



# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## Why is my garbage and recycling not being collected?

Winter storms in Central and Eastern Washington can create unsafe road conditions that affect our ability to provide service. With safety as a core value at Waste Management, our #1 objective is to ensure the safety of the community and our employees. Ensuring safety requires monitoring conditions closely so we can make informed decisions. Considerations include conditions on residential streets, the size and weight of our collection vehicles (more than 50,000 lbs.), the stop-and-start nature of collection service, and vehicles parked on the street. In some situations, icy and unsafe conditions on hills or on the routes to transfer stations may also prevent service.

## Conditions don't seem bad near me. Why can't you get out and collect?

We take the decision to postpone service very seriously. Our concern is for your safety as well as the safety of your property and our employees. Our collection trucks are big – wider and much heavier than a car. That's why you may be able to drive to the store, and yet local streets may be unsafe for collection trucks that need to stop frequently and operate on narrow or steep neighborhood streets. Also, weather conditions can vary widely. While roads may be safe in one area, getting to your neighborhood, on to side streets and back and forth to the transfer station may present unsafe conditions.

## What's the best way to get information about my WM service when it's snowing or icy?

Go online! The best place for Service Alert information is [wmnorthwest.com](http://wmnorthwest.com). Your specific webpage (specific to your city/county) on [wmnorthwest.com](http://wmnorthwest.com) is updated as Service Alerts are activated and throughout the day as conditions warrant. The purpose of a Service Alert is to provide information about service interruptions and recovery plans.

## How does WM notify customers about Service Alerts?

If weather conditions don't allow us to collect on regular schedules, we communicate as quickly as possible, so customers know what to expect:

1. **WM WEBSITE:** We post Service Alerts online at [wmnorthwest.com](http://wmnorthwest.com), which is your best resource when conditions prompt questions about service. Our policy is to post Service Alerts on [wmnorthwest.com](http://wmnorthwest.com) by 9 am. Post times will vary when conditions change unexpectedly or a storm hits later in the day. For the most up-to-date information as conditions change, the #1 resource is [wmnorthwest.com](http://wmnorthwest.com). The website has the most updated information available and it's accessible 24/7!
2. **LOCAL MEDIA:** We alert major media in the area, so information can be shared via TV, radio and social media channels. Also, we post on Waste Management's social media channels and monitor those channels for customer questions and feedback. (Our policy is to

respond within 24 hours.) Many of our partner cities/counties also post to their web pages and social media.

3. **WM CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE CENTER:** Our customer service team is on the job to respond to customer calls, Monday – Saturday at 1-877-466-4668. (Check your city/county specific website page on [wmnorthwest.com](http://wmnorthwest.com) for additional customer service information).
4. **CALLS TO CUSTOMERS:** We notify customers by phone. We use an automated call system to send a voice message directly to the telephone number associated with your account. (Yes! We can now call a cell phone if that's the number on the account.) The message includes information on the Service Alert and recovery plan for your service area. If conditions are in flux, our operations team will scout routes in the early morning. If conditions are determined to be unsafe, we will begin automated calls as soon as possible that day.

### How and when do you decide to stop or postpone services when it's snowing or icy?

When snow or ice is in the forecast, our operations teams begin scouting routes in the early morning (between midnight and 3 am). WM teams review this information to make informed decisions no later than 7 am. Sometimes conditions allow us to serve part of an area; sometimes unsafe conditions require that service be postponed for an entire area.

### How do you determine the recovery plan?

When it comes to storms and unsafe conditions, we have three critical objectives:

- **Safety** – It's a core value for WM. Our #1 objective is to ensure the safety of the community and our employees.
- **Get information to customers as soon as possible** – If unsafe conditions require that we postpone service, we communicate as quickly as possible so customers know what to expect.
- **Minimize disruption for customers** – This means resuming regular collection schedules as soon as it safe to do so, collecting extras at no charge in many areas, and getting back on the regular schedule as quickly as possible.

Recovery plans vary by community. For most service areas, the policy after a service postponement is for WM to collect a double load on your next regular service day, at no extra cost. (Your WM service calendar shows your regular service days. Please find your calendar online at your city/county specific page on [wmnorthwest.com](http://wmnorthwest.com).)

Important: Some cities/counties do have different recovery plans. That's why it is important to check the Service Alerts for your service area on [wmnorthwest.com](http://wmnorthwest.com).

For weather events that stretch over several days or weeks, we closely monitor conditions and adjust recovery plans in consultation with city/county staff.

Our goal is to resume collection as soon as it safe to do so. We understand the inconvenience that comes with inclement weather and we greatly value your patience as we do our best to collect materials – safely and efficiently – once conditions allow.

### Why did my neighbor down the road receive service and I did not?

Storms and unsafe conditions can impact various collection schedules and routes in different ways. Sometimes impacts are connected to snow plow routes and sanding; WM drivers can safely maneuver trucks on major arterials once they have been plowed or sanded, but some side streets remain unsafe. Other factors may include unsafe conditions related to steep grades, narrow streets and weather changes that require drivers to stop collecting before they finish their regular routes.

### **Why do I see WM trucks on the road if you are not providing service?**

WM trucks on the road during major weather events are servicing “critical care” locations, such as hospitals, nursing homes and medical facilities located on major arterials. If you see trucks on the road despite being told we are not operating, we are attempting to provide service to these “critical care” customers in light of public health considerations.

### **Why can't you attach snow plows to your collection vehicles?**

Our local trucks are not designed for snow plow attachments. Instead, we do our best to coordinate with street crews on routes before weather hits and during weather events.

### **Why don't I get a credit when you don't collect?**

Credit is not provided for postponed services. As much as we regret having to postpone service due to unsafe conditions, we will still provide the service at a later date. We will collect and manage the material, and incur costs related to collection and management. In fact, winter storm interruptions are more costly than providing routine services due to driver overtime and numerous operational inefficiencies.

### **What am I supposed to do with extra garbage?**

For tips on setting out extras, go to the bottom of your Service Alerts page on [wmnorthwest.com](http://wmnorthwest.com).

### **What am I supposed to do with extra recycling?**

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