



Sevier County Government

Solid Waste Operations Policy

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Introduction

The Sevier County Solid Waste Operations Policy provides a comprehensive plan of operations and regulations governing the Department of Solid Waste Services of Sevier County Government. The regulations and directives within this policy guide the operations of the public solid waste facilities including residential convenience centers, short-term rental household refuse sites, and any other public refuse facility managed by Sevier County via the Department of Solid Waste Services

1.1 Authority of Policy

The Sevier County Mayor or their designee, as fiscal agent of the county and the executive of the Department of Solid Waste Services, has the authority to implement operations policies for the department. The Sevier County Board of Commissioners enjoin these policies and sets appropriate fees as allowed per state law.

1.2 Intent of the Policy

Sevier County Government sets rules and regulations to drive the operations of the public facilities for the Department of Solid Waste Services. The intent of these policies is to ensure adequate and efficient management of any public convenience center.

1.3 Enforcement

The County Mayor and/or their designee shall be responsible for the enforcement of this policy as fiscal agent of the county and the designated executor by the Sevier County Board of Commissioners.

1.4 Authorization

The County Mayor or their designee has full authority over the administration and management of the Department of Solid Waste Services.

Management of Solid Waste Collection Facilities

2.1 Solid Waste Collection Facilities

The State of Tennessee generally defines convenience centers as any area which is staffed and fenced that has waste receptacles on site that are open to the public, when an attendant is present, to receive domestic waste, municipal solid waste, and recyclable materials. Convenience centers are only for household/domestic waste which means center users should only bring waste generated from their residence for proper recycling, reuse, or sanitary disposal.

Sevier County operates residential convenience centers to provide residents with convenient locations to dispose of residential waste and recyclable material to prevent roadside littering and illegal dumping.

Sevier County also operates short-term rental household garbage sites with the primary purpose of providing for the disposal of bagged household garbage from businesses collecting waste from incoming generating properties, such as short-term rentals. The short-term rental household garbage sites are fee sites meaning that tipping fees are required to dispose of waste at those centers.

2.2 Self-Service

Solid waste collection sites operate on a self-service basis, meaning that users are responsible for disposing of their own waste. Users must bring any additional assistance anticipated for the proper disposal of their waste. A person with a disability, or as otherwise identified as needing assistance by the operator, that cannot dispose of their own waste may be offered a temporary accommodation to solve an immediate customer service issue.

2.3 Secured Loads

Waste should be delivered to solid waste collection sites in sealed containers that are fully secured inside the vehicle. Loads should be covered with a tarp to comply with State of Tennessee litter and transportation laws. Below are two citations from Tennessee Code Annotated related to covering and securing loads.

Tenn. Code Ann. § 39-14-507 Motor Vehicles Transporting Litter

Any motor vehicle that transports litter or any material likely to fall or be blown off onto the highways, shall be required to have such material either in an enclosed space or fully covered by a tarpaulin. A violation of this section is a Class B misdemeanor.

Tenn. Code Ann. § 55-7-109 Loose Material Hauled in Open Truck Bed Restrictions

Any truck, or other motor vehicle, with an open bed, that is operated on any highway, road, or street open for public use in this state, shall be loaded so that any loose material transported in truck or other motor vehicle remains at least four inches below the walls of the open bed, measured at the front, back and sidewalls; but the load may be piled higher in the center of an open bed. A violation of this section is a Class C misdemeanor.

2.4 Salvaging and Solicitation

Salvaging is the authorized removal of individual non-recyclable items from convenience centers for personal use. Under no circumstance is any member of the general public or employee of the Department of Solid Waste Services to salvage non-recyclable items in mass. Members of the general public or employees who salvage multiple non-recyclable items on a daily or weekly basis is a direct violation of this policy.

Solicitation for money, goods, or services at convenience centers is strictly prohibited. Convenience centers may not be used as “flea markets” and under no circumstance are members of the general public to cash exchange for items on site. Members of the general public observed negotiating with each other to exchange item(s) not already dropped off at convenience centers will be required to leave the facility.

2.5 No Scavenging or Theft

Scavenging is the unpermitted taking of recyclable material from convenience centers which is considered theft of Sevier County property and is punishable by fines and imprisonment (Tenn. Code Ann. § 39-14-103). Under no circumstance is any member of the general public or employee of the Department of Solid Waste Services to take metal items from the convenience centers. When in doubt, a convenience center attendant should contact the Director or Assistant Director of the Department of Solid Waste Services to get clarification to ensure they are not taking an item that would be prohibited under this policy.

