

Proposed Residential Solid Waste Rate FAQ



What services does the Solid Waste Management Division provide?

The Solid Waste Management Division (Division) is part of the City of Fresno's Department of Public Utilities. The Division provides weekly solid waste, recycling, green waste and organic material collection services for approximately 119,000 residential accounts within the City of Fresno.

The Division also provides the following community benefits:

- Operation Clean Up which is the annual, curbside bulky items collection service
- Free Dump Days on six weekends per year at the Cedar Avenue Recycling and Transfer Station
- Litter control activities throughout the City, and
- Recycling education and outreach

Finally, the Division is also responsible for post-closure maintenance activities and projects at the Fresno Sanitary Landfill.

Why is there a proposal to update residential solid waste rates?

The Division's operating expenses are primarily funded by customer user fees and charges for service to residents. Over the years, increasing costs have forced the Division to operate in a deficit since 2012, using operating reserves and postponing vehicle purchases and other capital improvements to make up the difference. However, current estimates project the operating reserves fund will be completely depleted by June 2024. Continuing to operate in financial deficit is not responsible nor sustainable.

When was the last time the residential solid waste rates were updated?

The last residential solid waste rate plan was adopted by the Fresno City Council in February 2007, and this rate update was implemented in September 2009 – more than 14 years ago.

Is the proposed rate update necessary?

Yes. A rate update is necessary to reestablish the Division's financial health to cover today's operational costs and restore the operating reserves fund. The Division is committed to providing reliable residential solid waste collection and disposal services to residential customers, but it cannot continue to operate in a financial deficit.

To learn more about why a rate update is necessary, we encourage residential customers to attend an upcoming Community Outreach Meeting. The schedule of meetings and the PowerPoint from those meetings is also available on the Prop 218 website at www.fresno.gov/Prop218.

What are the current residential solid waste rates?



Solid Waste
Management
Division

Current Service Levels

Standard Service:
\$25.37 per month



Alternate Service:
\$19.20 per month



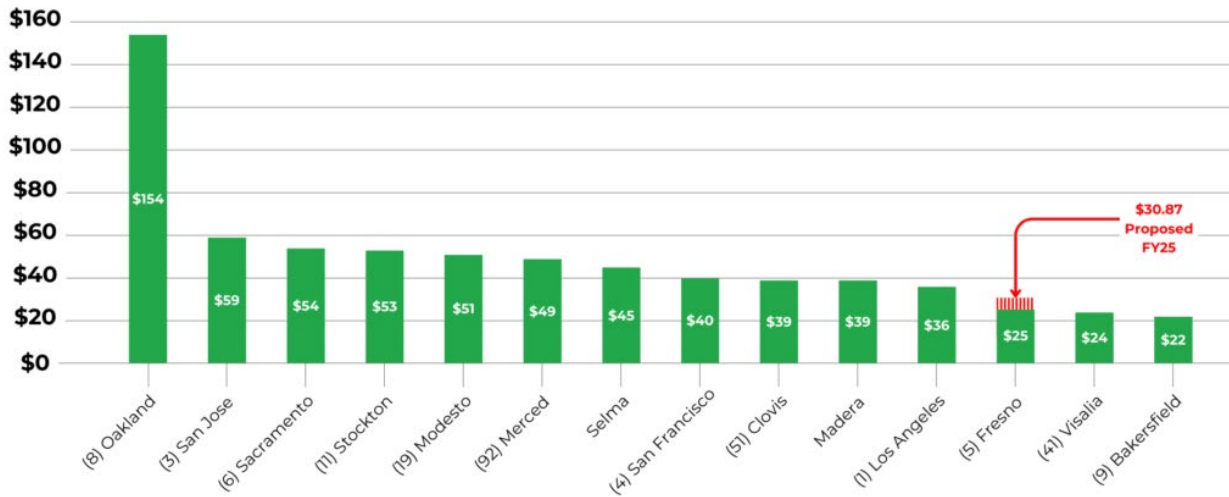
The current rate for standard residential solid waste collection service is \$25.37 per month. The standard service includes weekly collection of three 96-gallon carts: solid waste (gray), green waste/organic material (green), and recycling (blue).

An alternate level of service is also offered for \$19.20 per month. This service replaces the 96-gallon gray cart with a 64-gallon gray cart, while the green and blue carts remain at 96-gallons.

How does the proposed updated rate compare to other cities in the state?

Even with the projected rate update, Fresno’s residential solid waste rates remain among the lowest in California and are comparable to rates for surrounding Central Valley cities. According to rate information collected in May 2023, Fresno’s current rates are significantly less than the cities of Madera, Clovis and Selma, and are approximately half the monthly rate of Merced, Modesto and Stockton.

Solid Waste Rate Comparison




What are the new proposed rates?


