



CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 27, 2025

City of Watertown Announces New Refuse Collection Guidelines Effective December 1, 2025

On September 15, 2025, the Watertown City Council approved new refuse collection procedures to improve service efficiency, expand service availability, and ensure compliance with City Code Chapter 161.

These updated refuse and recycling guidelines will go into effect on December 1, 2025. A complete copy of the guidelines is attached and made available on the City's website and at the Department of Public Works (DPW).

Key Changes Include:

- **Containment Requirements:**
Pursuant to City Code §161-1, all rubbish must be contained in approved watertight trash/garbage cans, or trash/garbage totes for proper disposal pursuant to Section 161-1.1.
- **City-Provided Tote Sticker:**
The Department of Public Works will provide a tote sticker at no cost for residents to affix to their personal container to verify authorization for curbside collection.
- **New Collection Routes:**
Residents are advised to carefully review the updated collection routes, as pickup days may have changed. The attached maps provide a general overview and may not reflect all changes. *Residents should use the link provided in the guidelines to access the official interactive maps on the City's website to verify their specific collection day.*
- **Expansion of Services to Commercial Properties:**
In accordance with City Code §161-6, refuse collection services are now being extended to commercial (non-residential) properties at the discretion of the Superintendent of Public Works based on site location, site access, and the type and quantity of refuse generated.

Commercial Service Opportunity

Any commercial property owners who are interested in participating in the City's commercial refuse service are encouraged to contact the Department of Public Works at 315-785-7842 for further information or the City website at:

<https://www.watertown-ny.gov/departments/PublicWorks/RefuseRecycling>

Effective Date: All new guidelines and procedures become effective December 1, 2025.

For additional information or questions, please contact the City of Watertown Department of Public Works at 315-785-7842.

*****Effective December 1st changes highlighted***

City of Watertown

Refuse & Recycling Guidelines

www.watertown-ny.gov

The City of Watertown provides curbside pickup of **weekly refuse and recyclables** for residents purchasing City of Watertown Blue Refuse Stickers or renting a City of Watertown Refuse tote. Recycling is mandatory and all participants must follow the guidelines below.

Contact Information – Department of Public Works

Phone (315)-785-7842

Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

publicworks@watertown-ny.gov

Holiday Collection

Regular Refuse & Recycling dates, which either coincide with, or follow an observed holiday will be picked up one day later than normal within the same week.

Observed Holidays:

New Years Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Day



Pickup Schedule

To determine your pickup day please refer to our Refuse/ Recycling Pickup Schedule Map and find your address with the provided link.

<https://maps.watertown-ny.gov/portal/apps/instant/lookup/index.html?appid=251c6597eea04af187f73a4c77d4fd13>

Curbside Assistance

If you are unable to take your refuse and recyclables to the curb due to a physical limitation you may complete a Curbside Assistance Form found through this link. This form will be required to be completed yearly.

<https://www.watertown-ny.gov/media/PublicWorks/medformcurbside.PDF>



Refuse Guidelines

Refuse Collection is weekly between the hours of 7 a.m. and 3 p.m.

All totes must be placed in front of residence, in the margin area for curbside pickup by 7:00am. *Totes not placed by this time will not be picked up until the following week. NO go backs.*

What is a **margin**? – The space between your curb and sidewalk. Here is a great example!



Collectables: (what the city will pick up)
Refuse pick up consists mainly of all non-recyclable household items and food.

REFUSE WILL BE REJECTED IF IT CONTAINS RECYCLEABLE ITEMS!



Trash Tote Pick Up

(Pre-Paid on a quarterly basis)

1. All trash in a tote must be in plastic bags
2. **The tote must be placed at the curb with its top fully closed**
3. No water shall be in the trash tote
4. No hazardous or dangerous materials shall be placed in the tote
5. **Private Totes containing blue stickered trash will be marked with supplied City of Watertown Refuse Stickers**

All collections are subject to rejection based on these criteria

WINTER MONTHS (NOV – APRIL)

Residents must maintain full accessibility to totes and bags, including recycling containers. Crews will not dig out buried totes, or climb snowbanks to retrieve totes, or bags. Please be courteous and place your items in an accessible location such as a driveway margin.

Blue Sticker Refuse Pick up

The sticker program allows you to participate with the city refuse collection on an “as needed, pay as you throw” basis.

The proper stickers are blue and have “CITY OF WATERTOWN” inscribed on them. Each sticker covers the collection and disposal costs for a single unit garbage bag with a 40 lb. maximum weight limit and a maximum size of 32 gallons. Stickers are available for purchase at select retailers.

Questions?? Call (315) 785-7842



Recycling Guidelines

"No recycling services will be provided to any City resident who does not participate in the municipal refuse collection services as provided at § 161-22 of the City of Watertown Code [Added 3-18-2002 by L.L. No. 5-2002]"

Recycle Collection is weekly

Between the hours of 7 a.m. and 3 p.m.

