



Chargeable Garden Waste Collections Policy

Introduction

West Oxfordshire District Council offers a chargeable Garden Waste collection service. Garden waste collections are chargeable as part of an optional subscription based service. Garden waste licences are issued to individual property addresses and are non-refundable and non-transferable, charged at a flat rate and are applicable for the period 1 April – 31 March each year.

Charge

An annual garden waste licence is available at a charge of £30 per licence per garden waste bin or for the equivalent sized garden waste paper sacks for properties that have been identified as unable to house a garden bin.

This payment is for one licence for one bin. It is not an entitlement to a specific number of collections or a specific amount of waste to be collected, only for collections during the period 1 April – 31 March.

Additional garden waste licences and garden waste bins/paper sacks may be requested with a £30 charge for each additional licence. The provision of multiple licences will be subject to operational garden waste collection capacity.

The £30 charge for a licence is applicable for the whole 12 month period, irrespective of when a resident joins the service. If a resident who has purchased a licence, moves from that address, the licence is not transferable to a different West Oxfordshire property, nor is any proportion of the fee refundable.

Payment must be made in full and in advance by debit or credit card payment either online or by telephone to the Council's Customer services team.

Garden waste containers are provided free of charge when you subscribe to the chargeable service.

In a small number of cases where residents have been collecting leaf debris which falls within their domestic property from West Oxfordshire District Council owned trees, a free 'Service Licence' may be provided. This will only be provided if the Council assesses the quantity of leaf debris requires the provision of a free licence. A service licence is not available if the green waste is generated from trees or vegetation owned by anyone other than the Council.

Containers and licences

Garden waste bins and paper sacks will be supplied in a clean condition and in a good state of repair. The customer is responsible for the general condition and cleaning of the garden waste containers whilst in their possession. Garden waste containers supplied by the Council remain the property of the Council and must remain at the address to which they have been delivered. Only garden waste bins supplied by the Council which have a current licence placed on the lid of the garden waste bin will be emptied. Where garden waste paper sacks are provided only the appropriate sacks that have been purchased for the current year by the Council will be removed. The licence is valid for the address stated on the licence only. It is not transferable. Garden waste bins without a valid licence will not be emptied and collection crews will not return until the next scheduled collection day.

All properties will have a wheeled bin for garden waste unless the Council assesses the property and agrees that a wheeled bin cannot be used and stored at the property. The decision on whether a property has garden waste bins or paper sacks is based on the design and external space at the property and the operational ability to offer the alternative service.

A replacement licence will only be issued free of charge if damage or loss occurs during handling by the Council's waste and recycling contractor. When a householder damages or loses a licence a replacement will be delivered upon request and a charge of £10 will be made to cover administrative costs.

Accepted material and contamination

The garden waste collection service is for the collection of the following:

- ✓ Grass cuttings, hedge clippings & pruning's
- ✓ Weeds (non-invasive)
- ✓ Shrubs, flowers & houseplants
- ✓ Leaves and plant material
- ✓ Soil bound roots
- ✓ Tree trunks, twigs & branches up to 150mm diameter
- ✓ Christmas Trees cut into 300mm sections & placed inside bin
- ✓ Hay/straw from animal bedding or vegetarian parent (eg rabbits and guinea pigs)
- ✓ Wind fallen fruit (eg apples, pears)
- ✓ Bark & wood shavings

Items not accepted include the following:

- ✗ Any household, DIY or hazardous waste
- ✗ Polystyrene
- ✗ Any food waste other than wind fallen fruit
- ✗ Any plastic including plant pots, bottles & trays
- ✗ Compost bags
- ✗ Dog waste, cat litter or dead animals
- ✗ Invasive weeds (eg Japanese Knotweed, Ragwort, Spear Thistle, Creeping Thistle, Broad Leaf Dock and Curled Dock)
- ✗ Soil, turf, stone & rubble
- ✗ Paper & cardboard
- ✗ Timber, laminate & chipboard

Garden waste bins or paper sacks containing non-acceptable items will not be collected. Garden waste must be loose in the bins. Garden waste put in bags in the bins will not be collected as the bags may contain contaminated items and can also damage shredding equipment when the garden waste is processed.

Where containers are found to contain non-acceptable items they will be classed as contaminated. Residents will be notified by means of a sticker or hanger placed on the relevant container requiring them to remove the inappropriate material and dispose of it in a responsible manner. Once the inappropriate material has been removed from the container it will be emptied on the next scheduled collection date but not before.

Collection commencement and frequency

Garden waste will be collected fortnightly. The service will be suspended for two weeks of the year during the Christmas/New Year holiday period which will be advertised on the Council's website. This provides greater resilience for refuse, food and recycling collections during a period when collection day changes occur due to bank holidays. In addition, garden waste collections may be suspended to assist with waste and recycling collection during periods of significant service difficulty such as severe weather conditions.

Once payment has been received from a new customer we will aim to deliver the garden waste bin or paper sacks within 10 working days. A receipt will be issued by email or where requested a receipt number can be provided verbally to those making a payment over the telephone. The licence sticker and will be sent to customers within 10 working days of payment.

