

Essential trash collection continues with a few changes

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While many businesses throughout Del Norte County had to suspend operations during the coronavirus pandemic, many services continued, deemed essential. That includes trash collection.

Recology Del Norte General Manager Jeremy Herber said the company is continuing business as usual with a few precautions to safeguard their employees to help prevent the spread of the virus. He said in some areas collection was up with more people staying home but that was offset by many businesses no longer needing service while they were closed.

“We’ve seen some pickup increase from residential neighborhoods, with the shelter-in-place order and not as many people are self-hauling trash to the transfer station,” Herber said. “We have seen a decrease in commercial trash and recycle with them closed or doing minimal business. We’re not seeing a lot of construction boxes being used now, either, due to minimal construction as well.”

Ted Ward, Del Norte Waste Management Authority director, said the county transfer station has not seen a huge change in the amount of self-hauling. He added March transfer station tonnage had not been processed yet.

But the authority has taken steps to protect employees and its most vulnerable customers to the virus, the elderly. Ward said the transfer stations in Crescent City, Gasquet and Klamath have special hours for senior citizens who self-haul from 8-9 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Ward said to learn more during the shelter-in-place measures, go to the www.recycledelnorte.ca.gov/covid19.

Meanwhile, services continue as normal for Recology. Herber said so far he's only had a couple of residential customers who could not afford to pay their bill. He's actually had more new customers join than cancel. And most commercial businesses canceled their service or were put on vacation hold with no charge until activated again.

Herber said the company is considering delaying spring cleanup events, which in the past have been big events, that would now violate any social-distancing rules still in place.

Herber said Recology has taken steps to reduce the threat of spreading the virus. The main office is closed to the public and customer service staff are working from home. And its trash collectors, who serve all of Del Norte County, are required to wear personal protective gear, of masks and gloves, by the company.

"We choose to use the protective gear. We have no contact with customers and maintain social distancing. Our drivers will wave but we encourage residents call us over the phone with questions rather than ask the driver," Herber said.

Herber added these days, it is important customers have their cans out by 6 a.m. on their service day.

"We've been moving routes. So, people can get kind of used to the usual driver pick up at a certain time. There could be a change in pickup time," Herber said. "It's important you're not missed."

To learn more about Recology services, go to www.recology.com/recology-del-norte.