



# Solid Waste and Recyclables Q&A FOR CONTRACTORS

## ► Should I recycle?

Yes. There are many good reasons to recycle, including to reduce your costs (recycling is generally less expensive than disposal at \$105 per ton), to earn LEED and Built Green points, to conserve materials and protect the environment, to create local jobs and businesses (your future clients), and to make the world a better place for your children and grandchildren. In Snohomish County, you are not legally required to recycle, but it is a smart thing to do.

## ► If I recycle, am I required to have a container for garbage?

Yes. All projects generate some materials that are not recyclable and those materials must go into a properly marked solid waste container for disposal.

## ► Does the container for garbage have to be as big as the container for recyclables?

No. Depending on the project, most materials you generate are probably recyclable. You will probably need a much smaller container for disposal, but it should be proportional to the size of the project and the amount of non-recyclable waste generated. The vast majority of materials from new construction can be recycled if properly managed.

## ► Do I have to have separate containers for each kind of recyclable, like metal and wood?

No, the county code does not require that the recyclables be separated from each other at the job site. They can be mixed together in the recycling box, if the service you have hired allows (or requires) this. However, you may find financial benefits from separating the recyclables by specific materials. You can shop around to determine which arrangement and service works best for you.

## ► Can I have one company haul my garbage and have a different company haul my recyclables?

Yes, absolutely.

## ► Can my “recycler” provide and haul the garbage container, too?

Maybe yes, maybe no. It depends . . .

Only “G-certificated” or municipal-contracted haulers can haul solid waste for disposal. These companies have their garbage rates and services reviewed and set by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) or are under contract with a local municipality. Your solid waste container must be hauled by a G-certificated hauler or garbage collection company under contract with a city or town if you don’t haul it yourself. These haulers can also transport recyclables, and may offer a recycling service. The rates for the recycling services are not set by the WUTC but may be set by city contract.

Other transporters are not allowed to haul solid waste for disposal, but are allowed to haul recyclables for recycling. You can hire any transporter registered as a “common carrier” with the WUTC to haul your recyclables to a reclamation facility/processor who will recycle them.

If your G-certificated or municipal-contracted hauler is also hired by you to haul your recyclables, then yes, your “recycler” can also haul the garbage container. But if you hire a recycler who is not one of these, then no, your “recycler” cannot also haul the garbage container.

## ► Can my “garbage hauler” provide and haul the recycling container, too?

Please see the corresponding question and answer above.

Several, but not all, G-certificated and municipal-contracted haulers in Snohomish County provide a recycling service option for construction and demolition recyclables. Those that do provide this service may meet your recycling needs, or you can shop around for other recycling service providers.

## ► Can I haul the garbage myself?

Yes. You can take your garbage directly to a Snohomish County transfer station yourself.

## ► Can I haul the recycling container myself?

Yes. You can take your recyclables directly to a reclamation/processing facility or recycler yourself. Just be sure to only take materials to a location that accepts those materials for recycling, and please be sure that you are not transporting recyclables that contain more than 10 percent accidental and incidental non-recyclable waste. Whether you haul it yourself or hire a service, non-recyclable waste needs to be separated from recyclable waste and the non-recyclable waste must go to a Snohomish County disposal facility.

## ► Do I have more than one option for who can haul my solid waste for disposal?

No, there is only one WUTC G-certificated or municipal-contracted hauler in a given area, and they are the only option for hauling your waste for disposal, unless you haul it yourself.  
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Find which disposal service to use by visiting [www.snoco.org](http://www.snoco.org), and search “haulers.”

► **Do I have more than one option for who can haul my recyclables for recycling?**

Yes, there is open competition for the hauling of clean recyclables and a number of businesses provide this service. You can research recycling services in a variety of ways, including visiting <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/recycle/>.

► **How do I know what is recyclable?**

The company you hire to haul your recyclables or the facility that you haul to yourself should provide you with a specific list of materials that they will recycle. Not all transporters and facilities have markets and actually recycle the same set of materials, so you will need to know what they do and don't recycle. Just because a material is theoretically able to be recycled doesn't make it a recyclable. Only materials that are actually recycled (prepared and sold to be made into new products) are considered recyclables in Snohomish County.

► **What if workers put non-recyclables in the recycling container?**

You will need to clean out the non-recyclable materials before the container can be hauled. You should feel comfortable that the container contains no more than 10 percent non-recyclable material. It will then be important to work with employees and subcontractors to ensure that the problem doesn't persist.

► **If the recycling container has been contaminated with garbage, can't it just be hauled to the transfer station as solid waste?**

No. Containers marked for recycling are not allowed to be delivered to disposal facilities. Such containers should be free of non-recyclable materials before the container is transported to a recycling processor.

► **How can I meet my recycling goals if you don't allow wood waste to be used for energy?**

The Solid Waste Division does allow wood waste to be processed into hog fuel for energy recovery. Burning wood for energy does not typically qualify as recycling. However, for purposes of the County Code related to recycling containers and what qualifies as a recyclable, wood waste destined for energy use is considered a recyclable material.

► **How do I know that the recyclables are really being recycled?**

This is one of the key reasons for the County Code changes. The County is working to implement the Code so that you can be confident that businesses providing a recycling container to you are indeed recycling the materials they collect, and properly disposing of the processed residuals that can't be recycled. The service you hire should be particular about what materials they can accept for recycling and provide you with clear instructions and information to use with your employees. If you are not provided this information, you should request it and ask for details on what is and is not recycled by the service provider.

► **How am I supposed to get my workers and contractors to put the right stuff in the right box?**

The recycling service you hire should provide you with signage and instructions to give employees and subcontractors that show what can be recycled and what must be put in the garbage container. If they don't provide this information as part of their service, you should shop around. Using this information, you will need to make sure that the waste/recycling handling is done correctly, just as you oversee the correct procedures for the rest of the project.

► **What happens if I don't separate the non-recyclables from the recyclables? Can I be fined?**

First, you are not required to recycle, so if you don't want to separate the waste from the recyclables, you can simply have it all disposed as garbage at the disposal rate of \$105 per ton.

If recycling, you are required to separate the garbage from the recyclables and put each in the properly marked container. If you do not have a separate container for garbage, you can be fined.

If your recycling container has solid waste in it, your recycling service provider will not be able to haul it to a recycling facility if it contains more than 10 percent waste by volume. You will need to clean it up before it can be hauled. Your hauler can be fined if the container exceeds the limit and they transport the box. If the problem persists, your recycling service provider may withdraw their service, and all of your materials will then have to be sent to landfill at \$105 per ton. Recycling saves you money, so you will want to avoid this situation.

► **What if I order solid waste or recycling containers and they don't show up when I need them?**

You should plan on a seven-day lead time when ordering containers for solid waste disposal. Solid waste services are regulated by the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission. If you have a complaint regarding disposal service, call their complaint line at 1-888-333-9882. To report complaints on other services, or to report violations of the Snohomish County requirements for handling solid waste and recyclables, call 425-388-6669.

► **Can I get any help from the County?**

Yes. If you already have a solid waste and/or recycling hauler, please seek assistance and information from them first. If you still need to contact the County Solid Waste Division, you can call 425-388-3425.

