

***At Your Disposal* – Quarterly News You Can Use**



First Quarter Edition – February 2026



COLLECTORS' MEETINGS



Winter is here! The Solid Waste Management Program (SWMP) invites all licensed waste collectors to join us in regular and timely discussions about safety, compliance, customer communications, and any issues that come up during the year.

At our last Collectors' Meeting on November 13, 2025 we reviewed safety guidelines for driving/walking on wet leaves, as well as provided reminders on parking rules and cell phone use while on site. Permitting noted they are working on updating the CTO application process and provided dates for 4TP distribution and sanitation district petitions. Enforcement reviewed Chapter 109.1 requirements regarding service to multi-family housing. Operations updates focused on capital projects taking place at the I-66 Transfer Station as well as on safety guidelines for that site. Outreach & Engagement discussed a waste diversion project to identify recyclable materials entering the waste stream, the general outcomes of the CY2024 ARR audit, and Fairfax Recycles Day.

SAFETY FIRST

  **Cold Weather Stress and Black Ice Alert:** Black ice can be invisible on shaded roads, bridges, and yard surfaces, while cold temperatures increase fatigue and slow reaction time. Drivers / helpers should *slow down, increase following distance, and use three points of contact* when entering & exiting vehicles. Allow extra time on routes and *reinforce warming breaks* to reduce cold stress and prevent slips and falls.

  **Visibility and Defensive Driving Focus:** Snowbanks, fogged windows, and early darkness reduce sightlines at intersections and customer stops. Crews must clear mirrors and lights before moving, use turn signals early, and expect other motorists to misjudge stopping distance. *Maintain a defensive posture* by scanning ahead and never assuming cross traffic will yield!

  **Safe Stops and Ground Conditions on Route:** Collection points may have packed snow, rutted shoulders, or hidden ice near bins and driveways. Step down carefully, test footing before lifting, and avoid rushing between stops. Proper footwear, gloves with grip, and steady pacing reduce strains and falls while keeping the route moving safely.

FACILITIES

- **We want to hear from you!** Please complete a short survey on how to improve our residential and commercial services at the I-66 Transfer Station and I-95 Disposal Complex. The survey is here <https://engage.fairfaxcounty.gov/wastefacilitysurvey> and will be open through March 15.

- **Changes at I-66:** In early January 2026, an outage at the Reworld Complex caused longer than average wait times and heavy trash volumes at the I-66 Transfer Station. This had an impact on the ability of private waste collectors to dump their loads. To help mitigate these types of challenges, DPWES has implemented the following strategies:
 - 1) Provide flaggers and a closing supervisor to manage line impacts and prevent backups on Piney Branch Road and West Ox Road.
 - 2) Increase operations resources to divert material to out-of-county landfills. This includes increasing the use of private contractors to assist in delivering loads to the three different landfills/incinerators.
 - 3) At facility closing, DPWES will identify the last customer in line at closing time to allow them to drop off their load. No trucks that arrive prior to closing will be turned away.

PERMITTING UPDATES

FOUR TOUCH POINTS (4TP)

- 1st Quarter Touch Point is due by March 31, 2026. Here is a link to the 4TP first quarter content- [4TP Postcard](#).

CERTIFICATE TO OPERATE (CTO)

- **CTO Application Process:** Work continues on developing an online CTO application process. It is estimated to be live by April 1, 2026. As previously stated, our goal is to facilitate the process by enabling completion and filing of applications by avoiding the need for applicants to physically visit the Permit Offices.

- **Food Waste Pilot:** Due to multiple projects for our Outreach team, we are postponing the launch of the Food Waste collection pilot program to Spring 2027.

SANITARY DISTRICT UPDATES

- Sanitary District completed petitions were due back on January 30, 2026. All completed petitions will go to public hearing in May 2026.

ENFORCEMENT REMINDERS

- **Use of open-top waste containers:** Collecting refuse using open-top containers is a violation of County Code. Open tops encourage illegal dumping and can lead to litter and vermin issues. Collectors are prohibited from using open tops for refuse. ***Broken refuse compactors cannot be replaced with an open top container, even temporarily.***
- **Early morning collections:** Collecting refuse or recyclables in residential districts and/or within 100 yards of a residential dwelling between the hours of 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. is prohibited by Chapter 108.1 – the Noise Ordinance. By permission from the County’s Department of Planning and Development (DPD), SWMP enforces the Noise Ordinance through a delegation of DPD’s authority. Collectors should be aware that they are required to comply with all relevant provisions of Chapter 108.1 **and** Chapter 109.1.

OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLANNING

On January 21, 2026, Fairfax County hosted a conversation with the solid waste industry about the proposed Unified Sanitation Districts (USD). Representatives from residential and commercial waste collectors with a county certificate-to-operate (CTO) were invited to attend. Thank you to the 14 businesses that were present. The forum was broadcast live on Channel 16; the recording can be viewed here: [Trash Collectors Forum](#).

Fairfax County will hold a dialogue with Homeowners Association (HOA) leadership representatives about the proposed Unified Sanitation Districts (USD) on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. A recording of the forum will be available on the [USD webpage](#).

A report out will be created and delivered to the Board as directed by the [August 26, 2025 Board Matter](#).

ANNUAL RECYCLING DATA REQUEST

On January 19, 2026, permitted collectors and brokers should have received an email regarding the requirement to submit your annual recycling data for CY2025. The form with the required information is to be completed online; the link to the form is [here](#).

Please be reminded that your information is **due March 1, 2026**. Feel free to reach out with any questions; we ask that you do not wait until the last week to seek assistance. Incomplete or missing forms after March 1 will be forwarded to Enforcement.

COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES

At the USD Collectors' Forum on January 21, 2026, multiple speakers commented on the industry's willingness to collaborate. County staff would like to discuss these opportunities in more detail at the next Quarterly Collectors' Meeting.

Possible partnerships that were mentioned included expanding recycling programs, food waste reduction initiatives, and cleaner technology. We would also like to learn more about partnership examples you have successfully implemented with other jurisdictions.

NEXT COLLECTORS' MEETING

Please save the date for the First Quarter Collectors' Meeting on **Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026, at 5 PM** via TEAMS. Email with link will be sent out under separate cover.