

Halifax Regional Council
August 20, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Brian T. Smith, Director of Solid Waste Resources

DATE: August 13, 2002

SUBJECT: **Amnesty Days for Junk Removal**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN:

Request by Councillor Stephen Adams at Regional Council meeting, June 11, 2002.

BACKGROUND

Councillor Adams requested a staff report on the possibility of allowing residents to place large amounts of bulky materials and refuse out for collection during specific amnesty periods. This would allow residents who have unusual amounts of material, moving, or renovating to have materials picked up, which would normally be in excess of the limits provided in the Solid Waste Collection and Disposal By-Law S-600.

Prior to amalgamation some municipalities offered other alternatives to regular collection of bulky items, such as spring and fall cleanup events. These events did provide an opportunity to have renovation materials, bulky items or waste generated from a recent move to be collected. There were often occasions when the timing of the cleanup dates did not coincide with householders replacing appliances, moving, or renovating. Halifax Regional Municipality adopted the policy of allowing one bulky item to be placed curbside for pick-up every other week (up to 26 items per year), rather than continuing with the spring and fall cleanup events.

DISCUSSION

Solid Waste-Resource Collection and Disposal By-Law S-600 defines how materials are to be prepared for collection. Eligible residential dwellings may place a maximum of ten (10) bags/containers, including up to two (2) bundles of home renovation materials (tied and bundled) and one (1) bulky item and at the curb every second week for refuse collection. If residents generate more waste, they may either spread the material over a few weeks or deliver the refuse to the Otter Lake Facilities and pay the tipping fee of \$5.00 if the load is less than 100 kg. For loads greater than 100 kg, a fee of \$115.00/tonne applies (e.g., for 300 kg, or 660 lbs., the fee would be \$34.50).

Specific limits on the amount of material residents place at the curbside for collection are required for a number of reasons:

1. Limits enable the collection contractors to reasonably predict the total flow of waste for a given day, so they can assign vehicles and crews accordingly;
2. There is a practical maximum to the tonnage of material that can be received for sorting and disposal on any given day at the Otter Lake Facilities (amnesty periods could cause HRM to surpass this maximum);
3. A limit on home renovation materials discourages disposal of larger quantities of these materials at the Otter Lake landfill, and encourages diversion to C&D recycling operations; small renovation projects still can be accommodated curbside;
4. An upper limit on waste quantity collected encourages waste diversion and fosters a sense of individual stewardship for generating waste; and
5. Residents are provided with a service which accommodates the amount of refuse generated in the day-to-day operation of a household (and some peaks). A study in 1999 determined that the average HRM household places fewer than three (3) bags/containers of refuse at the curb every second week (HRM's limit is a generous 10 bags/containers).

As a component of the Future Systems Study (the current residential collection contracts expire on June 30, 2003), Solid Waste Resources is reviewing the provision of residential collection services in preparation of the issuance of an RFP later this fiscal year. The issue of bulky item collection is being studied as part of the review process.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The collection contracts for residential waste do not provide for cleanup or amnesty events nor special separate pickup of bulky materials. The implementation of a special clean up on amnesty days would require additional funding and could be considered as a budget item. The Otter Lake Facilities have a practical limit to the daily tonnage received and any haulage of refuse for disposal beyond of that limit, would be at additional cost.

ALTERNATIVES

Householders in HRM have the alternative to either remove the materials to the Otter Lake mixed waste processing and disposal facility themselves, or engage a private company to do it for them.

HRM could eliminate the biweekly collection of bulky items and introduce spring and fall clean up days instead, but this is not recommended as the current system appears to be meeting the requirements of most residents.

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Fred Wendt, Waste Resource Analyst 490-7175