

Surrey County Council (SCC)

Charges at Surrey's Community Recycling Centres (CRCs) for tyres, plasterboard and waste from the construction, alteration or repair of homes and gardens

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

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1. **Why has SCC introduced charges for tyres and waste from the construction, alteration or repair of your home and garden?**

SCC is required to provide a place for Surrey residents to deposit household waste free of charge. However, the types of waste in the charging scheme are not classified as household waste, so the council can choose not to accept this material, to put limits on the amount we accept and/ or charge to accept it.

In recent years the amount of waste from household alterations and building works that is being brought to our CRCs has increased. This, coupled with significant pressures on the council's finances, means SCC can no longer afford to accept unlimited quantities of this waste, free of charge. Therefore we have had to introduce charges, which are in line with other councils, to recover the cost of dealing with these types of non-household waste. These charges are intended to help SCC to achieve critical savings while still maintaining a comprehensive service for residents.

Up until 3 December 2017 you have a free daily allowance of waste from the construction, alteration or repair of your home and garden of one bag OR one item OR one sheet of plasterboard (size restrictions apply) per household. You will have to pay for anything beyond this amount.

From 4 December 2017 there will no free daily allowance of waste from the construction, alteration or repair of your home garden meaning that all of this waste is now chargeable from this date.

2. Will SCC be making money out of residents by charging for these waste types?

SCC will not be making a profit from dealing with this material- the charges only cover disposal and administration costs.

3. Why aren't all CRCs in the charging scheme?

The charging systems required for this scheme will require additional space at the CRCs. The nine CRCs selected have the extra space required to handle the new charging system, while the others don't.

4. When were these changes communicated?

When the changes to CRCs opening hours and days were communicated from 1 March 2016, it was stated that charges would be introduced as soon as possible after 1 April, when the opening hours and day's changes came into effect.

A communications campaign to introduce and explain the charges has been running since 1 August 2016 including:

- Banners at all sites.
- Leaflets to site users.
- Information on SCC and other council websites.
- Information at libraries, local council offices and other key locations.
- Social media and digital advertising.

The decision to stop the free daily allowance of chargeable waste from 4 December 2017 was communicated in a separate communications programme which launched on 26 October 2017, and used the same methods listed above.

5. Can charging scheme waste now be brought in vans, pick-ups or trailers to the charging scheme CRCs?

No, the [policy requiring vans, pick-ups and trailers](#) carrying construction and demolition waste to use the council's transfer stations remains in place. This is because the CRCs don't have the capacity to deal with the large quantities of waste that these vehicles carry. The Epsom, Guildford or Leatherhead transfer stations can accept this waste. Each transfer station will weigh your waste and charge for disposal.

6. Can traders bring charging scheme waste to the site if they have to pay?

No, CRCs are only for waste from residents' properties. Any tradesmen producing waste as part of their business will still be redirected to one of the council's waste transfer stations.

7. Can the free allowance be used per visit?

Up until 3 December 2017 the free daily allowance can be used once a day only per household. From 4 December 2017 the free daily allowance will be stopped meaning that all of this waste is now chargeable from this date.

If you have large quantities of these types of waste you should consider alternatives such as hiring a skip, buying a Hippo bag or using a commercial waste contractor. CRCs are not designed to accept large quantities of these types of waste.

8. Has any consultation been carried out on the changes?

A public consultation on a range of cost saving options to the CRC service was conducted from 15 July 2015 to 30 September 2015. The preferred changes based on feedback submitted by residents and stakeholders during the consultation in order of preference were:

1. Reduced opening hours
2. Closure of some CRCs on the least busy days
3. Charges introduced for non-household waste
4. Closure of CRCs

At their meeting on 24 November 2015, the council's Cabinet agreed to implement the first three changes, but not to close any CRCs. Changes to opening hours and days were introduced on 1 April 2016, and the introduction of a charging scheme for non-household waste is the last of these changes to be implemented on 1 September 2016.

The decision to stop the free daily allowance of chargeable non-household waste was made following the summer 2017 public consultation with residents, and was agreed at the Cabinet meeting on 26 September 2017.

