



# RECYCLING & ENERGY CENTER®

CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

## Frequently Asked Questions: The Real Cost of Trash

- What is a “tipping fee?”
  - This is the fee a waste hauler pays to deposit trash at a disposal site, which can include a transfer station, processing facility, or landfill. It is usually charged by weight, on a per-ton basis.
  
- What is the tipping fee at the R&E Center?
  - In 2018 the fee is \$77.00 per ton. In 2019, the fee will be \$79.00.
  - A history of the tipping fees at the R&E Center is shown below. Prior to purchase of the R&E Center by Ramsey and Washington Counties, the tipping fee was \$86.22 per ton; upon purchase the tipping fee was reduced to \$70.00 per ton.
    - 2013 - \$86.00
    - 2014 - \$86.22
    - 2015 - \$86.22
    - 2016 - \$70.00
    - 2017 - \$70.00
    - 2018 - \$77.00
    - 2019 - \$79.00
  
- What does the tipping fee pay for at the R&E Center?
  - The money collected from tipping fees covers the full cost of operations at the R&E Center. That includes labor, operating the equipment, transporting and marketing recyclables and refuse-derived fuel, landfilling what can’t be recycled or used as fuel, maintaining the equipment and vehicles, insurance, debt service, and providing funds for replacing equipment in the future.
  
- How does the tipping fee at the R&E Center compare to other similar facilities in Minnesota?
  - There are nine waste processing facilities in Minnesota; all but one are publicly owned. Tipping fees range from \$55 per ton to \$102.50 per ton.
  
- Are trash fees regulated, like other utility charges?
  - Trash fees are not considered a utility fee. Those cities with organized collection, in which the city contracts with one or more haulers to provide residential service, set the fees by contract. In other cities with “open” collection service, and for most commercial accounts, the charges for trash service are set by the hauler and are negotiable.

- How much of my bill is related to the R&E Center?
  - Studies of fees and charges nationally, and specific to the East Metro, show that about 1/3 of a trash bill is for disposal costs.
  - On average, a household produces about one ton (2,000 pounds) of trash each year. The 2018 tipping fee is \$77.00 per ton, so the disposal cost per household is about \$77.00 per year, or \$6.42 per month.
  - There are additional taxes and fees on the disposal cost, and with the cost for collection and transportation.
  
- What makes up my trash bill and why are there so many charges on my bill?
  - Trash bills can vary by hauler, but most include similar charges, including the hauler's cost of providing the service (labor, equipment, insurance, etc.), fees that haulers may put on the bill (fuel surcharge, environmental fee, administrative charge), the County Environmental Charge, and state (and sometimes local) tax. These are further discussed below.
  
- What is the Residential Service charge on my bill?
  - This charge is referred to by different names depending on the hauler. In some cases it refers to the cart size (i.e., 60-gallon service), and other times it may appear as "removal service." This is the basic charge for trash removal, and often depends on how often trash is collected (e.g., weekly, twice weekly, etc.), and container size.
  
- What is the Minnesota Solid Waste Management Tax on my bill?
  - The Minnesota Solid Waste Management Tax is a mandatory charge that haulers must, by law, put on your bill. It is equal to 9.75% of the "Sale Price" for residential trash service, including any administrative or hauler specific fuel/environmental fees. Commercial customers pay 17% of the "Sale Price" for trash service, including fees.