



Garbage and Recycling Collection Service Provider Interviews

Executive summary

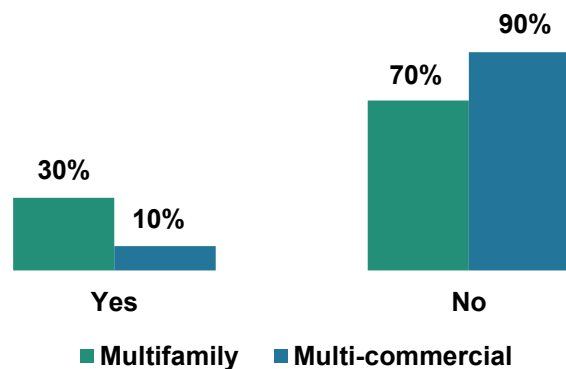
In response to changes in Oregon’s recycling laws, the opportunity to recycle is being extended to all residential and commercial tenants of multi-tenant properties. The change will require cities and counties to ensure properties with tenants that share garbage collection service also receive recycling collection by July 2022. This requirement is for cities with 4,000 or more residents, cities within the Metro Service District and counties which manage programs within those cities’ urban growth boundaries. In order to support implementation of this statutory change, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality staff interviewed 10 Oregon garbage and recycling collection service providers serving 34 cities and 14 counties to understand common conditions when providing residential and commercial multi-tenant recycling collection services.

DEQ is grateful to Bend Garbage and Recycling, Cascade Disposal/Waste Connections, City Sanitary Service, Loren's Sanitation & Recycling Service, Recology of Western Oregon, Republic Services, Rogue Disposal & Recycling, Royal Refuse Service, Sanipac/Waste Connections and Valley Recycling and Disposal for contributing to this study.

Tracking data

DEQ found that collection service providers rarely track multi-tenant accounts separately from other residential or commercial customers. Multifamily data was only tracked separately by 30 percent of collectors. Multi-commercial collection data was only tracked separately by 10 percent of collectors.

Multi-tenant customers tracked separately



What works

Dedicated on-site property management and providing recycling education were identified as key to supporting successful recycling programs at multi-tenant properties according to half of collectors. They also said the greatest challenge included recycling contamination and collector-provided communication not being passed on to tenants.

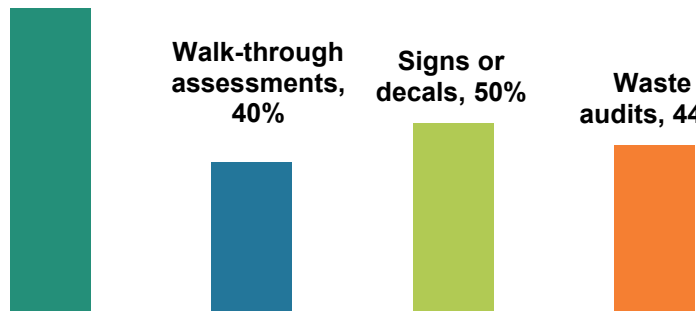
Education or assistance provided to property managers

Educational materials, 80%

Walk-through assessments, 40%

Signs or decals, 50%

Waste audits, 44%



Contamination

Contamination was a problem cited by 80 percent of collectors. To address contamination, all collectors notify the customer if the contamination is found and leave contaminated recycling to be cleaned up. Property managers usually directed the collector to dispose of contaminated recycling as garbage. Eighty percent of collectors said they provide education or assistance to the customer to reduce contamination.

Education and assistance

In order to help property managers, 80 percent of collectors provided educational materials to property managers. Half said they provided signs or decals for collection areas or receptacles. In order to help property managers, a third of collectors offered special services, such as waste audits and walk-through assessments of recycling areas. Nearly a quarter offered tote bags to carry recycling from the unit to the collection area. There is a need to repeat education efforts frequently. Nearly a third of collectors said tenants and managers leaving and being replaced is not helpful.

Identifying material streams

To identify which receptacles were to be used for what materials, collectors provided garbage decals in 50 percent of cases and recycling decals in 90 percent of cases. Decals and signs were equally as likely to be in English as in two or more other languages, according to six of 10 collectors who responded about language. Half of the decals provided had images. Contamination messaging was provided by half of collectors. Illegal dumping signs were provided by 60 percent of collectors.

Colors were also a clue to differential material types. Ninety-one percent of collectors had a different color for garbage receptacles than mixed recycling. The most common colors identified for mixed recycling receptacles were blue and red at 45 percent each. Half of collectors used blue glass recycling receptacles.

Bulky waste solutions

Collectors did not identify bulky waste service as problem. 80 percent of collection drivers contacted property managers when they saw it. Thirty-three percent of collectors will take bulky waste automatically as they have a standing agreement to collect it automatically. Some use separate truck service. One collector will even pick up materials from the unit. Another increases service during scheduled move-in and move-out periods for schools.

Improving efficiency

In order to improve efficiency of collection, 60 percent of collectors said changes could be made to collection areas included changing the size, location and design to remove barriers. The size of receptacles and the collection area also influence how frequent materials have to be collected. Forty percent of collectors expressed interest in changing service frequency to improve efficiency.

Safety issues

Safety issues were mentioned by collectors. Having a clean collection area was important as well as a well-designed enclosure that accessible by drivers, had good visibility, space for receptacles and a clear path to the truck.

Other concerns

Other concerns by collectors included parked cars in the way and use of collection areas and receptacles by non-tenants including transients and scavengers. No one concern was shared by a majority of collectors.

Policy

When it came to policy, 69 percent of collectors were under a franchise agreement with the local government. Eighty-nine percent of collectors conducted planning, education and outreach, and technical assistance on behalf of the city or county. Sixty-seven percent of collectors worked regularly with the city, county or both. About a third worked with another party.

Limitations

Because the sample size for this study was small, findings are insightful but might not be representative of all of Oregon's garbage and recycling collection service providers.