The Department of Public Utilities is proposing a gradual rate adjustment over a 5-year period beginning on July 1, 2024. The new rate for the standard service level would change to \$30.87 per month. The new alternative service level rate would be 28.12. The rate for each service level would adjust gradually each year until July 2028.

Proposed Monthly Rates for Three-Cart Service

The Solid Waste Management Division provides weekly solid waste collection services for City of Fresno residents living in single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes. The standard service level is for the collection of three 96-gallon carts for green waste/organics, trash, and recycling. The standard service rate is \$25.37 per month.

Standard Service Level	Current	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
96-Gallon Solid Waste Service	\$25.37	\$30.87	\$35.30	\$38.70	\$41.99	\$45.24
	\$ Change	\$ 5.50	\$ 4.63	\$ 3.20	\$ 3.29	\$ 3.25

The Division offers an alternate service level of 96-gallon carts for green waste/organics and recycling and a 64-gallon cart for trash. The alternate service is currently \$19.20 per month. The following table shows the proposed updated rates for the next five years.

Alternate Service Level	Current	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
64-Gallon Solid Waste Service	\$19.20	\$28.12	\$32.34	\$35.25	\$38.25	\$41.21
	\$ Change	\$ 8.92	\$ 4.22	\$ 2.91	\$ 3.00	\$ 2.96

City of Fresno residential waste customers can request additional carts for use at their homes. The following table shows the current charges for additional carts and the proposed updated rate for each additional cart.

Additional Carts	Current	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
64-Gallon Trash Cart (Gray)	\$7.43	\$5.50	\$6.33	\$6.90	\$7.49	\$8.07
	\$ Change	(\$1.93)	\$0.83	\$0.57	\$0.59	\$0.58
96-Gallon Trash Cart (Gray)	\$10.25	\$8.26	\$9.50	\$10.36	\$11.24	\$12.11
	\$ Change	(\$1.99)	\$1.24	\$0.86	\$0.88	\$0.87
96-Gallon Recycling Cart (Blue)	\$3.74	\$3.47	\$3.99	\$4.35	\$4.72	\$5.09
	\$ Change	(\$0.27)	\$0.52	\$0.36	\$0.37	\$0.37
96-Gallon Organics Cart (Green)	\$3.87	\$4.95	\$5.69	\$6.20	\$6.73	\$7.25
	\$ Change	\$1.08	\$0.74	\$0.51	\$0.53	\$0.52

How will this proposed rate update benefit me?

The proposed rate update will enable the Division to continue to provide weekly collection services to residential customers. It will also allow the Division to continue offering bulky item pickup, controlling litter, and investing in sustainable initiatives like recycling programs and waste reduction efforts.

Finally, the proposed rate update will allow the Division to consider expanding services, which could include adding bulky items pickup by appointment once the financial situation improves.

What are the consequences if the residential solid waste rate is not updated?

Without a rate update, the Division will be faced with two options:

- Reduce services to residential customers, or
- Subsidize services using the City's General Fund, which could impact other city-wide services, improvements, and maintenance activities, since the General Fund is fully allocated for City services.

To learn more about the consequences, we encourage residential customers to attend an upcoming Community Outreach Meeting. A complete list of meetings is available on the Prop 218 website at www.fresno.gov/Prop218.

What specific costs have increased since the last rate update?

The following costs have increased since the 2009 rate update, which was based on a rate study completed in early 2007:

- Landfill disposal fees, also known as tipping fees
- Fuel
- Staff wages and benefits
- Collection vehicles
- Service support vehicles
- Maintenance of vehicles and equipment
- Collection carts
- Additional post-closure regulatory compliance activities at the Fresno Sanitary Landfill

What else has changed since the last rate update?

In 2012, the City eliminated the commercial solid waste program for businesses and multi-family residential properties, leaving the Division responsible for service to 103,000 residential customers. Today, the Division serves approximately 119,000 accounts, which is a 16% increase. The volume of residential waste has also increased. For the current fiscal year that just ended on June 30, 2023, the Division hauled and disposed of approximately 255,000 tons of waste, which is an increase of approximately 13% since 2012.

What are the post-closure regulatory activities at the Fresno Sanitary Landfill?

The Fresno Sanitary Landfill is owned by the City, and was operated as the City's primary solid waste disposal location from the 1930s until its closure in 1989. Ongoing maintenance and operation of a methane gas collection system and a groundwater collection and treatment system are still required for the site. The City is under a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) enforcement action to implement projects to improve the gas collection and treatment system and enhance ongoing maintenance activities at the site. The full costs to operate the systems and implement the improvements were not understood or completely accounted for in the 2007 rate study.

What is the process to update rates?

