

Cart-based Recycling

Frequently Asked Questions

What is automated and semi-automated recycling?

In an automated recycling program, special recycling carts are picked up by a mechanical arm on a truck rather than manually lifted. With semi-automated recycling, an employee moves the cart to the truck and a “tipper” device helps empty the cart.

Why is the City changing to cart-based automated or semi-automated recycling?

A cart based system makes municipal collection programs more efficient, cleaner, and safer. Data analysis has shown residents recycle 50% more when provided a 64-gallon recycling cart. The cart system also reduces the risk of injuries to workers and requires less manpower.

Am I included in the program?

You can check if your address is included in the program by visiting our website at www.albanyrecycles.com.

What happens if I'm included in the program?

A new free 64-gallon recycling cart (more than double the size of the current bins) will be delivered to your property. You do not need to be home to receive the cart. Once your cart has been delivered you will then be able to use this cart for your recyclables. The cart is easy and safe to maneuver and rolls across all types of terrain.

What can I put in my new recycling cart?

The recycling program will continue to be single-stream, meaning there is no need to sort recyclables. Do not use plastic bags inside your cart – these are only recyclable at grocery stores. Cardboard does not have to be bundled, but must fit inside your cart.

What do I do on my collection day?

On the evening before to your collection day wheel your cart out to the edge of your driveway or to the edge of the curb, making sure the handle is facing towards your home. Carts must be placed away from other objects so there is enough space to make the collection safely without tipping over other containers or damaging property. Make sure the container handle faces toward your home.

Do I have to bring my recycling cart out if it isn't full?

You do not have to bring your cart to the curb every week if it is not full – the program is more green and efficient if the trucks do not have to make unnecessary stops.

What do I do if I have more recycling than will fit in my cart?

You must store your excess recycling until the next collection day.

Is my collection day changing?

No – your collection day will remain the same. Your recyclables should be placed curbside, after 4:30 p.m. the evening prior to the designated waste collection and recycling collection day.

What should I do with my old recycling bin?

You can keep your old recycling bin(s) for storage, but they cannot still be used for weekly collection. If you would like to dispose of your old bin, place it curbside on your trash night.

What if my cart gets damaged or stolen?

The carts are the property of the City of Albany and each one is assigned to a specific address. All reports of damage or theft will be investigated and should be reported to the Department of General Services at 518-434-2489. Residents are responsible for keeping carts clean.

I live in a multi-unit property that shares recycling bins. What should I do?

Contact your landlord to find out how many carts your property will be receiving and work with your landlord and neighbors to determine who will be responsible for bringing the cart out to the curb each week.

What should I do with my cart if I move?

Carts are the property of the City of Albany and must remain at the address to which they are assigned. If you are moving, please inform the Recycling Coordinator of changes in occupancy by calling 518-434-2489 or by emailing albanyrecycles@albanyny.gov.

What if my recycling did not get picked up at its normal time or was missed?

Recycling pick-up times are not always the same due to a number of factors. If the recycling is not picked up after 12PM on your designated collection day, please notify DGS A.S.A.P by calling 518-434-2489.

What if one cart is not enough for our family's recycling needs? Can I get a second one?

One 64-gallon cart is typically well suited for families of 3-4 people and residents rarely need more than one.

What if it snows?

As long as carts are placed within three feet of the curb, emptying the carts should not be a problem; or, set the cart out the following week once the weather improves.

I bought a cart at home depot that looks just like the ones we'll be using. May I use it?

No, our collection trucks can ONLY pick up the containers issued by the City of Albany.

How should I pack the materials in my recycling cart?

The recyclable items should be packed loosely. Tightly packed materials will get stuck in the cart and will not come out freely.

More questions? Give us a call at 518-434-2489 or email the Recycling Coordinator at

albanyrecycles@albanyny.gov.