Sevier County employees who witness theft on Sevier County property are required to immediately report all incidents to the Director of Solid Waste Services. Reports should include the date, time and place of theft, descriptions of person(s), names of person(s) if known, description of vehicle, vehicle tag number and item(s) stolen. If an employee witnesses theft and fails to report it, or is participating in enabling theft, it will be grounds for immediate dismissal and prosecution.

2.6 Assumption of Risk and Privacy

Convenience center users should understand there are risks involved with loading, unloading, transporting, and disposing of their waste into designated collection areas. Users disposing of waste at convenience centers may pose a risk of physical injury to the user and/or the users' personal property. Convenience center users assume all risks of any physical injury which results from the use, whether proper or improper, of the facilities. By entering the center and utilizing the county services provided, center users shall hold harmless and release, waive and discharge the county, together with its directors, officers, agents, and employees from all claims, suits, complaints and demands for personal injury or damage to convenience center users' persons or property because of the use of the facilities. Courts have found that users cannot have an expectation of privacy of what is knowingly exposed to the public such as personal or vehicle description, license plate, or the contents of the waste or recyclable material brought for disposal. Waste brought for disposal will be used during an investigation if illegal dumping is suspected.

2.7 Customer Service Challenges

From a public perspective the ability to arrive and dispose waste quickly with minimal wait times is a positive experience. During their visit users want clear informative signage or informative interactions with attendants about what is accepted and what is not.

From an operations perspective the ability to scan contents of users and correct residents with unallowable materials on proper disposal with minimal interaction is ideal. User compliance and willingness to accept direction from attendants is necessary for proper operation and permit compliance.

Waste regulations and operational realities may require County staff to make policy and procedure adjustments in real time. Verbal cues and instructions from staff or management may override any written procedures or policy.

When users ask attendants questions about operational issues, the attendant should answer to the best of their knowledge and provide a way for the customer to get further information. Users should be referred to the management team when there is no clear answer to a question or if a lengthy explanation is needed.

If attendants see center users making mistakes, then attendants should politely ask users not to repeat the error in the future and to place any additional waste in the correct location.

Attendants should never require users to remove items out of containers or compactors. If garbage or recycling must be removed and placed in another location, the attendant will be responsible for removing the item(s). The public should never enter containers or compactors.

Attendants should never make threats to center users about enforcement such as threatening to write their license plates or banning them from a center. If a user deliberately places waste in the wrong place after being advised of the correct place to put the waste, attendants will document the circumstances and a member of the management team will investigate and take appropriate action.

Attendants will treat the public/taxpayers with respect. If users are not willing to follow directions, then the attendants may need to refer offending center users to a manager for clarifications. Attendants should never engage in any kind of argument with a member of the public and not intervene in an argument between two center users.

Center attendants should not tell users they must leave the center. Center attendants do not have the authority to ban center users from county facilities and must limit their statements to informing users about operating procedures outlined in this manual.

In certain situations, center attendants may authorize users to dispose of waste in undesignated locations or waive restrictions and limits in the issue of customer service. When exceptions are made the solid waste management team should be alerted about the exception and a clear reason given.

Attendants may not accept payment from anyone for any purpose unless authorized via the Short-Term Rental Household Garbage Site purposes. There are other policies and procedures prohibiting Sevier County employees from accepting money or using their job for personal enrichment. Attendants may accept modest gifts such as food or baked goods, but gifts should be reported by attendants to ensure compliance with county ethics rules.

2.8 Public and Personal Safety

Convenience center attendants should always be wearing one garment displaying the Sevier County logo to be easily identifiable for the general public to approach and ask questions. Attendants must always wear all applicable personal protective equipment (PPE) when they are at work to protect against workplace hazards. Attendants and truck drivers must also establish safe work zones when trucks are performing work on site by setting up cones and/or directing traffic to limit public exposure to dangers and ensure public safety. Young children and pets should remain in vehicles at all centers.

At no time is the public allowed to operate the waste compactors and the control buttons should be locked. Waste compactors are heavy-duty industrial machines that can cause serious injury or death. It is the attendant's responsibility to visually inspect a compactor before turning on the hydraulic ram to ensure they are safely operated. The compactor should not be started if any part of a person's body is in the compaction zone or if there is a crush hazard. If the attendant cannot clearly see what is going on, then the attendant should adjust their viewpoint or operate the machine from the controls on the machine.

