



Garbage / Recycling Billing Questions & Answers

Q: Does the City of Meridian have a residential recycling program?

A: Yes, the city has a recycling program that is included in the cost that you pay for garbage service. The City utilizes the proceeds from the recycled materials to pay for household hazardous waste collection and have paid for such things as the playground equipment located in Storey Park, garbage cans and recycling education materials.

Q: How do I find out the schedule for my trash and recycling collection?

A: Republic Services Inc (formerly Sanitary Services Company) located at 2130 W Franklin Rd. Meridian, ID is the franchise for garbage and recycling collection within the limits of City of Meridian. Their contact number is 208-345-1265, website www.republicservicesidaho.com. They will be able to assist you with the selection of cart service to best meet your needs as well as provide the schedule for your area.

Q: Republic Services picks up my garbage and recycling, but my bill comes from the City of Meridian. What is the relationship between the City and Republic Services?

A: Pursuant to the Idaho Constitution and the Meridian Solid Waste Ordinance, the City has entered into an exclusive franchise agreement with Republic Services. The Idaho Constitution secures to all Idaho cities the power to enter into a contract with a garbage collection company under which that company, and only that company, is authorized to provide garbage collection services to all city residents. The City of Meridian has exercised this constitutionally-endowed power by entering into an exclusive franchise agreement with Republic Services. Under this agreement and the Meridian Solid Waste Ordinance, Republic Services provides garbage and recycling collection services, and the City, in turn, prohibits, within city limits, the collection of garbage and recycling by any other company or entity. By entering into this contract with Republic Services, the City is assured that garbage collection services within Meridian are provided in a consistent, reliable, timely, lawful, and safe manner.

Q: Why am I billed for garbage collection services with my water bill?

A: The Meridian Solid Waste Ordinance established a unified garbage collection/utilities bill in order to minimize administrative costs and keep bills low. The City and Republic Services work closely to ensure that Meridian residents receive the best and most cost-effective garbage collection service possible. One way the City and Republic Services work together to keep costs down is by handling billing for garbage collection services through Meridian Utility Billing Services (MUBS). MUBS is already fully staffed and set up to send utility bills and collect payments; this eliminates the need for Republic Services to establish separate billing and accounting departments to bill for garbage collection services. Because your bill for Republic services' comes from MUBS, your garbage collection services bill is merged with your Meridian City utilities bill.

Q: I haul my own garbage to the landfill or transfer station. Why am I still billed for garbage collection services?

A: All residents are billed for garbage collection services, without exception – but in return, all residents receive curbside garbage collection and additional services. Under the Meridian Solid Waste Ordinance, the City both requires all city residents to pay for garbage collection services, and, in turn, provides garbage collection services to all city residents. This approach best serves the public health and protects our quality of life by ensuring that garbage is collected in a consistent, reliable, timely, lawful, and safe manner. This approach also eliminates the need for staff to monitor each household's garbage pick-up needs. The Meridian Solid Waste Ordinance does not provide for any exemption from the garbage collection fee, even for those who prefer not to utilize curbside garbage collection services. This is one of many reasons to take

advantage of the entire package of garbage collection services provided to City residents. Your residential collection fee also includes curbside pickup of recyclable items, yard waste, leaves, and Christmas trees. Programs for household hazardous waste and medical sharps are also offered.

Q: I moved out of my house and no longer use garbage collection services. Why am I still being billed for garbage collection services?

A: Under the cost-effective unified billing method for garbage and city utilities, as long as utilities remain available, garbage collection services will also remain available. As set forth in the question above, requiring all households with activated utilities to pay for garbage collection services results in low administrative costs, less paperwork, and less bureaucracy; this is a cost-effective alternative to tracking each household's garbage collection services usage and customizing each bill.

For this reason, the Meridian Solid Waste Ordinance does not provide for customized billing such that an unoccupied home may be billed separately, or not billed, for garbage collection services. This means that if you move away from a particular home, but choose not to shut off water and sewer service availability, the availability of garbage collection services will also continue. As long as water and sewer services are provided to the home, garbage collection services will remain available, and you will be required to pay the garbage collection fee, even if you choose to stop using garbage collection services at that home.

Notwithstanding the rare circumstance in which separate bills for garbage collection services and water might appear to save a single household money in the short term, the unified utility/garbage billing configuration actually saves all Meridian households money in the long term by eliminating the cost of implementing, staffing, and administering a customized billing program for each household.

