



City of Arts & Innovation

# News Release

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## **City of Riverside Takes Emergency Action to Alleviate Trash Pick-up Delays**

*City allows private hauler to pick up routes that otherwise would be delayed*

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Faced with an aging fleet of trash trucks decimated further by a recent heat wave, the City of Riverside invoked an emergency provision in its solid waste contract to allow a private trash hauler to assist city crews in picking up refuse in a timely manner.

“Our job is to deliver essential public services, and this action ensures we will be able to do that,” Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson said. “We must pick up trash for public health reasons and our residents’ safety. Riversiders expect and deserve timely service from their city.”

City Manager Mike Futrell issued the emergency order directing private hauler Athens Services to provide refuse service on several city routes that otherwise would not be serviced on schedule by city crews. Athens, which already provides services in areas not handled by city crews, will start trash pickups on Thursday (9/19), supplementing city crews which pick up trash for most routes in the city.

Trash cans left at the curb by delayed pick-ups can attract insects and other vermin while also impacting scheduled street sweeping services, resulting in trash in the streets.

The City has struggled to keep up with the demand for refuse collection because, at times, more trucks have been out of service than working. Eight trucks broke down in late August and were sidelined by 107-degree temperatures last week. Trucks overheated, could not be refueled with compressed natural gas or lacked air conditioning, sending temperatures in the truck cabs soaring to 120 degrees. The major heat event has worsened the backlog of necessary truck repairs.

City crews have worked overtime on Wednesdays – usually no pick-ups are scheduled this day – as well as Saturdays and Sundays to complete delayed routes. Most refuse was picked up within a day of the scheduled pick-ups, but recent delays have stretched to two or three days as more trucks have failed.

“City refuse workers have worked diligently and often in difficult circumstances to serve our residents,” City Manager Mike Futrell said. “But you can’t pick up trash without an operating trash truck.”

Ten new trucks have been ordered and are expected to arrive between the end of 2024 and March 2025. The emergency declaration will be reviewed periodically but could remain in place for six months.

City refuse drivers who do not have a working truck to drive will be reassigned to other tasks, such as delivering replacement trash cans, assisting with service on manual routes, or checking residential cans for contamination. No layoffs are anticipated.