

City of Houghton

Trash and Recyclables Changes Starting June 2023

As many people know, the City of Houghton is transitioned to the use of trash and recyclables carts instead of special garbage bags.

Waste Management delivered 64 -gallon trash carts and 64-gallon recyclables carts to customers the last in June. Beginning June 19, 2023, they will only collect what is in the containers and will not collect any items out of the containers. Trash will be collected every week on your regular day. Recyclables will be collected every other week along with the trash.

Trash and recycling containers should be placed out for collection by 7:00 am on collection day. If you place your carts out too late and the truck has already gone by your neighborhood, they will not come back around. They have to keep on their schedule.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- Why is this change being made?
 - Waste Management and much of the industry is transitioning over to the use of carts and automated trucks, primarily for worker safety reasons. Workers currently suffer a variety of injuries due to the need to repeatedly exit/enter the truck lift/throw bags, and place themselves in traffic to do their job. The new truck will have an automated arm that will grab the carts and empty them into the truck.
- What can I do with any leftover City of Houghton trash bags I purchased?
 - You can use them as you would any trash bag. Or, if you want to be refunded the cost of the bags, you can bring them to the City of Houghton office between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm Monday thru Friday and we will credit your water bill the cost of the bags.
- Can I use the blue recycling bin I previously purchased from the city?
 - No – these bins are too small to be used now. You own this bin. You can repurpose the bin, or bring it back to the City of Houghton office and receive a \$10 credit on your next water bill.
- Do I have to put my trash in bags inside of the bin?
 - You are not required to use bags inside the bin. However, you should use common sense so that you can keep your bin clean and sanitary.
- Do I need to bag my recyclable materials?
 - No. You cannot bag recyclables. Bags foul the equipment used to sort the recyclables. They must be loose and free of food waste and liquid.
- How close to the road must these carts be so the automated arm can grab them?
 - The automated arm can reach 6 feet so the carts must be within 6 feet of the road and nothing can be within 3 feet of the cart as the automated arm needs room to grab the cart.
- What do I do if my cart is damaged?

- Contact the city office and we will contact Waste Management. They will fix and/or replace the cart.
- How do we tell the carts apart?
 - The carts will be different colors. The lighter carts are for recycling. The darker carts are for trash. Because there has been confusion, Waste Management will be placing new stickers on the carts to clearly tell you what cart should be used for what purpose.
- What do I do if Waste Management misses my trash and recyclables on collection day?
 - If your trash and recyclables are missed on your collection day, you can bring them up to Waste Management and let them know you are a resident of the City of Houghton. Or, you can keep them in your cart for collection the next week.
- Can I drop off my trash and recyclables to the Waste Management center?
 - Only if they missed you on collection day.
- I used to bring large loads of recyclables to Waste Management and paid an additional charge, can I still do that?
 - Yes. However, this can only be done Monday – Friday from 9 am to 3 pm. You will be charged \$6.00 for a car load and can drop off approved items in the recyclables yard. This service is not free for Houghton residents. Curb side collection in the approved cart is free.
- Are there any changes to what materials can be placed out for recycling?
 - No. Waste Management will still only accept recyclable materials which are on the published list of acceptable materials.
- What if I need more than one trash and/or recyclables container?
 - You can let the City of Houghton office know if you need more than one container. An additional trash container is charged \$12 per month and an additional recyclables container is charged \$5 per month.
- How many containers can I have?
 - The ordinance allows up to (4) trash carts and (4) recyclables carts per property. If more than (4) are needed, the customer should have a dumpster.
- How do I get a dumpster?
 - You work directly with Waste Management. They will work with you to pick an appropriate size and locate a dumpster for your property. You would then pay your bill directly to Waste Management.
- What if I don't want a recycling container? Will I still have to pay?
 - If someone chooses not to have a recycling container, please call the city office and it will be picked up.
 - To keep the cost as low as possible, all customers will be charged the base rate, which includes the ability to place their recyclables curbside.
- Can I opt out of the service entirely or suspend service if I am out of town for awhile?
 - No. Like utility services such as water and sewer, the base amount charged to the customer is spread over the entire customer base to cover the cost of the service to ensure that it is available to all, even though some may not use it from time to time, but it will still be there when someone wants to use it.