9. Are there charges for garden waste?

You will still be able to dispose of most garden waste free of charge at CRCs including:

- Grass cuttings
- Hedge trimmings, twigs, small branches
- Plants, flowers, leaves and weeds (please refer to our [garden waste](#) page for advice on intrusive weeds)

If you take these types of waste to any of our sites in a van, pickup or trailer you will require a [van permit](#).

Please note soil and stones are not accepted free of charge and are part of the charging waste scheme.

10. Won't this increase fly-tipping?

Since the scheme was introduced on 1 September 2016, the amount of fly-tipped waste collected by district and borough councils has fallen significantly.

Separately, SCC, working with the local authorities within the Surrey Waste Partnership, together with other agencies such as Surrey Police, our Trading Standards team and the Environment Agency, have developed a new strategy to address the problem of fly-tipping across the county. The new strategy focuses on coordinating and enhancing the prevention, investigation and enforcement activities of these partner organisations, and making use of recently strengthened powers available to local authorities in an effort to reduce fly-tipping in Surrey, and increase the chances of bringing those responsible to justice.

For more information, please visit recycleforsurrey.org.uk/flytipping

11. Won't this scheme increase queuing at the sites?

Since the scheme launched on 1 September 2016 there have been no significant issues with queuing, but the council will continue to monitor this moving forward.

12. Does everyone have to pay under the charging scheme?

Yes, everyone has to pay. There are no dispensations or subsidised rates under the charging scheme.

13. What can I tip for free?

The charges do not apply to general household waste or garden waste. Other categories of DIY waste, such as kitchen units, non-ceramic sinks and baths and doors may still be brought to the 9 charging sites in a car and deposited free of charge. The council's existing policy does not allow DIY waste to be brought to a CRC in a van, pick-up or trailer.

14. Are there any restrictions on how much charging scheme waste I can bring to the site?

No, provided staff are satisfied that you have come from your own home and you have not brought them to the site in a van, pick-up or trailer.

15. How should I bring my waste?

The charging scheme waste should be brought to the site in the appropriate sized bags (bags no bigger than 50cm x 77cm). Items that don't fit into bags will be priced per item, such as a sheet of plasterboard or a sink. If charging scheme waste is brought to a site loose in the back of a car then it will be charged at a per car rate of £50.

16. Will site staff weigh my material on site?

No, the charging scheme is based on volume, either per bag, item or car load.

17. What if I disagree with the site attendant's assessment of the charges to be applied?

The site staff have been provided with training and guidance on how to assess your chargeable waste in bag, by item, by sheet or by vehicle. Their decision is final. How the charge is being administered will be monitored to ensure that it complies with the policy.

18. How do I pay?

All payments must be made via debit or credit card. (JCB, American Express and Diners cards are not accepted). **No cash or cheques** will be accepted on site. The decision to take card-only payment has been made following the results of the public consultation which showed that the majority of respondents would prefer to pay by card.

19. What happens if I can't pay?

You will not be allowed to dispose of any chargeable materials unless you can pay with a credit or debit card. You can dispose of any household waste free of charge. Legal proceedings will be taken against anyone using the service or attempting to use the service without paying. All sites have CCTV and site staff will gather evidence of anyone illegally dumping for possible prosecution.

20. What are you going to do if waste is left outside the site?

Leaving the waste outside the site is fly-tipping. This is a criminal offence and can carry an unlimited fine or a five year prison sentence. Vehicles suspected of being used for fly-tipping can be seized and destroyed on conviction. All sites have CCTV and site staff will gather evidence of anyone fly tipping waste for possible prosecution.

21. What if I disagree with the charging scheme waste policy?

The council's complaints procedure is unable to investigate decisions properly taken by cabinet. Therefore residents should be advised to contact their local councillor if they wish to raise any objections about this policy.

22. What if I tip my charging scheme waste and then decide to take some back home? Will I get a refund?

No refunds will be issued for waste that you decide to take back home.

23. Is VAT included and can I have a VAT receipt?

Yes VAT is included in the pricing.

You can request for a VAT receipt by asking the Charging Scheme Officer and they will organise for this to be sent out to you.

24. What is SCC going to do with the income and money saved?

The savings will be used to operate the CRCs and offset against the reduced funding from central government.

25. If my bags are half full, do I get 2 bags for 1 bag charge?

Unfortunately no. The prices are set per bag, item or sheet. So if you were depositing 2 half bags you would be charged for 2 bags (assuming you had already used up your free allowance).