Residential Fee/Penalty Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. **Why is the City implementing new solid waste fees and penalties?**
   The City is implementing updated solid waste fees and penalties to help address increasing operational costs and service disruptions caused by improper disposal practices. These practices include late setouts of carts, overfilled carts, and contamination of recycling (blue cart or blue lid) or organics containers (green cart or green lid). The updated fee structure was adopted by the City Council on April 22, 2025

2. **Will the residents be informed about these new fees?**
   Yes. Residents will be notified of the new fees and penalties through a comprehensive public education and outreach campaign. The City is committed to ensuring all residents are well informed and have access to the resources they need to comply before any fees are implemented.

   The campaign includes the following communications:

   - **Mailed Notifications:** Printed notices outlining the new contamination, overage/overweight, go back, and hazardous waste cleanup fees will be included in utility bill inserts during the July and August billing cycle.
   - **Website Updates:** The City's official website features detailed information, including FAQs, examples of contamination, and tips for proper waste sorting.
   - **Social media & Digital Outreach:** Educational messages, videos, and reminders will be shared on Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor.
   - **Community Engagement:** City staff will host public information sessions, participate in community meetings, and attend local events to explain the changes and answer questions.
   - **Customer Service Support:** Residents may contact 311 or the Solid Waste Division directly for assistance or clarification regarding the new fees and penalties.

3. **Where can I find more information about the new fees?**
   Detailed information about solid waste fees, customer communications, the Residential Waste Management Guide ("What Goes Where"), and other waste-related resources is available on the City's website here.

4. **How can I avoid being charged the new fees?**
   Residents can avoid fees by following proper solid waste guidelines, which include:
   - Setting carts out on time

- Avoiding overfilling or overloading carts
- Properly sorting recyclables, organics, and trash to prevent contamination
- Scheduling bulky item pickups within the allowed number of free collections (2 per calendar year, up to 5 items each)

5. **Will I receive a warning before being charged?**
   Yes. The City has a progressive warning system for both cart contamination and overfilled/overweight carts. This process is designed to give residents the opportunity to correct improper disposal practices before any fees are applied. This process includes:

   - **First occurrence:** A warning tag will be placed on your cart.
   - **Second occurrence:** A second warning tag will be placed on your cart, and a formal warning notice will be mailed to your address.
   - **Third and subsequent occurrences:** A warning tag will be placed on your cart, a charge notification will be mailed to you, and a fee will be added to your refuse bill.

   This approach supports ongoing education and encourages compliance with proper sorting to maintain a clean and sustainable Riverside.

6. **What does it mean if a cart is overfilled or overweight, and how can I avoid related fees?**
   A cart is considered **overfilled** when the lid cannot completely close and remains open at an angle greater than 45 degrees.

   A cart is considered **overweight** if it exceeds safe lifting limits, more than ***55 pounds*** for manually collected containers or **150 pounds** for automated carts.

   These conditions can lead to spillage during collection or require additional cleanup by collection crews.

   To avoid overage of overweight charges, residents should:

   - Ensure all materials fit inside the cart with the lid fully closed
   - Avoid placing heavy or non-compliant items in the cart
   - Request an additional cart if the current capacity is not sufficient
   - Avoid overfilling carts to prevent litter and potential code violations

7. **What do "Go Back" or "Late Sit Out" mean and will I be charged a fee?**

   "Go Back" refers to when a collection driver must return for a second trip because it was not out at the designated location in time for pickup. A $46 fee will be applied to your billing account for this additional service if requested.

"Late Sit Out" means that **your cart was placed at the curb too late,** after the collection truck had already passed your home. As a result, the cart was not collected, and a $46 fee will also be charged if a return trip is requested.

8. **What happens if I place my cart out late or miss my service day?**
   If your cart is not placed out on time and collection is missed, you have two options:

   - Wait for the next scheduled collection day and your cart will be serviced at no additional charge, or
   - Request a return trip within the same service week because your cart was placed out late. A "Go Back" fee of $46 will be charged.

9. **Who can call 311 to request a missed cart pickup, cart replacement, extra service pickup, or bulky item pickup?**
   Previously, anyone could make these requests. However, because some services may incur fees, only the account holder or authorized callers on the account can request these services when contacting 311. If you are not listed as an authorized caller, please ask the account holder to add you before submitting a request.