All containers must be placed in front of the residence, in the margin area for curbside pickup by 7:00am. Containers not placed by this time will not be picked up until the following week. NO go backs.



Suitable Recycling Containers

Any durable, weatherproof, container, can, pail, or buckets capable of holding separated recyclables that does not exceed 20-gallon capacity. Customers must keep container in good working order – not cracked or broken.



DO NOT USE: plastic bags, paper bags, cardboard boxes, or containers with multiple compartments. One separate group per container.

Acceptable Items

Newspaper, Magazines & Mixed Paper
Corrugated Carboard
Plastic Bottles
Tin & Aluminum
Glass
Lightweight Cardboard (Pressboard)

See Preparing Recyclables Materials
Reference Sheet!

All collections are subject to rejection based on these criteria

***REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR
REFUSE & RECYCLABLES SEPARATE***

Questions?? Call (315) 785-7842



Seasonal Guidelines

Yard Waste & Brush Collection

This collection is daily. Keep Yard and Brush waste **SEPARATED!**

This program is to assist in yard maintenance and is not intended for land clearing, tree/ hedge removal by private contractor. Private contractors must take yard and brush clippings.



Brush Regulations

- Brush must be placed in bundles having a max diameter of 18" and no longer than 5 feet in length
- Each individual branch cannot exceed 4" diameter, place smaller twigs and branches in a trash can (not to exceed 32 gallons)

Yard Waste Regulations

- Leaves and grass clippings must be in PAPER BAGS or hard sided container
- Bags should not exceed more than 40 lbs., be split or broken open
- No bags with anything other than leaves or grass clippings

All collections are subject to rejection based on these criteria

Seasonal Blue Bulk Waste Sticker Pick up

The blue sticker program allows you to participate with the city bulk collection on an “as needed, pay as you throw” basis. The proper stickers are blue and have “CITY OF WATERTOWN” inscribed on them. Each sticker covers the collection and removal disposal costs for bulk waste as listed under the pricing list. These blue bulk stickers can be purchased at participating vendors.

Visit our website for upcoming service dates and acceptable items and pricing list. All prices are estimates, final costs will be determined by size and weight of object. A site visit to assist in calculating final costs may be needed prior to collection. All pickups must be scheduled ahead of time with DPW (315) 785-7842.

Do you still need to get rid of Bulk Items?

The Jefferson County's Recycling Center & Transfer Station is located at 27138 NYS Rt 12 Watertown NY 13601 Additional information can be found at: <https://co.jefferson.ny.us/departments/RecyclingWasteManagement/transfer-station-guidelines>



Preparing Recyclable Materials

Please make sure all recyclables are in a suitable container, one separated group per container!

Newspaper, Magazines, and Mixed Paper	
Recyclable - Office & copy paper - Junk mail & envelopes - Newspaper, magazines & catalogs - Shredded Paper, brown paper bags - Telephone Books - Paperback Books (No hardcover books)	DO NOT INCLUDE - Paper cups, paper plates paper towels, tissues, toilet paper - Diapers - Hard covered books - Wax paper, freezer wrap - NO PLASTIC BAGS
Corrugated Cardboard	
Recyclable - Corrugated cardboard – must be clean and dry - Remove shipping labels, tape, and staples. Must be broken down FLAT, no larger than 3'x3' and stack neatly to the curb - Pizza boxes	DO NOT INCLUDE - Wax, plastic, Styrofoam, or metal coatings - Milk or juice cartons - NO PLASTIC BAGS
Plastic Bottles	
Recyclable - Plastic Bottles, Containers & Tubs  - Empty and rinsed clean. Labels and caps can stay on	DO NOT INCLUDE - PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS, toys, hangers, tableware, plexiglass, plastic wraps, prescription bottles - Automotive oil containers - Styrofoam (even with symbol)
Tin and Aluminum	
Recyclable - Tin, Aluminum, and beverage cans - Aluminum pans and foil - Metal lids from jars - Rinse clean, flatten if possible - Empty Aerosol cans	DO NOT INCLUDE - Silverware, hangers, paint cans, batteries, scrap metal - Combined paperboard/ metal containers: examples include frozen juice concentrate
Glass	
Recyclable - Glass bottles and jars only - Remove and discard caps and lids - Rinse clean, labels can stay on - Clear and colored may be mixed	DO NOT INCLUDE - Windows, plate glass and mirrors - Dishes, drinking glasses, glassware and cookware - Ceramic dishes and clay pots - Light bulbs - NO PLASTIC BAGS
Lightweight Cardboard (Pressboard)	
Recyclable Food, cereal, beer, or soda type boxes, paper egg cartons	DO NOT INCLUDE NO PLASTIC BAGS