



**Snohomish County**

**Public Works**

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## **Snohomish County Transfer Stations and Drop Boxes Return to Regular Hours This Weekend, Closures Canceled**

*County averts health and safety hazard, much more to do moving forward*

**EVERETT, Wash., May 11, 2022** – All Snohomish County Solid Waste transfer stations and drop boxes will return to regular business hours this weekend May 14 and 15 after crews averted a health and safety emergency. County staff worked long days inside closed Solid Waste facilities May 7-8 to clear a backlog of garbage that piled up, allowing for the cancelation of a second weekend of closures. However, the underlying issues which caused the original emergency persist and will need to be addressed in the coming weeks and months.

“We know the closure was an inconvenience, and we appreciate our customers patience last weekend,” Snohomish County Public Works Director Kelly Snyder said. “We stopped the immediate health and safety hazard, but there is much more work and coordination left to do with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF), Republic Services, Waste Management and others to prevent additional closures later this spring and summer.”

In total, crews cleared nearly 5,400 tons (over 10 million pounds) of refuse from the Airport Rd Recycling and Transfer Station (ARTS) in Everett and Southwest Recycling and Transfer Station (SWRTS) in Montlake Terrace.

“We are so very proud of our staff’s performance and determination. They averted a second weekend of closures through sheer hard work,” Solid Waste Director David Schonhard said. “Safety is our No. 1 concern, and they worked diligently to remedy what was becoming a very untenable situation.”

The cause of the backlog stems from hiring and supply chain issues with contracted waste removal service partners. A shortage of rail space on trains needed to transport the refuse from the county’s Solid Waste facilities to landfills lead to a slow buildup of excess garbage since the first of the year. However, in recent months, the piles grew significantly, triggering health and safety concerns.

Solid Waste has been working for weeks to reduce the backlog through its contracted vendors Republic Services and BNSF as well as through an emergency-services contact with Waste Management. The last time a Snohomish County facility was closed due to maximum capacity was in 2008.

The Airport Rd Recycling and Transfer Station (ARTS) in Everett is the busiest in the county, accounting for 49 percent of the refuse processed; the Southwest (SWRTS) facility in Mountlake Terrace accounts for 28 percent; and the North County (NCRTS) facility in Arlington 23 percent. ARTS employs 30 staff, while SWRTS has 24 and NCRTS has 21.

Snohomish County Solid Waste processes nearly 600,000 tons of refuse annually, while serving more than 900,000 customers.

#### **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](http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/PublicWorks) or follow the department on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for more information about Snohomish County Public Works.

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