10. **Why am I being charged a fee for bulky item pickup? I thought residents receive two free pickups per year, with up to five items each.**
    Each residential account is entitled to **two free bulky item pickups per calendar year**, with a limit of **up to five items per pickup**. However, if a resident requests **additional pickups beyond the two included services**, a **fee of $25 per item** will be charged. This fee helps cover the cost of providing service beyond what is included at no charge.

11. **Who do I contact if I believe I was charged in error or want to dispute the fee?**
    Please contact 311 at (951) 826-5311 for assistance. Additional information and FAQs are also available at the City's website here.

12. **What is hazardous waste, and why am I being charged a fee for it?**
    Hazardous waste includes materials that, due to their quantity, concentration, or harmful properties, pose a risk to human health or the environment. These items must **not** be disposed of in your waste carts. If hazardous waste is improperly placed in a cart causes a spill or contamination during collection, a cleanup fee of $209 will be charged.

13. **Why would a resident need a cart replacement, and when is a fee applied?**
    Residents may need a cart replacement for several reasons, including:

- Damage beyond repair from normal wear and tear over time.
- Accidental damage by the resident (e.g., melted from hot ashes, broken lid from improper use).
- Lost or stolen carts that cannot be recovered.
- Missing carts following service that cannot be located despite reasonable efforts.
- Damaged unrelated to collection operations (e.g., run over on private property).

A cart replacement fee will be charged if:

- The cart was lost, stolen, or damaged due to resident misuse or negligence.
- The damage occurred on the resident's property and was not caused by collection operations.
- The resident requests a replacement for cosmetic reasons, even though the cart is still functional.
- The replacement is outside the scope of wear and tear covered by the service provider.

14. What is an extra pick-up request?

An Extra Pick-Up request refers to a special collection of additional trash, recycling, or organics that does not fit in your cart and needs to be collected within the same service week, outside of your normal scheduled pickup day**.** A $52 fee will be charged to your account if you request an extra pick up.

15. Why is the Cart Replacement fee so high?

The $108.72 cart replacement fee reflects the full cost of purchasing a new cart, delivery, labor, and equipment needed to complete the replacement. This fee helps the City and its waste hauler recover expenses associated with replacing carts that are: damaged due to misuse, lost or stolen, or requested for early replacement for cosmetic reasons before reaching the end of their service life.

16. What are the fees/penalties?

	SOLUTION NAME	SERVICE DESCRIPTION	COST
1	EXTRA BULKY PICK UP	BULKY ITEM PICKUP PER ITEM (IN EXCESS OF 2 PICKUPS PER YEAR AND LIMITED TO 5 ITEMS PER PICKUP)	$25
2	GO BACK/LATE SIT OUT	GO BACK/LATE SIT OUT (PENALTY)	$46
3	OVERAGE/OVERFILLED/OVERWIGHT	SOLID WASTE OVERAGE- RESIDENTIAL OVERWEIGHT/OVERFILLED CART (PENALTY)	$46
4	CART REPLACEMENT	DELIVERY/REMOVAL/EXCHANGE OF RESIDENTIAL SOLID WASTE CART (IN EXCESS OF ONE REPLACEMENT SET EVERY 10 YEARS)	**$108.27
5	HAZARDOUS CLEAN UP	CLEAN UP HAZARDOUS MATERIAL SPILL DUE TO MATERIAL PLACED IN CART (PENALTY)	$209
6	EXTRA PICKUP REQUEST	EXTRA PICKUP REQUEST PER RESIDENTIAL CART (WITHIN SAME SERVICE WEEK)	$52
7	CONTAMINATION FEE	CONTAMINATION IN RECYCLE/ORGANICS CONTAINER FOR THREE OR MORE COLLECTION DATES	***$18.02

** APPROVED BY COUNCIL ON APRIL 22, 2025 - ACTUAL COST - OF THE CART.

NOTE: ACTUAL COST IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

*** RMC 6.04.040(D) ESTABLISHES THE CONTAMINATION FEE AS "EQUAL TO THE CHARGE FOR AN ADDITIONAL SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL CONTAINER" (R722), FOR FY2627 WHICH IS CURRENTLY $18.02. THE CONTAMINATION FEE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE