

REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

Refuse collection and disposal issues are a frequent source of discontent in Lafayette Square. We all have many anecdotes about overloaded dumpsters, refuse in the wrong dumpsters, illegal dumping, enabling our neighbors' bad habits as we properly dispose of their trash, etc. Maybe, just maybe, there are a few stories neighbors could tell on each one of us. And so maybe it's time to recognize that some of our refuse management needs improvement and to do something about it. This article is a step toward that goal by summarizing City rules and some etiquette we all need to observe when disposing of items we no longer want.

St Louis City rules on refuse collection and dumpster use are described at stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/street/refuse. Key points from that source and some suggestions on refuse etiquette are discussed below.

1. **Weekly Refuse Collection.** The City uses an automated system of dumpsters and roll-out carts (containers) for collection and disposal of residential trash, yard waste, and recycling items. City trucks normally collect the refuse twice a week—on Tuesdays and Fridays in Lafayette Square. The trucks use a hydraulic system to lift the containers and empty them into large trash chambers. (Truck drivers do not get out of the trucks to collect items left beside the containers. If you left something on the ground beside the container and it's gone, odds are that one of your neighbors disposed of it properly for you.)

The City's collection rules require that residents:

- Sort household trash, recyclable, and yard waste and place the refuse in appropriate containers.
- Place household trash that can't be recycled in a trash bag and put the bag in the container marked "Trash Only" or "No Yard Waste".
- Refrain from putting yard waste in bags before placing it in the "Green Waste" container.
- Refrain from bagging recyclables before putting them in the blue "Recyclables Only" container.
- Put all refuse inside the containers—not on the ground, on top, or leaning against the containers.
- Close container lids—completely--after disposing of refuse and don't overload containers.

-Use a nearby container if the closest one for similar use is full or retain the refuse until after the City trash truck empties the container.

-Place roll-out carts in the street at least 3 feet away from parked cars.

-Limit the size of tree limbs placed in the yard waste container to 3 feet in length and 1 foot in diameter.

-Refrain from using the containers to dispose of flammable liquids or smoldering tobacco products.

-Recycle Christmas trees at one of three City Parks: Forest, O'Fallon, or Carondelet. These trees are not acceptable refuse for alley containers.

-Obey the law and never use the containers to dispose of bulky items, furniture, auto batteries, motor oil, tires, appliances, and electronics.

2. Bulk Item Pickup and Disposal and B.O.A.T. (Batteries-Oil-Appliances-Tires). Residents can dispose of bulk items (furniture, bundled branches, etc), B.O.A.T., and electronics during monthly bulk-item pickup. In Lafayette Square, bulk-item pickup is scheduled for the week of the second Monday of the month.

Certain rules apply. Residents:

-Dispose of a maximum of three items each month.

-Place items in the alley directly behind their property (or at the curb for roll-out cart customers) by 6 AM of the Monday of the collection week.

-Put bulk items in the alley behind their property only during bulk item pickup week. (No one wants to look at or drive around to avoid someone else's bulk refuse for an extended period.)

-Place the items away from refuse containers (i.e., residents need to resist the temptation to put bulk items near a container which is in the alley behind someone else's house.).

-Place small, loose items in a box or bundle.

-Refrain from placing railroad ties or pallets out for bulk pickup.

-Ensure that bulk items don't block alley or street traffic.

If bulk items are not collected at the end of 5 days, please contact the Citizens' Service Bureau at 314-622-4800.

3. **Illegal Dumping.** People frequently dump refuse illegally in Lafayette Square alleys. Witnesses to illegal dumping should record the license number, description of the vehicle and call 911 if the dumping is in process. If the dumping occurred sometime earlier, report it to the Citizens' Service Bureau at 314-622-4800. If the dumpers are caught, residents reporting this illegal activity could be eligible for a \$100 reward.
4. **Common Sense Etiquette.** Here are a few points to consider as we all work together toward proper refuse management and to keep our neighborhood clean:

- Breakdown boxes. Flattened boxes leave more room in containers for everyone to properly dispose of refuse.

- Leave more empty space in containers by cutting up fallen tree limbs into smaller pieces.

- Use the containers near your home, on your alley; not the containers in someone else's alley. Your neighbors on other alleys shouldn't have to deal with containers you loaded up.

- Help keep the container areas clean. If the container is not behind your property, pitch in to help out your neighbor who has it behind their property. Many people use the same containers. Clean-up duties shouldn't fall solely to the people who have the containers directly behind their properties.

- Avoid overloading containers with bricks, concrete blocks, and other construction material.

- Keep the alley behind and the street in front of your residence clean. Make the effort to remove and properly dispose of accumulated debris, weeds, and leaves.

I believe that Lafayette Square has the finest Victorian facades in the City. If we work together, our alleys can be the best too. So please share this refuse and disposal information with new neighbors and long-time neighbors who might not otherwise see this.