Q: I prefer to burn or bury my garbage. Why am I still being billed for garbage collection services?

A: Burning or burying garbage is prohibited; Meridian residents should use the provided curbside garbage collection services instead. Under the Meridian Solid Waste Ordinance, it is illegal to burn, incinerate, bury, dump, or otherwise dispose of garbage within the city. While it is not illegal for you to haul garbage that your own household has produced to the landfill or transfer station, Meridian City Code does not provide any exemption from the residential garbage collection fee. Providing consistent, reliable, timely, lawful, and safe garbage collection services to every household, regardless of how extensively each individual household uses the services provided, is the best way for the City to protect its citizens from the threats to our health, safety, and quality of life that are associated with the accumulation of garbage, including visual blight, unpleasant odors, and disease-carrying pests.

Q: My household does not produce as much garbage as my neighbor's. What are my options?

A: There are three levels of service available in regards to residential garbage collection. The cost of service is dependant on the size of trash cart selected. Current cart sizes to choose from are 95 gallon, 65 gallon and 35 gallon. Additional carts may be requested at an additional charge.

The Meridian Solid Waste Ordinance provides that all residents of Meridian are charged for garbage collection based on the size of cart utilized with the small cart charge as a default if no cart is selected. The number of people in the household does not affect the fee paid for garbage collection services.

Recycling collection is included unless additional carts above the allotted 1 cart per household are requested. Additional charges will apply for additional recycle carts.

Q: Why does the fee for garbage collection services change periodically?

A: The fee for garbage collection services is determined by a formula that is tied to the Consumer Price Index, an economic indicator generated by the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics. Annually, Republic Services may request a rate increase based upon the CPI. This increase is normally done at the end of the summer and is adjusted with the beginning of the fiscal year in October.

Q: I don't participate in the recycling program. Can I be billed just for garbage collection?

A: No; the fee for garbage collection services is the same regardless of which services you choose to use. The garbage collection fee applies whether you utilize only garbage collection services, or take advantage of the full complement of curbside recycling and pick-up services included in your fee. The Meridian Solid Waste Ordinance provides that all residents of Meridian are billed at a rate for garbage collection based on the cart selected for trash, and in return, all residents receive garbage collection and recycling services.

Q: I have my own trash cans. Why do I have to use Republic Services carts?

A: Automated trash collection was implemented in July 2010, in order to be fully automated; the carts used for trash collection were required to be standardized. Customers are allowed to select the size and number of carts they wish to have on site; thus dictating their own garbage fees. The standardized carts are designed to be used in automated trash collection allowing the truck to pick-up, dump and replace to curb easily.

Q: What is this cart/tax on my bill every month?

A: With the automated trash collection upgrade, came the requirement to utilize carts provided by Republic Services in order to standardize the carts used through-out the city. The service costs are based on cart size for a total monthly fee. A portion of that monthly fee has been dedicated to cart value and tax. The Idaho State tax commission mandates we collect sales tax on any service that includes material items. So as not to pay tax on the entire trash service we choose to separate the cart fee from the trash service fee. Therefore, a value of 94 cents has been placed on each cart provided to the customer with a tax of 6 cents. Customers with carts will see separate line items on their bill for trash services.

Garbage Service = \$\$
Cart/Tax = \$\$
Ex Cart = \$\$ (as appropriate)

Q: As a Builder, can I just opt out of having trash service?

A: No, The City of Meridian does not have an opt out option for trash services. That being said – Builders are treated differently and are given a break in the billing process. When a building permit is issued the utility account is established it is given a “Builder” customer type.

- Billing for water does not start until the day the meter is installed and activated (giving the contractors a water source for washing, concrete mixing, etc.)
- Sewer billing does not start for another 90 days (allows time for the house to be built and actually connected to the sewer system)
- Trash charges are connected at the time the certificate of occupancy is issued. This certificate of occupancy means that the house is updated to a “Residential” customer type, and is ready to be occupied. All City services are available for use and are now billing as such.

Solid Waste Ordinance 4-1-4: Compulsory Use Required. All residential owners and/or occupants; all commercial owners and/or occupants; and all persons under taking, providing, or allowing the provision of construction contractor or landscaper services within the City of Meridian; shall pay for, and shall be provided, solid waste and recyclable material collection services.