



Metro is proposing changes to multifamily garbage and recycling services.

Metro works with communities, businesses and residents in the Portland metropolitan area to chart a wise course for the future while protecting the things we love about this place. If you take your kids to the Oregon Zoo, picnic at Blue Lake or drive your car, you've already crossed paths with us.

We also like to talk about trash. Since 2015, Metro has engaged with people living in apartments and condos (what we call multifamily homes), local government officials, property managers and owners, and companies that collect garbage and recycling, to better understand garbage and recycling at multifamily homes. We heard that our services for multifamily homes are not fully providing what people need.

We worked with our partners to propose changes to Metro Code and Administrative Rule to create better, more equitable services and fill in some gaps for residents of apartments and condos.

Our proposed changes will do two things:

1. We'll improve the clarity and consistency of stickers and signs, and implement a color-coded system for garbage and recycling collection at apartments and condos across greater Portland—so that no matter where you are, you'll know what goes where.

Later this year, you will see new stickers that use universal images to help identify what to put in each bin (a term we also use to describe carts, containers, drop boxes or compactors). Right now, there are some bins that don't have any stickers. There are also some bins that have confusing stickers, or really old ones.

We'll also establish a color-coded bin system. No matter where you move, the garbage will be grey, the recycling will be blue, and the glass will be orange. People who move frequently won't need to re-learn the system.

The new bin colors will be phased in over several years, and changes shouldn't immediately or substantively affect your garbage bills.

2. We'll create an improved and more consistent garbage and recycling collection experience from building to building, and between multifamily and single-family homes.

Metro is setting a minimum level of service for garbage, mixed recycling and glass recycling. This will increase recycling service at 60 percent of multifamily properties.

Increased service should not result in additional costs. For franchised commercial areas (i.e., all areas outside of Portland city limits), most commercial rate structures already provide for a one-to-one ratio of garbage to recycling collection service.

These are just the first steps we are taking. In the future, we will provide better collection service for bulky items, like furniture and mattresses—a unique need for people living in multifamily homes. We will also improve and expand the garbage and recycling areas at multifamily sites to make them cleaner and safer.

These changes are meant to address concerns that Metro heard from residents, property managers, local governments and collection companies.

In March 2019, Metro adopted the [2030 Regional Waste Plan](#), which sets the policy direction for the region’s garbage and recycling system. This plan reflects the needs and ideas from members of our community who have not had a strong voice in the development of environmental plans, policies or programs before.

To inform the plan, in 2017, Metro completed a [collaborative analysis of garbage and recycling](#) in apartment and condominium buildings across greater Portland. Here are some specific things we heard:

- There’s **not enough access** to mixed recycling and glass recycling service at many multifamily sites.
- The current collection **bins are very different and confusing** to those who use them (different carts, containers, colors, stickers and signs).
- **Contamination** in the mixed recycling stream is high.
- **Bulky waste**, such as sofas, chairs, appliances and mattresses, is an issue at properties.

The changes Metro is proposing will make it easier for residents to appropriately dispose of garbage and recycling, and will create safer and cleaner multifamily properties. These changes will also standardize the process so that new residents and new property managers will easily be able to adapt.

Lend your voice.

Will these proposed changes improve your property’s garbage and recycling services? Let us know. The full language of these proposed changes and answers to Frequently Asked Questions can be found at www.oregonmetro.gov/servicestandards.

Between September 15 and October 15, you can visit www.oregonmetro.gov/servicestandards to fill out a form and share your thoughts with us. You can also email us at ServiceStandards@oregonmetro.gov or mail written comments to:

Metro
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Key dates:

September 14: Draft of code and rule posted
September 15 – October 15: Public comment period
October 27: Final draft of code and rule posted