

Town of Forest Heights Trash Collection

Your cooperation with Town ordinances for disposing of residential trash is important for maintaining health and property values in the Town.

Who collects trash in Forest Heights? Both the Town and Prince George's County have collections in the Town. The Town collects trash, yard refuse and metal appliances. The County's contractor collects recyclable materials. Residents are responsible for disposing of poisonous and hazardous materials which are not permitted to be picked up by Town and County contractors.

When is trash picked up in the Town? Trash is now collected by the Town's contractor on **Tuesdays** and **Fridays** (except holidays). The County's contractor collects recyclable materials in the Town on **Mondays**. Tree trimmings, grass and leaves are picked upon **Wednesdays**. The Town's Public Works Department will pick up metal appliances and certain other items on any workday for a fee.

What is considered trash? Regular trash consists of mixed combustibles and noncombustible trash and garbage discarded by households in the normal course of living. However, some items being discarded may need special handling as follows:

Recyclable materials: This is a voluntary program run by the County. The County provides a yellow recycling bin (call 301-952-7630 to obtain or dispose of a bin) and residents should place the bin plus any newspapers by the curb on Mondays. Currently the County is collecting aluminum cans, glass bottles and jars, newspaper, narrow-neck plastic containers, steel food and beverage cans, and mixed paper for recycling. For more information about this program [click here](#). Please note, Town home owners pay for this service through a \$20 fee that is charged as part of the County's real estate tax bill. That tax is not voluntary.

Metal appliances such as washing machines and

refrigerators, tires and rims. Simply put these items by the curb and the Town's Public Works Department will pick them up. However, you will be charged for this service according to the following schedule: **Appliance \$35, tire without rim \$4, tire with rim \$6.**

If you want to avoid the Town fees on appliance pickup, many appliance stores will pick up the old appliance when they deliver the new one. Be aware, however, that the store may charge a fee up to \$50 or more for that service.

Poisonous and Hazardous Materials: These materials include obvious substances like such as flammable turpentine and oil-based paints, acids, car batteries, used motor oil, etc., but also includes other items such as computer, TV's and some electronic equipment. Many of these electronic items use lead, which is a hazardous material, on their circuit boards and other components. Residents should take these items to the County's Brown Station Landfill for disposal. [Click here](#) or call (301)-952-7610 for directions and hours of operation. The County also runs household hazardous material collections at local schools and other locations twice a year. Watch for flyers in the mail announcing these events. Many automobile service stations will accept used motor oil. Residents must use noncommercial vehicles and may be restricted to certain hours and days to avoid dumping fees at the landfill.

Bulky nonmetal Items: These include old furniture such as mattresses, chairs, couches and rugs. The Town contractor will pick these up on the regular Friday pick-up days, but the number of items per household is limited to fifteen items of any type on any given day.

Yard Waste: This includes tree trimmings, grass and leaves. Grass and leaves should be bagged and tree trimmings should be no longer than four feet and tied in small bundles. The Town's trash contractor is not required to collect large trees, or stumps.

Auto parts: Disposing of these items can be a problem for do-it-yourselfers. Neither the Town nor the County will pick up these materials. Automobile tire and battery stores are required by law to take your old tires and batteries, but typically will charge a fee for the service. Auto salvage yards may accept old car parts.

Construction/building materials: Another problem for do-it-yourselfers. Construction materials include old lumber, wall board, commodes, bricks, roofing, dirt, stone, etc. If home improvement work is done by a licensed home improvement company, they are supposed to dispose of the old roofing or other materials as part of the job. However, it is a good policy to check with the contractor on these matters before the work is authorized. To dispose of construction materials yourself, take them to the County's Western Branch Compost Facility in Upper Marlboro. Call (301) 627-6388, or [click here](#) for directions and hours of operation.

Where should trash be placed for pickup? Trash should be placed within two feet of the curb line. It is important to use trash containers with lids. Rats and other animals will open garbage left in plastic bags. The trash cans may be placed by the street the night before, and should be returned for storage by the evening of the day the trash was collected. If you placed trash out for collection and it was not collected by the end of the day, call the Municipal Building on (301) 839-1030 as soon as possible, but do not leave the trash at the curb. Failure to comply could lead to being fined by the Town.

Will the County pick up bulky metal items in the Town for free? *No!* The County will pick up these items from residents outside of municipalities, but will not pick up these items in Forest Heights. There have

been some cases where a Forest Heights resident has scheduled a pickup with the County, but typically the County never shows up to retrieve the item.

However, the Town's Public Works Department will see the item out for pickup, take the item away, and then bill the household per the price schedule listed above. This may lead to some confusion. The reason the Town does not provide "free" pickup for these bulky items is the cost of the service and disposal, which would be passed on to homeowners through increased Town taxes. Currently, Forest Heights homeowners pay lower real-property taxes than their counterparts in unincorporated areas of the County primarily because the Town does not provide this free pick-up service for metal bulk trash. Past Town public hearings on this policy have reaffirmed that most citizens support it.

Why are trash pickup rules so complicated?

Disposal of trash is an old problem and archaeologists learn much from ancient civilizations by examining their dumping sites. In medieval and earlier times, inhabitants of walled cities would dump their trash over the walls. The trash would pile up after many years, and enemies attacking the cities could easily climb the heaps of trash to scale the walls. The cities would then build new walls beyond the trash heaps.

In modern times there is a myriad of Federal, State and local regulations governing the disposal of trash. These regulations are instituted to protect public health and safety, the environment, and maintain the community's appearance. Authorities at all levels of government try to balance the public needs against the costs of these programs which are funded by taxes. Your trash collection is not free—you pay for it in your taxes. Contact your Town representatives to let them know how you feel about the services.

Rev.7/22/03