

Gone With the Wind!

Do you occasionally see garbage flying out from the top of garbage or recycling trucks and ending up as litter on our streets? Here's what you can do to help prevent this inadvertent littering:

Light-weight materials such as foam-type packing "peanuts", paper, plastic bags, etc., may fly off the garbage truck, causing litter on the street if they are not properly contained. In fact, any materials in the truck, whether they are recyclables or garbage, can potentially fly out of the truck if it is very full and the items are not well contained.

It is very important to bag all your garbage materials securely, enclosing them in a plastic trash bag. While plastic shopping bags are not accepted in the recycling program, you can reuse them by placing your garbage/recyclables in them prior to disposal.

If we all strive to securely place garbage in the garbage container, we'll keep it in the truck and prevent it from littering our streets.

What does ECUA do to prevent fly-away litter?

Sadly, we are not alone in this – windblown debris is one of the biggest problems throughout the waste collection industry. While the ECUA is not the sole source of fly-away litter in our community, we take this matter very seriously and make every effort to reduce reports of litter from our vehicles – those over which we have control.

Some roadways are particularly problematic, because they are routes used by all the sanitation collection providers' garbage trucks to travel to the Perdido Landfill on Beulah Road. The ECUA has taken several steps to try to reduce the amount of litter that escapes from our trucks. Our drivers do everything possible to prevent litter. We ask the driver to secure the truck and load as much as possible prior to leaving the route and heading to the Landfill. In some cases the driver may not be able to see the litter coming from the body, due to the design of the trucks.

We have evaluated multiple truck designs and found none that eliminate the problem. We selected a body style that was better than most and asked the manufacturer to make modifications to further reduce the amount of litter. Production issues prohibited the manufacturer from assisting in this regard, so ECUA is making the truck modifications in-house. This involves welding additional caging to the opening of the truck body to reduce windblown debris. Due to the design of the automated arms on the collection trucks it is virtually impossible to eliminate all litter.

Finally, ECUA began our "Gone with the Wind - Bag your Bags" public education campaign in 2008, reminding customers to bag their garbage and recyclables before placing it in the automated collection cans. Bagging these materials helps reduce the amount of litter by containing the plastic bags and other light-weight items that make up the bulk of the litter from the garbage trucks. We will continue these education efforts and ask our customers to help us prevent litter.



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