



NEWS RELEASE

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Solid Waste develops new efficiencies to improve yard waste pickup

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – The City of Murfreesboro Solid Waste Department continues to experience challenges in recruiting Commercial License Drivers (CDL) needed to operate trash collection equipment and trucks for limb and brush pick-up. In response to the labor shortage, Solid Waste has developed internal efficiencies to improve collection.

“City Solid Waste collection drivers are required to have a CDL Class B license that is currently in high demand due to construction growth,” said Utility Enterprises Executive Director Darren Gore. “Currently, there many businesses soliciting drivers, which makes a very competitive employment environment and is driving up the hourly rate required to hire appropriately licensed drivers.”

Amid the labor challenges, Solid Waste is utilizing efficiencies designed to help alleviate the backlog of brush, limb and yard waste:

- The Solid Waste Department is working overtime on Wednesday running only brush and limb pickup.
- The Street Department is assisting by working overtime on Saturday by running only brush and limb pickup.
- The Solid Waste Department has hired two new laborers, including one with a CDL permit.
- By mid-August one of the Solid Waste Department rear loader trucks (with a 2-man crew) will no longer be needed due to businesses and apartments “opting out” of City solid waste service. This crew can be moved to brush and limb pickup. More crews for limb and brush pickup should be gained as more businesses opt-out of City Solid Waste services.
- Brush and limb “lay down” areas (ex. Water Resources O&M facility on South Church Street) for limb and brush vehicles will be established to collect brush and limb at a location closer than the Florence Rd. facility. This will cut down on travel time and allow more efficient pick-up of limbs and brush. Staff intends to utilize an existing maintenance contract with Rollins Excavating to load and haul off the limb and brush accumulated at these lay down areas.

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The Solid Waste Department issued and advertised an Invitation to Bid (ITB) to solicit private services for Limb, Brush and Yard Waste Curbside Collection Services. This service would encompass roughly half the City.

“In the meantime, Solid Waste is doing everything possible, including paying drivers overtime and utilizing Streets Division drivers to pick up limb, brush and yard waste on Saturdays,” added Gore.

The Solid Waste Facebook page keeps the public informed on the weekly cycle location for yard waste collection. Visit www.facebook.com/Murfreesboro-Solid-Waste-Department-326604987891147/.

Residents can assist in making the process go more smoothly by following a few simple guidelines to improve service and efficiencies for the City and its customers.

- Place the tree limbs and brush parallel to the street.
- Make sure the yard waste is in one pile only instead of several piles.
- Don't place brush and limbs in ditches around or on top of structures such as mail boxes, fences, meter lids, utility lines, utility poles, etc.
- Don't place brush longer than 10 feet in length or 8 inches in diameter.
- Don't place foreign debris such as lumber, household trash, and other types of debris in your brush pile. It will NOT be picked up with such debris in the brush pile.
- Don't set brush on vacant lots or vacant properties. This is illegal dumping.
- Don't place brush under low-lying power lines and cable lines to allow room for the boom to work.
- Don't park a vehicle near the brush pile during daylight hours.
- In order to best accommodate our citizens, please be mindful of the timing of placement of yard waste. Often our Solid Waste Department will pick up an entire street or subdivision, only to find the very next day it is covered with yard waste again. When this happens, it is inevitable that the yard waste will have to remain until the next pick-up cycle. Placing yard waste out by the curb immediately after Solid Waste crews pick it up will extend the time the yard waste resides on the property.

Residents are asked to place debris within five to 10 feet of the street, so that collection equipment can reach them. Limbs should not be placed too far out in the street since this causes traffic hazards and potential drainage problems. According to City Code Streets and Sidewalks Section 28-9-Obstructing streets or sidewalks, “It shall be unlawful for anyone to obstruct in any way any street, public place or sidewalk except as authorized by law . . .”

Only biodegradable paper bags are accepted for those residents who choose to bag yard trimmings. Residents are also asked to keep loose leaves separate from yard waste like brush and limbs, and other yard trimming waste because mixing them causes damage to the vacuum units and slows vacuum collection. Collected leaves and debris are trucked to Murfreesboro's mulch site at 4765 Florence Rd. where the leaves are mulched.

The Solid Waste Department is also considering an update to the City's Solid Waste ordinance to possibly include the following changes to yard waste pickup:

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- Loose grass clippings on the curb would no longer be picked up. All grass clippings would be bagged in biodegradable yard waste bags.
- Private lawn and tree service establishments must not place grass clippings or brush and limb at the curb for City pickup. The City will begin strictly enforcing the current ordinance and impose penalties for violators.
- Limiting the amount of yard waste a residence can place at the curb to a maximum of 6 feet by 6 feet by 4 feet (approximately 5 cubic yards).
- No brush collection for establishments that are not solid waste customers.

For more information on Solid Waste collection, visit the department webpage at <http://www.murfreesborotn.gov/1544/Solid-Waste> or call 615-893-3681.

For City News online, visit www.Murfreesborotn.gov.

Photos attached:

1. *Murfreesboro Solid Waste Logo.jpg*