the Environmental Services Operations Station at 8353 Miramar Place weekdays between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM.*

12. **Question:** Why was my trash, recycling, or greenery container tagged?
Answer: Tagging containers is the best way for Sanitation Drivers to let residents know about waste collection regulations or problems with your containers or waste.
13. **Questions:** My trash container was tagged by the driver, telling me not to use it. How do I get my trash collected?
Answer: The resident must immediately obtain a new black automated container to resume service. This requires calling the City at 858-694-7000 for a replacement unit (user fee applies) or obtain a City-approved container from a home improvement store.
14. **Question:** Why can't I take the trash, recycling, or greenery container with me when I move?
Answer: Containers are numerically registered to the address that they are originally delivered, and it is recommended that residents record container numbers. They are the property of the City of San Diego and available to the resident of the household for use.
15. **Question:** Can I get a "blue container" and use it for trash?
Answer: No, blue containers are strictly for recyclable materials. If a blue container is found to have been illegally painted black, it will be removed.
16. **Question:** Can I buy my own black trash container?
Answer: Yes, residents may obtain a City approved replacement black trash container from a home improvement store (approved brands: Rehrig Pacific ROC-35, ROC-65, ROC-95-U or Toter EVR Universal Cart 64- or 96-gallon).
17. **Question:** Can I buy my own recycling container?
Answer: At the current time, the City provides blue recycling containers for its recycling service. Once a replacement fee for blue containers is established, then residents will be able to alternately obtain containers from home improvement stores.
18. **Question:** Can I buy my own greenery container?
Answer: Most greenery collection is emptied by hand and not collected by an automated truck with the side arm. Residents are required to provide their own 32 gallon rubber container, without wheels or attached lid, for yard waste.
19. **Question:** Can I swap out one size trash container for another at no cost?
Answer: No, once the trash containers have been registered to a residential address, they cannot be swapped out without paying addition user fees.
20. **Question:** Can I swap out one size recycling container for another at no cost?
Answer: There are two sizes available: large (96 gallons) and medium (64 gallons). Blue recycling containers may be exchanged for free, but the resident must bring the container to 8353 Miramar Place between weekdays 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM. Delivery fees will still apply if the container is delivered to your home.

21. **Question:** *What happens when a trash or recycling container gets stolen?*

Answer: *In order to have City-provided service, residents must have a container that is capable of being collected by the waste vehicles' automated arms and flippers. If a container is stolen, the resident needs to immediately obtain a replacement container in order to resume waste collection services. The only assessed cost to the resident is for black trash containers; there is no cost for the collection and disposal of waste for eligible households.*

22. **Question:** *How can I stop my neighbor from using my trash, recycling, or greenery container?*

Answer: *Once the container is at the curb for collection, you cannot stop neighbors from inserting waste into your container. We encourage the occasional overflow to be distributed to nearby containers for safe and litter free waste collection which sometimes results from overfilled containers.*

23. **Question:** *When is automated greenery collection coming to my neighborhood?*

Answer: *The City is currently testing the use of automated greenery containers in its yard waste collection process in a few neighborhoods. Once funding becomes available for the purchase of containers and the automated vehicles used in this collection process, the City hopes to expand this service to additional neighborhoods. At this time, the City is unsure when funding may become available.*