

Waste Export

Your garbage now goes through seven steps.

1. First, the Cities trucks picks up garbage from the curb or dumpster and loads it into a garbage truck. Some people haul their own garbage to a transfer station or rural drop box.
2. The City worker takes the garbage to the Skagit County Transfer station.
3. At the transfer station, the garbage is tipped, compacted into a cube weighing 27-30 tons, and pushed into a shipping container.
4. The shipping container of garbage is then trucked to the RDC Rail Loading Facility about 2 blocks away.
5. Every day the shipping containers are loaded onto a train and carried 360 miles to the small town of Roosevelt on the Columbia River. The trip takes about 12 -18 hours.
6. The shipping containers are removed from the train in Roosevelt and loaded onto trucks.
7. The garbage is trucked to the nearby Roosevelt Landfill and unloaded, and the empty containers are returned for re-use.

On an average, 15 shipping containers or 1,500 tons of Skagit County garbage go every weekday to the rail facility for export to southeastern Washington.

Roosevelt Landfill

Roosevelt Landfill is lined with compacted clay and high-density polyethylene, to prevent "leachate" from contaminating the groundwater. Leachate is the result of rainwater leaching pollutants out of the garbage. The leachate is collected through a plumbing system installed throughout the landfill.

Methane gas, produced by decomposing garbage, is also collected through a similar system. One hundred percent of this gas is used to produce electricity at the Klickitat County P.U.D. powerhouse. Eight megawatts (enough electricity to service 72,000 homes) are generated from the methane at this time and more generators are planned as the landfill grows.

The garbage is dumped into "cells," or sections, to manage leachate and to organize the unloading procedure. Every day the garbage is covered with soil to eliminate odors and to discourage seagulls, rodents, and other scavengers.

The Roosevelt Landfill property covers 2,545 acres (2.5 times the size of Lake Stevens or 10 times larger than Green Lake in Seattle). As of October 2005, there is capacity for an additional 92 million tons (46 years worth of garbage) as currently permitted.

Recycle, Reuse, and Prevent Waste

As you can see, a lot goes into handling Skagit County garbage. Human time and labor, fuel, money, materials that produce trucks and trains, and other types of energy are consumed to transport this solid waste. What is really wasteful is when recyclable or reusable items are just dumped in the garbage.

Sending recyclables like aluminum, glass, newspapers, cardboard, mixed paper, scrap metal, yard clippings, pop bottles, and milk jugs all the way to Klickitat County wastes landfill space and natural resources. These resources could be recycled again and again into new products instead of being buried in the landfill.

Reusable things are also disposed of needlessly. People throw out bicycles, clothes, books, furniture, and many household items that could be donated to thrift stores, sold at garage sales, or given to others who could use them.

Re-using keeps perfectly good items out of the landfill and helps others. It also extends the life of the things, thus better using the natural resources that went into making them.

Avoiding wasteful packaging or poor quality items that break is also important. Use sturdy durables instead of disposables. Filling up our landfills with "convenience" items or with unnecessary packaging is truly a waste.

These are crucial reasons for choosing to prevent waste, reuse, and recycle.

How You Can Get Involved

You can help keep the environment healthy and save Ratepayer money by learning the basics about solid waste and encouraging others to consider issues and solutions. These choices will affect the quality of life for you and your family, and for many generations to come.

Here are some good questions to ask yourself:

- What can I do at home and work to prevent waste?
- What more could I recycle?
- What gets in the way of taking these actions and how could I solve this?

Residents are welcome to present ideas on how to recycle more items or how to improve existing infrastructure. Call Leo Jacobs 360-855-1884