

# Universal Recycling in St Petersburg

## Frequently asked Questions Concerning Alley Collection

- Why are changes being made to the city's recycling program?
  - In order to increase participation, and for the convenience of residents who get their trash picked-up in the alleys, the Sanitation Department will begin collecting recycling in those alleys, as well.
  
- When does alley recycling start?

Recycling collection in the alleys will begin January 25, 2016.
  
- Will my pick-up days and times change?

No. Collection will continue to occur every other week in each of the 8 zones. The zone boundaries are not changing, so your recycling will continue to be collected on the same day. Collection times remain the same; containers should be ready for pickup by 7:00 a.m. on your designated collection day.
  
- Where do I place the container in the alley?

The container needs to be placed on your property (or as close as possible) within a few feet of the alley.

  - It needs to be near the alley and without obstruction so the operator may easily bring it to the truck for collection and return it.
  - It must not be within 3 feet of the large, 300 gallon, trash containers so that trash collection will not be affected.
  - It needs to be on your property so it does not block any part of the alley. The alleys are already narrow and these containers cannot be an impediment to your neighbors, to emergency personnel, to service trucks, etc.

Some residents have fences that go all the way to the alley. Although inconvenient, these residents may need to place the container in front of their garage or carport entryway.
  
- If I don't live on an alley, will this change affect me?

No. Your recycling will continue to be collected at your curbside.
  
- Do I have to put my recycling in the alley?

Yes, if your trash is picked up in the alley, then your recycling will be picked up in the alley, too.

- Can I continue to have curbside service even if I have an alley behind my house?

Recycling will be collected at the curb if your regular trash is collected at the curb. If your trash is collected in the alley, your recycling will be collected in the alley. Please keep in mind that your recycling container should only be placed out for collection on your recycling day. At other times you should move it back onto your property.

If you don't know where to place your container in the alley for collection, contact Sanitation at 893-7838.

It would be cost prohibitive for the city to collect recycling both at the curb and in the alley in the same area due to manpower, fuel, and vehicle maintenance costs.

- Where should I keep my container for the 13 days between collections?

It would be our preference that you pull the container into your property away from the alley (inside a garage, inside the fence, against the back of your house, etc.). There are 2 primary reasons for this:

- it will make your container less likely to have contaminated material put into it or recyclable material removed from it by someone else;
- by keeping it close to living areas, it will be easier to use and more material will be recycled.

- If containers are left in alley, won't that impede the collection of trash?

Not if they are placed properly. Containers should not be actually *in* the alley – they should be on your property *near* the alley. And, hopefully, you'll move the container further back onto your property except on recycling collection day, which is not the same day as trash collection. Most importantly, the large trash containers need 3 feet of clearance on both sides to ensure they can be emptied. Remember not to leave *anything*, including your recycling container, within this buffer zone.

- Will recycling pickup in the alley require more alley maintenance?

Yes. The additional truck traffic in the alleys will likely increase the frequency of work required to maintain the alleys.

- What happens when there is non-recyclable or contaminated material in the containers?

Non-recyclable material (contamination) in the recycling container must be separated from the recyclable material, which is costly, and decreases the value of all materials taken to the processor. That translates into less revenue for the city.

If the operator sees contaminated materials inside a container, it will not be collected. Once the contamination has been removed, the container may be placed out for pick-up on the next regular recycling collection day. You may also call 727-893-7838 to schedule a special collection at no charge.

- I've heard that plastic bags, which have a recyclable triangle on them, are not recyclable. Is that true? And what happens to a plastic bag full of recyclable material (like aluminum cans) in the container?

It's true we do not accept plastic bags for recycling in our program. The reason plastic bags aren't accepted is they interfere with the machinery our processor uses to separate the different types of recyclable material. However, most grocery stores and some retailers do collect plastic bags for recycling.

Plastic bags containing recyclables that are collected and taken to the recycling processor will be thrown out, recyclables included, as one of the first steps in the separation process.

- How has the program been doing since it was started?

So far, the amount of recycling now being collected in the city has exceeded our expectations. In the first 3 months of collection, we have picked up over 3,400 tons of material. As a comparison, the private company offering recycling services to St Petersburg residents collected just over 2,500 tons for the entire year of 2014.

- Where can I get more information? If I have questions, who can I call?

Information about the City's recycling program can be found at [www.stpete.org/recycle](http://www.stpete.org/recycle). For information about other sanitation services, visit [www.stpete.org/sanitation](http://www.stpete.org/sanitation).

Keep track of your trash and recycling collection schedules with the St Pete Collects mobile app. Download the app from your favorite app store or at [www.stpete.org/recycle](http://www.stpete.org/recycle).

Call Customer Service. Agents for all sanitation questions, including recycling, may be reached by calling (727)893-7838.