If there is immediate danger, a medical emergency, or significant concern about public or worker safety then attendants will call 911 to request emergency responders and contact their immediate supervisor or a manager as soon as possible. Members of the public are urged to call 911 themselves if they cannot easily reach a staff member.

2.9 Traffic/Compactor Flow Management

Convenience center attendants must direct traffic to certain containers or lanes to ensure containers are filled to sufficient capacity prior to them being hauled away and emptied. These lanes are open or closed based realistic assumptions about the time taken to remove, dump, and return an empty container. Some lanes may be kept closed to preserve capacity for later in the day but to the extent possible, attendants should also open additional lanes when traffic is backed up at centers.

Centers must have several hours of compactor capacity when containers are being emptied. Convenience centers are open long after the Sevier County landfill closes for the day. Attendants are trained to tell when the containers have reached capacity and when to call for a container to be emptied, including when to empty containers prior to reaching maximum capacity in the interest of operational efficiency. Attendants will consult with their supervisors on ways to avoid shutting down if all containers begin to fill up.

2.10 Spill Containment and Reporting

All convenience centers are equipped with kits with the capacity to absorb several gallons of oil. Spills of any automotive fluids (gasoline, oil, anti-freeze), hydraulic fluids (trucks, compactors), and any other potentially hazardous material will be contained and cleaned up promptly. Staff members undergo spill response training upon hiring and receive regular training to prepare for spill response. Staff members must report spills to their direct supervisor.

2.11 Enforcement

Employees of the Department of Solid Waste Services are responsible for promulgating rules and regulations for the operation of all convenience centers. The regulations are available for public inspection on the county's website and at every center. Violations of any rule or regulation for the operation of convenience centers are considered littering/dumping. Some actions may also be more serious crimes. For example, being abusive to staff may be considered assault and scavenging is a form of theft. Violators will be prosecuted.

The county will follow an internal enforcement response plan where possible. For minor violations, the individuals suspected of violating the rules will be notified, and asked to either comply with the rules or cease offending behavior. Where possible vehicle information may be obtained by staff submission, public complaints, or other means to identify users that are breaking center rules.

Residential Convenience Centers

3.1 Purpose

Residential Convenience Centers are established to provide locations across Sevier County where only Sevier County residents may dispose of household refuse. Unless deemed a commercial or short-term rental site, only residential refuse may be disposed of at the residential convenience centers.

3.2 Eligible Users

Residential convenience centers are primarily funded by Sevier County taxpayers. For this reason, only Sevier County residents may use the residential convenience centers for disposal of waste generated from their primary residence. Residents may also dispose of residential refuse from other Sevier County residents as needed such as immediate family members, neighbors, etc. as long as the respective resident is doing so as a personal service and not for commercial/business purposes. Commercial purposes are required to use, if applicable, the short-term rental sites or the landfill. Any person disposing of waste at a residential convenience center may be asked to show proof of residency. A driver's license or any document showing the resident's name with a Sevier County address is acceptable proof of residency.

It is acceptable for a county resident (with proof of residency) to come into a center with a commercial vehicle and dispose of waste generated from their primary residence. However, vehicles with commercial tags and/or company names on the side of a vehicle may be investigated for illegal dumping and will be questioned about the origin of the waste and whether the waste was generated from commercial activity.

The Director of Solid Waste Services may refuse any individual or business as deemed necessary for the efficient operation of the convenience centers or for any abuse.

3.3 Residential Sites

The following are considered Residential Convenience Center sites:

- Kodak Site
- Allensville Site
- Boyds Creek Site
- Seymour/Chapman Highway Site
- Whites School Site (also a Short-Term Rental Household Garbage Site; AKA Mega Site)
- Pigeon Forge Site
- Pittman Center Site
- Jones Cove Site
- Birds Creek Site
- Newport Highway Site
- Centerview Site (also a Short-Term Rental Household Garbage Site; AKA Multipurpose Site)

3.4 Hours of Operation

Hours of operation are posted on the county website and on the entrance gate of all locations. Entrance gates open and close promptly at published times unless unforeseen circumstances cause a center to close early.

