



Snohomish County

Public Works

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Snohomish County Approves \$2 Million Emergency Solid Waste Removal Contract with Waste Management

Railway and garbage hauler staffing, supply chain issues lead to excess refuse at county transfer stations

EVERETT, Wash., April 27, 2022 – This morning, the Snohomish County Council approved an emergency contract with Waste Management Inc. to aid Snohomish County Solid Waste in the removal of excess refuse at local transfer stations. Refuse has built up since the start of the year due to a shortage of intermodal containers used for waste-by-rail shipments to the Roosevelt Landfill located in south central Washington. These containers are provided to county by Republic Services and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF), which have indicated that staffing shortages are the primary reason for the reduction of available containers.

The \$2 million short-term waste transportation and disposal agreement will give Solid Waste workers the ability to transport more garbage out of county facilities.

“We appreciate Waste Management working with us to resolve this unfortunate situation and allow us to protect the health and safety of Snohomish County’s residents,” said Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers. “Rail service disruptions and supply chain challenges have caused a significant backlog of garbage in county facilities, and the County Council and I are united in our commitment to get this resolved as quickly as possible. Snohomish County continues to work closely with Republic, BNSF, and local solid waste haulers to resolve this health, safety, and environmental crisis.”

“We know one of our fundamental responsibilities in Snohomish County is to ensure solid waste is safely disposed, since our environmental and public health depend on it,” said Snohomish County Council Chair Megan Dunn. “We will continue to resolve these challenges as they arise.”

While the contract with Waste Management will give county workers another outlet to begin lowering refuse levels at the facilities, it will take time to return to normal levels.

“We still may have to shut down some of our facilities temporarily in order to catch up on the removal of this excess garbage, but this emergency contract will help ease the strain on our system,” Snohomish County Public Works Director Kelly Snyder said. “Our Solid Waste staff are grateful to have this extra tool to address this issue.”

As of today, the buildup of garbage has not exceeded Snohomish County facility limits. However, the Airport Rd (ARTS) and Southwest (SWRTS) Recycling and Transfer Stations are reaching their capacity limits, which would trigger a shutdown. ARTS currently has a record 4,200 tons of refuse, while SWRTS has a record 2,250 tons of refuse. The last time a shutdown due to capacity limits was triggered was in 2008.

Excess refuse can become a fire and health hazard, among other dangers, at the transfer stations. While the ARTS and SWRTS facilities are seeing the greatest impact, all Snohomish County Solid Waste facilities are experiencing customer slowdowns.

The county is urging customers to be patient when visiting the facilities. Customers are encouraged to check the lines before visiting Solid Waste facilities at <https://snohomishcountywa.gov/5431/Check-the-Lines>.

For more information, visit <https://snohomishcountywa.gov/207/Solid-Waste>.

About Snohomish County Public Works

Snohomish County Public Works is responsible for approximately 1,600 miles of county roads, more than 200 bridges and manages about 200 traffic control signals. The department also processes nearly 600,000 tons of garbage per year. Its mission is to focus on safety and mobility while practicing fiscal responsibility and preserving the environment. Public Works has won numerous state and national honors for its work and is the largest department within Snohomish County government with approximately 500 employees plus seasonal staff. Its main office is located at 3000 Rockefeller Ave, Everett, WA 98201. Visit www.snohomishcountywa.gov/PublicWorks or follow the department on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for more information about Snohomish County Public Works.

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