Local government agencies must follow what's known as the Proposition 218 process when proposing new or increased rates. Prop 218 requires the Division to conduct the following rate-setting process:

- Perform an independent analysis of revenues and expenses, develop appropriate rates, present the analysis in a report (rate study).
- Request City Council approval to conduct the Prop 218 rate-setting process. The City Council approved the initiation of the Prop 218 process at the **December 14 City Council meeting**.
- Mail notices of the proposed rates to property owners and rate-paying customers and inform them about the process to protest the proposed rate update if they choose. These notices began being mailed out the week of March 18.
- Conduct a public hearing 45 or more days after notices are mailed.
- Count the number of valid written protests received by the close of the public hearing. A simple majority, or 50 percent plus one, is required for the protest to be considered successful.
- If less than a simple majority protests the proposed rate update, the Division will request that City Council adopt the proposed rates.

To learn more about this process, we encourage residential customers to watch the explainer video on our Prop 218 website at **www.fresno.gov/Prop218**.

How can I support the proposed rate update?

If you wish to support the proposed rate update, no action is necessary. You are showing your support for the proposed rate update by not returning a protest notice. You may also attend the public hearing to voice your support. The public hearing will be held on May 2, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. at Fresno City Hall, 2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93721.

How can I protest the proposed rate update?

Every impacted property owner and customer will be mailed a notice and protest card the week of March 18, 2024. You may mail or hand deliver a signed protest card or alternate written protest to the City Clerk, 2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93721.

All valid written protests received by the close of the public hearing on May 2, 2024, will be counted. Property owners and customers have the right to submit a protest for each property owned that is serviced by the Division, or each residential solid waste account with the City.

More information about alternative options for written protests can be found on the website www.fresno.gov/prop218.

What needs to be included in my written protest?

To be counted, a valid written protest must include the following components:

1. Statement of the submitter's intention to protest the residential solid waste rate update;
2. Identification of the affected parcel (by street address, assessor's parcel number (APN), or utility account number); and
3. Printed name and original, wet signature of the person submitting the protest.

Your signed written protest must be mailed or hand-delivered in a sealed envelope to the City Clerk, 2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93721, and must include the phrase "Attn: Protest Residential Solid Waste Utility Rate Update" written on the outside to properly identify and account for the protest.

Can I email or fax my protest?

No, Prop 218 requires a written protest with an original signature. You can voice your opinion on the Prop 218 proposed rate update via email or fax, but for your protest to count, you must submit a valid written protest with an original, wet signature.

I did not receive a notice in the mail. How can I get a copy?

You can download the Prop 218 notice at www.fresno.gov/prop218.

What if I lost my protest card or did not receive one?

Replacement protest cards are not available, but you may still submit a written protest in an alternate format. Written protests that are not made on the provided protest cards will still be counted but must include all the following components:

1. Statement of the submitter's intention to protest the residential solid waste rate update;
2. Identification of the affected parcel (by street address, assessor's parcel number (APN), or utility account number); and
3. Printed name and original, wet signature of the person submitting the protest.

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All valid protests received by the close of the public hearing on May 2, 2024, will be counted. More information about options for protesting the rate update can be found on the website www.fresno.gov/prop218.

I changed my mind. Can I withdraw my protest?

Any person who submits a protest card or written protest may withdraw it by submitting to the City Clerk a written request that the protest be withdrawn. The request for withdrawal of a protest must contain sufficient information to identify the affected parcel, the name of the record owner or residential solid waste customer who submitted the protest and is requesting that it be withdrawn.

Requests for withdrawal of a protest must be submitted by the close of the public hearing on May 2, 2024.

Can the Solid Waste Management Division ever charge more than the approved rates?

No. Prop 218 requires the Council-approved rates to be the maximum increases allowed for each Fiscal Year, and the Division may not charge any more than the approved maximum increase. Each year a financial analysis will be conducted, and a determination may be made that the rate update in a Fiscal Year does not need to increase to the maximum approved rate. Therefore, the rate implemented in any Fiscal Year may be lower than approved, but will never be greater than the approved rate without undergoing another Prop 218 rate-setting process.

I'm on a fixed income. Is financial assistance available?

The Division will be proposing a separate Solid Waste Affordability Credit Program (SWACP) for City Council consideration with the proposed rate update. The SWACP will mirror the requirements of the already-established Water Affordability Credit Program and will utilize the same application. Eligible customers will receive a monthly credit on their utility bill, which will be funded by non-ratepayer funds.

When will the proposed rate update take effect?

If adopted, the new residential solid waste utility rate update will go into effect July 1, 2024.

Where can I get more information?

The Division will conduct a series of meetings throughout the City of Fresno over the next few weeks prior to the May 2, 2024, public hearing. For the dates, locations, and times of those meetings please **visit www.fresno.gov/prop218**. Email questions to **Prop.218@fresno.gov**, or call **[559-621-8218](tel:559-621-8218)**.