

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) - Refuse

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## **Do I need to bag the refuse before putting it in my wheeled bin?**

Refuse can be put in to your wheeled bin either loose or in bags. The decision is entirely yours.

## **Where should I put my wheeled bin for collection?**

Wheeled bins should be put out to the kerbside by 7.30am on your scheduled collection day. If you fail to put your bin out by this time your collection may be missed. If your property does not have a pavement or kerb adjoining its boundary, you can place your bin inside the curtilage of your property, to a maximum of 1.5 metres from the edge of the road.

## **Can I put black sacks out for collection?**

No. All refuse must be contained within the black wheeled bin you have been issued with. We will not collect any sacks (or items) left either beside or on top of your wheeled bin and the lid of the bin must be closed in order for our crew to empty it.

Sacks can still be used to contain your refuse but these must be placed inside your bin. If you prefer, refuse can be put loose in to your bin.

## **Are there any exceptions to the above?**

Yes. We realise that an increased amount of refuse can be generated over the Christmas and New Year period. Therefore, households will be able to put out up to 12 black sacks in addition to their normal wheeled bin. The sacks will be collected on the same day as your normal refuse collection and must be presented at your **first collection** following Christmas Day. Sacks presented after this time will not be collected.

You will also be able to put out sacks if we fail to make your scheduled collection due to exceptional circumstances, such as snow.

## **What if I am unable to fit all my refuse in my wheeled bin?**

While we wish to encourage residents to recycle as much as possible, we do realise that from time to time you may need to put out additional refuse (perhaps after a large party or if you are having a major clear out). If you are unable to fit all your waste in your wheeled bin, beige refuse sacks can be purchased from the Council offices which can then be put out for collection. The refuse sacks will also bear the Council's logo making them easily identifiable to the crew.

Black sacks put out for collection will not be picked up.

Extra refuse can still be taken to the local Household Recycling Centre at Broadwell.

## **Are there any items I cannot put in the bin?**

The refuse bin is intended for all domestic waste. However, we would like to encourage everyone to only put in non-recyclable items where possible. By using the weekly recycling services available you should have plenty of space in your bin for the 2-week period between collections.

Please note that the refuse wheeled bin cannot be used for garden waste. If garden waste is put in the refuse bin it will not be emptied.

Please do not put hot ash in your bin. Cooled ash is accepted.

Please do not use your bin for liquids such as oil and paint. The spillage and damage to road surfaces are costly to clean and repair. Please ensure paint and oil is disposed of properly. For information about the safe disposal of these materials please call the Household Recycling Centre helpline on 0845 602 9344.

Your wheeled bin will not be emptied if it is contaminated with non-domestic household waste (i.e. soil, rubble, oil, hazardous waste, builders waste for instance). If your bin is contaminated our collection crews will put a sticker on it explaining why. It will be your responsibility to ensure this material is removed ready for your next collection.

## **Do I own the wheeled bin?**

No. The wheeled bin remains the property of the Forest of Dean District Council. If you move house, please leave your refuse bin at the property for the next owner or tenant.

However, it is the responsibility of the householder to maintain their bin in a hygienic and serviceable condition.

## **What if my refuse bin is damaged or stolen?**

A replacement bin will be issued free of charge if it has been damaged by our contractor or if it is faulty. To request a new bin please call our Customer Services Team on 01594 810000. We will endeavour to deliver you a new bin within two weeks. You will need to ensure that your damaged bin is available for us to collect at the time we deliver your replacement bin (please ensure that it is empty).

Where the householder has clearly caused damage to the bin due to misuse, a charge will be made.

If your wheeled bin has been stolen, it will be replaced for free provided that you have reported the incident to the Police. We will ask for the crime reference number when you order your replacement.

## **Why are you asking that households use a wheeled bin for refuse?**

Collecting refuse in a wheeled bin offers a number of benefits. Firstly, it gives householders a secure way to store their refuse and helps reduce littering from wild and domestic animals splitting open refuse sacks and spilling the contents.

Collecting in this way is also safer for our crews who prior to the service change regularly picked up refuse sacks with unwrapped broken glass, knives, animal faeces and clinical waste (which should not be put out with the refuse but often was). Using a bin means there is no need for the crews to manually handle the waste as bins are emptied directly on to the vehicles using mechanical lifting equipment.

By containing the refuse, we can also encourage those that don't already take advantage of the kerbside recycling service to do so.

## **The Council has a responsibility to collect my waste so why can't I put out as much refuse as I want?**

While the Council is required to collect refuse and dry recycling from households it is in everyone's interest to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, both in terms of improving the environment but also in terms of managing the cost.

Not only are Gloucestershire landfill sites reaching capacity but for every tonne of waste disposed of at landfill, the Waste Disposal Authority (Gloucestershire County Council) has to pay both a landfill tax (£86.10 per tonne) and a gate fee. Landfill tax is increasing every year.

## **Can I have an extra bin?**

The majority of households will not be eligible to receive an extra container as the 240ltr wheeled bin should be large enough to contain all your non-recyclable household waste. By limiting the amount of bins properties can have, we can encourage all residents to use the recycling services available to them. This is not only better for the environment but also a more cost effective solution for the Forest of Dean.

Households with six or more people, or where there are other mitigating circumstances such as a medical condition, will be able to request an additional bin by calling us on 01594 810000. A Council officer may visit your property to discuss your waste storage needs prior to the additional bin being issued.