Newport Highway Convenience Center

Open: Monday – Saturday 6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Closed: Sunday and holidays

All Other Residential

Open: Monday – Saturday 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Closed: Sunday and holidays

3.5 Bagged Household Garbage (Residential Trash)

Sevier County residents may dispose of bagged household garbage or residential trash that is generated from their primary residence or as otherwise noted in Section 3.2. Typically, residential trash is putrescible and may contain a wide variety of materials that are disposed of in household kitchen trash cans, bathroom trash cans, or other waste bins in the home. Residential trash delivered to a convenience center should be bagged and placed in a compactor designated for household garbage. Loose trash will not be accepted as it creates litter and cannot be unloaded in a timely manner.

3.5.1 Daily Load Limit for Bagged Household Garbage (Residential Trash)

Each individual/residence/vehicle is allowed to dispose up to five (5) normal sized bags of household garbage per day. Attendants may provide discretion when a Sevier County Resident disposes of household garbage on a weekly schedule instead of daily (see Memorandum 2024-005 for further discretion instructions) and other administratively approved situations. Each residential address may, up to twice a calendar year, call for a Special Residential Disposal Permit to dispose up to fifteen (15) bags for special circumstances such as cleaning of a residential space, non-commercial event on their residence, holiday celebration at their residence, or any other circumstance as approved by the Director of Solid Waste Services or their designee.

3.6 Bulk Household Waste

Sevier County residents may dispose of bulk household waste items that are generated from their primary residence. Typically, bulk household waste is comprised of plastic or wood material and some common examples include: bed headboards, bookshelves, chairs, couches, glass mirrors, mattresses, tables, and toys. Bulk household waste delivered to a convenience center should be placed in a large open top container designated for bulk household waste or as directed by the attendant. Electronics or bulk household waste comprised of metal is to be disposed of in separate open top containers.

3.6.1 Daily Load limit for Bulk Household Waste

Each resident is allowed up to either: 1) five-foot by eight-foot (5x8) pickup truck load, or 2) Small trailer of Bulk Household Waste.

3.7 Construction and Demolition Waste

Sevier County residents may dispose of do-it-yourself construction and demolition waste that is generated from their primary residence. Some common examples of construction and demolition waste include: doors, drywall,

lumber, siding, tile, insulation, windows, sinks, toilets, carpet, and dried paint cans. Construction and demolition waste delivered to a convenience center should be placed in a large open top container designated for construction and demolition waste.

3.7.1 Daily Load Limit for Construction and Demolition Waste

Each resident is allowed up to either: 1) five-foot by eight-foot (5x8) pickup truck load, or 2) Small trailer of Construction and Demolition Waste.

3.7.2 Construction and Demolition Waste Not Accepted

Sevier County residents may not bring more than an incidental amount of certain construction and demolition waste or they will be redirected to dispose of the waste at the landfill. These waste items include: block, brick, dirt, gravel, roofing, sand, shingles, and soil.

3.8 Scrap Metal

Sevier County residents may dispose of scrap metal that is generated from their primary residence. Some common examples of accepted scrap metal items include: dishwashers, microwaves, fence posts, aluminum or steel containers, wire hangers, screws, nails, washers, dryers, hot water heaters, grills, exercise equipment, shelving, metal pipes, metal doors, and sheet metal. Generally, smaller pieces of scrap metal delivered to a convenience center should be placed in a large open top container designated for scrap metal while larger items are placed to the side of the scrap metal container. Metal collected at convenience centers is sold to a scrap metal company to help offset the operating costs of convenience centers. No one is permitted to scavenge or remove items from the metal pile and anyone attempting to do so will be subject to criminal charges for theft.

3.8.1 Daily Load Limit for Scrap Metal

Each resident is allowed up to a reasonable amount of scrap metal as determined by the attendant.

3.9 Electronic Waste

Sevier County residents may dispose of electronic waste that is generated from their primary residence. Some common examples of electronic waste include: televisions, monitors, laptops, scanners, and computer equipment. Electronic waste delivered to a convenience center should be placed in a large open top container designated for electronic waste.

3.9.1 Daily Load Limit for Electronic Waste

Each resident is allowed to dispose a reasonable amount of electronic waste as determined by the attendant.

3.10 Used Automobile or Engine Oil

Sevier County residents may dispose of used automotive oil removed from home maintenance of vehicles or small engines. Used oil should be delivered to a convenience center in closed, re-sealable containers such as the original packaging or empty plastic jugs. Residents are responsible for emptying their used oil into the appropriate container on site and disposing of their empty container.