If the Council's waste and recycling contractor fails to empty the garden waste bin or paper sacks as a direct result of service failure, the contractor will return to empty it within two working days of the resident informing the Council that the collection has been missed.

If the subscription is not renewed after a year, collections will cease and the containers may be removed without prior warning. If you currently have a garden bin that you no longer require please contact Customer Services who will be able to arrange the collection of the bin for you at a date to be agreed. The bin needs to be empty and clean.

Extra or side garden waste

All garden waste must be contained within the Council supplied garden waste bins or paper sacks. No excess or side garden waste will be collected during normal collections. Bin lids must be closed and the level of the garden waste in the paper sacks should not exceed the maximum line. For safety reasons overfilled containers will not be collected.

Frozen bins

During times of cold weather, garden waste can become frozen in garden waste bins. When garden waste has become frozen in the bin and the waste does not empty when lifted by the vehicle mechanism the bin will be left with the contents still in it. The frozen bin will be reported by the collection crews to the Council and where possible crews will return to empty frozen bins however where frozen bins are affecting a large number of properties it may not be possible to return before the next scheduled collection. The resident should then ensure that the waste is loosened within the bin when presenting it for collection on their next scheduled collection day.

Overweight garden waste bins or paper sacks

Garden waste bin

Where a crew member cannot safely manoeuvre and position a garden waste bin onto the vehicle, or where the vehicle cannot lift the garden waste bin due to the weight of it, then it will be left un-emptied and a sticker or bin hanger will be placed on the bin notifying the resident why it was not emptied. Residents will need to empty a sufficient quantity of waste before the next collection so that it can be safely loaded on the vehicle.

By law, all the vehicle bin lifts have a safe working weight limit which crews cannot override. As a guideline, the bin should be easily moved with one hand.

Garden waste paper sacks

When collecting garden waste paper sacks the collection crews will assess the weight of the paper sacks. If a paper sack is filled about the maximum fill line or too heavy to safely lift it will not be collected.

Where any garden waste paper sack is found to be overfilled or too heavy, the householder will be required to remove sufficient material from it and dispose of it in a responsible manner. Council communication will be placed on the paper sack notifying the resident why it was not emptied.

Once sufficient excess or weight has been removed, the garden waste paper sack should be presented on the next scheduled collection date. The Council's waste and recycling contractor will not return to empty the container before the next scheduled collection date.

All crews and contractor staff are trained in manual handling and health and safety. If they feel a garden waste bin or paper sack is unsafe to lift, their decision is final.

GENERAL WASTE SERVICE POLICY

The following terms and conditions apply to all waste collection services including the Chargeable Garden Waste Service.

Presentation of containers

All waste and recycling containers should be presented at the edge of a resident's property, at the point where the premises meet the adopted highway for collection. If properties are located down a private driveway or access road then the containers must be presented where the private driveway or access road meets the adopted highway. This applies even when a household does not own the land between property and the adopted highway. Containers must be left in a safe place where they do not block pavements or vehicular access or affect motorist's visibility.

Where a household is on a private or unadopted road, the Council's collection vehicles will usually only collect from the road where:

- The road is of a construction that would meet the standard for adoption by the Highways authority
- The Council believes the road is of a suitable design to enable a waste collection vehicle to manoeuvre easily and turn where needed
- Damage has not been caused to the private road previously
- The nature of the road is not such that it would take an unreasonable length of time to carry out collections relative to other collections from adopted highways within the districts
- The owner of the road indemnifies the Council's contractor, against any claims for damage to the road

The Council may change any collection point, either temporarily or permanently, following a review process. This review process may be instigated due (but not limited to) the Council belief that the access to or location of the presentation site would be unsafe for collections.

The Council will give at least 10 working days' notice, in writing, of any changes to the location of a collection point, highlighting the alternative site to the householders affected. Each case will be looked at on an individual basis to agree a suitable collection point as near to the boundary as is safe and practicable.

Missed collections

There are occasions when a container may not get collected, due to crew error. Should a collection be missed, it needs to be reported to the Council. A missed collection must be reported within two working days of the scheduled collection. Missed collections can be reported from 16:00 on the collection day.

We will return to collect genuine reported misses within two working days once the missed collection has been reported. Any missed collections reported after this time will not be collected until the next scheduled collection day.

A missed collection will not be classed as genuine if:

- The garden waste bin or paper sacks were not out for collection before the crews arrive. All containers should be available for collection by 06:00 on the day of collection.
- The garden waste bin or paper sacks were not at the correct collection point
- In the case of assisted collections, access was not granted e.g. locked gates
- The garden waste bin/paper sacks, recycling containers or food waste caddy contained unsuitable materials which were classed as contamination
- The garden waste bin or paper sacks were classed as overfilled or overweight by the collection crew

Assisted Collections

An Assisted Collection Service is available for residents who are physically unable to manage the garden waste wheeled bin and only where there is nobody else living at the premises capable of moving the bins. Where this service is already in place for refuse and recycling bins, it will automatically be arranged for the garden waste bin.