If you do not fall into the above categories, and should you need to put out more refuse from time to time, you can purchase beige refuse sacks by contacting the Council directly on 01594 810000. Do not use black sacks as these will not be collected.

## **What if I live in a flat or a terraced house?**

Households where it is not practical to have a wheeled bin will either be allowed to have a sack collection (in agreement with the council) or where there are many households experiencing similar issues we will look to provide a large communal bin.

So that they are easily identifiable by our collection crew, households requiring a sack collection will be issued with an annual supply of beige refuse sacks which will bear the Council's logo. An officer may visit your property to assess its suitability for this service. Qualifying households will receive 80 sacks. This supply should last a full 12 months. Free refuse sacks will not be issued again until the following year. It is not permitted to put out black sacks for collection.

If you wish to speak to us about the sack collection service please contact our Customer Services Team on 01594 810000.

### **What if I am unable to cope with a wheeled bin for my refuse?**

Residents who are unable to manage a wheeled bin for their refuse will be able to have a sack service once agreement has been made with the Council. This will only apply to those individuals with a genuine need and is likely to apply to those who are infirm or disabled.

So that they are easily identifiable by our collection crew, households receiving a sack collection will be issued with an annual supply of beige refuse sacks which will bear the Council's logo. Qualifying households will receive 80 sacks. This supply should last a full year. Free refuse sacks will not be issued again until the following July. It is not permitted to put out black sacks for collection.

If you feel you can manage to put your refuse in to a wheeled bin but are worried about moving it, it may be that an assisted collection is better for you. In this case, a member of our collection crew will come on to your property and empty and return the bin for you. To qualify for an assisted collection there should be no one in your household able to put a wheeled bin out to the kerbside for you.

If you wish to speak to us about the sack collection service or to request an assisted collection, please contact our Customer Services Team on 01594 810000.

### **Will my refuse bin smell or attract vermin?**

If you use the weekly recycling service (including the food waste service) there will be very little left in your refuse bin which should cause unpleasant odours. Keeping your bin out of direct sunlight should also help, particularly in warmer weather.

Similarly, it is the food element of household waste that would attract any vermin or wildlife to your wheeled bin so as long as this has been removed you should not experience any problems.

### **How do I keep my wheeled bin clean?**

If your bin becomes dirty, it can be rinsed out with disinfectant or bicarbonate of soda once it is empty. Placing a few sheets of newspaper in the base will help soak up any excess liquids.

### **Does collecting refuse on a fortnightly basis cause a health hazard?**

No. There is no evidence to suggest that operating a fortnightly refuse service poses a health hazard. Concerns regarding bin smells, flies and vermin are unfounded as long as basic housekeeping rules are followed and the lids on bins are kept closed.

Using the weekly food waste collection service will mean that the vast majority of 'smelly' waste that could attract flies is already removed from your bin.

### **What should I do about nappies or sanitary products?**

It is recommended that nappies and sanitary products are tied in a nappy sack or similar before being put in to your bin.

If you are interested in using real nappies and live in Gloucestershire you can apply to receive a one-off cash back payment of £30 if you spend more than £50 on your purchase. Details for your local Gloucestershire Real Nappy Project adviser can be found on the Real Nappy pages at: [www.recycleforgloucestershire.com](http://www.recycleforgloucestershire.com).

### **What should I do about dog faeces?**

Large amounts of dog faeces are not accepted in the domestic refuse. Faeces can be flushed down the toilet or buried in your garden. In addition, there is a range of useful products available on the market including specialised wormeries and composting receptacles, including Staywell's Eco Clean system or Good Boy's Clean Green Dog Loo.

### **Can I put out a traditional style dustbin for collection?**

No. Our vehicles are fitted with lifting equipment on the rear to accommodate a wheeled bin. It is not safe for the collection crew to regularly take sacks out of bins and deposit them in the back of vehicles in this way.

### **Will my metal ash bin be emptied?**

No. You may still want to use a metal bin in which to cool your ashes but you will need to transfer them to your wheeled bin for collection. To reduce the amount of dust during the transfer it is a good idea to wet the ashes first.

Alternatively, wood ash can be dug in to your garden or small amounts put in to your compost bin if you have one. Cool wood ash can also be put in to your garden waste bin if you subscribe to this service.

### **Why do you insist that the lid of the bin is closed?**

The reason for enforcing a closed lid policy is primarily down to the safety of the collection crews.

The Health and Safety Executive investigated the death of a Gloucestershire refuse worker who was killed in February 2010. They found that one of the major factors contributing to the accident was an overloaded bin, which the crewmember was loading on to the vehicle.

It is believed that as a result of a raised lid, his vision was compromised and he became caught in the lifting equipment.

Waste collection is a high-risk industry with the number of fatalities being over ten times the national average and accident rates being four times more likely. It is not only the waste contractor who could be liable for prosecution should an accident occur, but also the district council as the organisation awarding the contract. It is our duty to keep collection staff safe and reduce any risk of legal reproach.

Promoting a closed lid policy will also help reduce littering and protect the bins when they are loaded on to the vehicles. This is because an open lid can swing open prematurely when being lifted on to the vehicle and get caught in the machinery. The broken bin will then to be replaced.

Keeping lids closed will also prevent flies.

**Does my refuse bin have an identity microchip?**

No. The bins are not chipped.