3.10.1 Daily Load Limit for Automobile or Engine Oil

Each resident is allowed to dispose of a reasonable amount of automobile or engine oil as determined by the attendant.

3.11 Green Waste

Sevier County residents may dispose of their residential green waste at designated convenience centers. Some common examples of green waste include: tree limbs, tree trimmings, brush, logs, and stumps. Green waste delivered to a convenience center should be placed in a large open top container designated for green waste.

3.11.1 Daily Load Limit for Green Waste

Each resident is allowed up to either: 1) five-foot by eight-foot (5x8) pickup truck load, or 2) Small trailer of Green Waste.

3.12 Household Hazardous Waste

Sevier County residents may dispose of their household hazardous waste at the household hazardous waste facility located at the Center View Convenience Center. Household hazardous waste is any leftover household product that is flammable, corrosive, reactive, or toxic. Some examples of household hazardous waste include: cleaning liquids, mercury thermometers/thermostats, and pesticides. Household hazardous waste delivered to the Center View Convenience Center should be placed in the metal building on-site which is the Sevier County Household Hazardous Waste Facility.

3.12.1 Daily Load Limit for Household Hazardous Waste

Each resident is allowed to dispose of a reasonable amount of household hazardous waste as determined by the attendant.

Short-Term Rental Household Garbage Sites

4.1 Purpose

Short-Term Rental Household Garbage Sites are established to provide locations where household garbage from Short-Term Rentals may be disposed.

4.2 Eligible Users

Sevier County businesses disposing of bagged household garbage generated by income generating properties, such as short-term rentals, may use the short-term rental household garbage sites. Additionally, any Sevier County resident disposing of bagged household garbage exceeding the daily load limit (Defined in Section 3.1), or any Sevier County resident cleaning residential homes for commercial purposes, may also utilize the sites but must pay the applicable fee.

The Director of Solid Waste Services may refuse any individual or business as deemed necessary for the efficient operation of the convenience centers or for any abuse. For example, if a business is too large to be adequately accommodated without causing operational issues or excessive cost to the county, the Director of Solid Waste Services can require that business to take their refuse directly to the landfill or hire an outside disposal service.

4.3 Hours of Operation

Hours of operation are posted on the county website and on the entrance gate of all locations. Entrance gates open and close promptly at published times unless unforeseen circumstances cause a center to close early.

Centerview Convenience Center

Open: Monday – Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Sunday 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 pm.

Closed on New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

4.4 Load Level Limits

There are three load level limits for how much waste a business may bring to a short-term rental household garbage site. Any load level in excess of the Level 3 load listed below must be taken to the Sevier County landfill. These load levels are based on (1) five-foot by eight-foot (5'x8') pickup truck or small trailer load. One car or SUV load following the same size guidelines as a pickup load is also accepted. See Attachment A for load limit examples.

4.5 Bagged Household Garbage

Businesses may dispose of bagged household garbage or the equivalent of residential trash that is generated from income generating properties, such as short-term rentals. Typically, residential trash is putrescible and may contain a wide variety of materials that are disposed of in household kitchen trash cans, bathroom trash cans, or other waste bins in the home. Trash delivered to a short-term rental household garbage site should be bagged and placed in a compactor designated for household garbage. Loose trash will not be accepted as it creates litter and cannot be unloaded in a timely manner.

4.6 Fee

Businesses disposing of bagged household garbage from income generating properties will be required to pay a tipping fee to offset the operating costs of the short-term rental household garbage sites as determined by the Sevier County Board of Commissioners. The Sevier County Board of Commissioners will establish a minimum tipping fee at each commercial location for every business that disposes of bagged household garbage for short-term rental purposes and additional fees will be incurred based on load size. Attendants will charge users a tipping fee based on the load size limits as defined in Section 4.4. The Sevier County Board of Commissioners shall set the fee to be charged based on the Load Limits. See Attachment A for the approved Fee Schedule.

4.7 Financial Management

The Sevier County Mayor, or their designee, shall be responsible for implementing a financial management system to manage the financial aspect of the Short-Term Rental Household Garbage Sites.

Miscellaneous

5.1 Exception to Policy

The County Mayor, or their designee, can make exceptions to this policy as seen needed.