



Billing Changes for Garbage and Recycling Services

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is San José changing the current garbage and recycling billing system and opting to bill for these services on the Santa Clara County Secured Property Tax Bill?

On September 17, 2013, San José City Council approved a plan for placing the billing of garbage and recycling services provided by the City of San José on the Santa Clara County Secured Property Tax Bill. The property tax billing alternative was determined to be a more cost-effective, efficient billing method that avoids costly software upgrades required to maintain the City's current billing system. San José residents currently pay for sanitary and storm sewer utility services on the Santa Clara County Secured Property Tax Bill. Adding garbage and recycling service charges to the property tax bill will align with how the City currently collects for other property-based utility services.

When will this change take effect?

The first property tax bill to include garbage and recycling services will be on the Fiscal 2015-2016 Santa Clara County Secured Property Tax Bill in the fall of 2015 which covers services for July 2015 through June 2016. Expect to receive your last bi-monthly garbage bill from the City in May or June of 2015, depending upon your current billing cycle.

Will this affect the cost of garbage and recycling collection for residents?

No, this will not change the total annual cost for garbage and recycling service. Most customers utilizing the 32 gallon standard cart size currently pay about \$370.00 annually through six bi-monthly invoices from the City. With this new billing alternative, residents can pay as a lump sum or split it into two installments, consistent with how the Santa Clara County Secured Property Tax Bill is currently paid.

How will residents know of future rate changes?

The City will continue to provide notices of proposed service rate increases to property owners. Rate changes will continue to require City Council approval.

What about residents who live in apartments, condominiums, and mobile home parks?

Residents who live in a townhome or condominium with individual cart service (as opposed to dumpsters) will begin to pay for garbage and recycling services through their Santa Clara County Secured Property Tax Bill, just as other single family households. Owners of apartments with shared cart service for occupants will begin to pay for garbage and recycling services through their Santa Clara County Secured Property Tax Bill. Billing for apartments, townhomes or condo complexes with communal dumpster service will not change. Billing for all mobile home parks will be unchanged as well. In total, almost 200,000 customers will be billed through the Santa Clara Property Tax Bill. An estimated 4,000 customers will continue to receive their Garbage and Recycling bills from the City.

Why are residents in mobile home parks and complexes with bin (dumpster) service not switching to the new property tax billing method?

Billing through the Santa Clara Secured Property Tax Bill was determined to be too complicated at these properties due to the frequently changing occupancy rates and the wide variety of garbage and recycling service options available to them.

Does the change to property tax billing affect me? I live in a single family home in an unincorporated area of San José?

The Santa Clara County Secured Property Tax Bill transition only applies to properties in the City of San José that are receiving garbage and recycling services from San José. This change does not impact customers:

- in unincorporated County areas;
- surrounding cities; or
- homes receiving garbage service from another County provider, such as West Valley Collection and Recycling.

Will renters still receive a bill from the City?

Renters will no longer receive a bill from the City, and can no longer directly pay for garbage and recycling collection services.

Who do I contact for billing, service questions or concerns?

Single-family residents can contact the City with billing concerns through the Customer Contact Center at (408) 535-3500 or email at customerservice@sanjoseca.gov and their garbage and recycling collection company with any service related concerns, such as a missed pick-up, or to repair or replace a broken, damaged or stolen cart. [Find contact information for your garbage and recycling collection company.](#)

What happens if I change my garbage or recycling service throughout the year?

After July 2015, customers who request a larger garbage cart or subscribe to additional services during the year will receive a bill directly from the City. Customers who downsize to a smaller garbage cart will receive a credit towards the next year's Property Tax Bill, or they may request a refund directly from the City.

What happens when I sell my house?

When you sell your home, any refund due will be sorted out by the title company during escrow; just as your property tax and other fees on your Santa Clara County Secured Property Tax Bill are handled.

Will the new property tax billing method change how non-payments for garbage and recycling services are handled?

Yes, with the current billing system, if a garbage bill becomes delinquent the City may place a lien on the property for the delinquent account balance plus additional administrative fees and charges. Placing a lien on properties for delinquent account balances is a costly and time consuming administrative process. By switching to the property tax billing alternative, the City will no longer have the need to

place liens on properties for delinquent account balances, except under limited circumstances. The current process for delinquent Santa Clara County property tax payments will remain unchanged and will be governed by the [Santa Clara County Tax Collector](#).

Do I need to discontinue automatic payment or recurring payments?

Single-family garbage and recycling service customers:

- If you signed up for automatic or recurring payments through the City, no action is needed.
- If you signed up for automatic or recurring payment with your bank, you will need to ask your bank to discontinue the payment.

Multi-family property owners and managers, and San José Municipal Water customers:

- If you signed up for automatic or recurring payments through the City, no action is needed.
- If you signed up for automatic or recurring payment with your bank, you need to update your account information to reflect your new 17-digit Customer/Account Number. You can find your Customer/Account Number on your new bill.
- You can now sign up for automatic or recurring payments [online](#) 24 hours a day via the City's website.

I have property taxes paid through an escrow account with my lender. How will garbage and recycling service billing work in this case?

If your property tax bill is paid by your lender, you will pay for your garbage and recycling services through the same process, similar to how you pay for other fees and assessments that appear on the property tax bill. No action on your part is required. You can inform your lender that property tax charges will increase with the addition of garbage and recycling services, but this is not necessary.

Are garbage and recycling charges tax deductible since they are now on the property tax bill?

Consult with your tax advisor.

If you have any further questions about the change to property tax billing, please email your question to: recycleplus@sanjoseca.gov.