

## Sanitary Trash Disposal

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Lately, curbside trash pickup services are problematic for many residents. Contributing factors include forced adjustments to once-per-week trash and recycling pickups, disposal companies failing to arrive on the scheduled days, and the sanitation worker labor shortage. However, trash and recycled waste still needs to be secured against wind and rummaging animals. Any food-related or other stinky items must be kept in hard containers, such as roll-out bins, or risk getting ravaged by scavengers. This image of an overstuffed wheely bin shows holes in bags torn by raiding critters. Garbage is scattered in the street, though a lot more of it was picked up prior to taking this photograph. Waste like this must be protected against scavengers such as crows, rats, raccoons, foxes, loose pets, and even the occasional bear. When animals raid the refuse, any of the following happens:

- It creates an unsanitary problem.
- The scattered garbage litters neighboring properties and the community.
- Junk enters the environment.
- The critters can be harmed by indigestible materials or improper food.
- Those animals get into the bad habit of ransacking rubbish.

Some solutions include:

- Replace broken bins, especially ones with large holes. Most disposal companies swap worn-out bins with new ones for free upon request.
- Ask the disposal company for additional bins.
- Raccoon-proof the bin's lid with a weight (e.g., a cinder block), clips, or bungee cords.
- Reevaluate the household waste stream. See if more items can be recycled and free up regular trash space.
- Rinse out recycled food and beverage containers so they do not reek.
- Prioritize disposal of smelly trash so it all fits in the bin. Keep this rubbish separated from other refuse like "clean" plastic packaging material. Non-recyclable items that will not attract wildlife, such as pressure-treated wood or large Styrofoam blocks, could be packaged outside the bin.
- Start at-home composting. Details are at in the article, [Free, Easy, Plentiful Live Bait for Fishing \(June 2020\)](#), which caters to fishermen but the composting principles benefit everyone.
- Certain materials, such as meat and bones, should be kept out of a home compost bin. However, all food bits can be processed in Fairfax County's [Food Scraps Composting Drop Off](#) program. The composting efficiency and temperatures reach much higher levels than small household operations, which enable more types of items to be processed.
- Got too much garbage that needs to be gone ASAP? Take it (or hire someone to do it for you) to the I-66 Transfer Station or I95 Landfill Complex. More on these options is at <https://www.fairfax-county.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/locations-hours>.



Keeping garbage from the animals and the elements helps everyone stay healthy and safe.

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