

Solid Waste Collection Fee

The Virginia Beach City Council adopted a new fee for solid waste collection as part of the City's 2011/12 budget that began July 1st, 2011. The new fee is being implemented to offset the rising costs associated with residential waste collection. The fee will be on residents' utility/stormwater bills beginning January 1, 2012.

Some of the most frequently asked questions are:

1) Why is there a new Solid Waste fee?

- ***We are beginning NOW to prepare for the future. The costs for collecting, handling and disposing of the City's waste and debris are INCREASING, and we must be prepared to manage that increase in the best way possible without adding a huge burden to our residents.***

The fee will help us begin to invest in solid waste collection for the long-term. We negotiated a stable, manageable disposal fee – the lowest in the region - with SPSA when we began working with them. Beginning July 1st, 2011, however, that fee was increased, which means our costs for getting rid of the waste we collect increased. The City Council believed that beginning to implement a small fee now would keep us from implementing a much larger fee once our contract with SPSA ends.

We are one of the last cities to have a solid waste collection fee, and our fee will still be THE LOWEST in Hampton Roads. This fee will apply to approximately 123,000 homes in Virginia Beach that are served by Waste Management.

2) What services does the new fee cover?

- *The services you have been receiving - residential curbside waste collection, yard debris pick-up, and bulky item pick-up - will remain the same, but the \$10 fee will only cover a portion of the costs. The remaining costs will continue to be funded in the General Fund.*

3) Will the trash collection service for my home change in any way?

- *No, we will continue to provide the same collection programs and quality, dependable service that you have always received.*

4) Why not just make it a tax – add it on to our real estate tax so we can write it off, which we cannot do with a fee?

- *Paying for our waste collection programs through a real estate tax would be unfair to many. Our current waste collection service is provided to residential single-family homes, townhomes and duplexes. It is NOT provided to over 40,000 apartments, condominiums and over 27,000 businesses. If assessed through the real estate tax, these people would be paying for a service they do not receive.*

5) My condo fees pay for a private company to collect our trash. Will I be charged the \$10 fee from the City as well?

- *No, the fee will only be charged to residential homes who are receiving solid waste collection from the City. It will NOT be charged to condominium owners/associations.*

6) If everyone in our condominium association pays the \$10 fee, will the City pick up our trash as well and allow us to terminate our contract with a private collection service?

- *No, the fee will only be charged to single-family residences that are receiving City service. Under Virginia Beach City Code, Waste Management is only responsible for single-family residential homes – as defined by the Code - therefore, the fee will only be charged to residential homes who are receiving the service.*

7) Why is the solid waste fee being charged on the water bill?

- *It is more cost effective and convenient for both the City and the customer to have this new fee included with the combined services statement, which also includes charges for water, sanitary sewer collection, and storm water management.*

8) I live in the county in an area where I don't receive water provided by the City. I have a private well. How will you bill me?

- *You will still be billed as part of your combined services bill, along with storm water and possibly sanitary sewer.*

9) I don't agree with the new fee and don't want to pay it. What will happen if I just pay everything on my bill except the solid waste fee?

- *The new solid waste collection fee will be included on the combined services statement, which also includes water, sanitary sewer collection, and storm water management charges. Failing to pay the solid waste fee will cause the account to become delinquent, and will eventually result in the water service being turned off.*

10) What is our arrangement with SPSA?

- *Virginia Beach, along with seven other localities, comprise the Southeastern Public Service Authority. All members are required to dispose of their solid waste at SPSA and to pay tipping fees as approved by the SPSA Board. That agreement remains in place until January 2018.*

By a separate agreement with SPSA, Virginia Beach tipping fees are capped in exchange for SPSA ash from the waste-to-energy plant being disposed of at the Virginia Beach landfill. Those capped rates and the agreement supporting them end in January 2016.

The current SPSA tipping fees are \$65.35 per for Virginia Beach, and \$145 per ton for other members/localities. This saves the City over \$10 million each year.

By initiating a minimum fee now, we can begin to plan financially and invest in other means for disposing of our waste and debris in the coming years.

11) Why not privatize?

- *We can ensure better service at a fixed price by continuing to have the City responsible for waste collection. Private companies would set their rates and decide whether to charge for additional services that the City currently provides. Also, preliminary surveys indicate that private collection is more expensive to the customers than City service.*