

Public FAQs on Revised Refuse Collection Fees for Households

1. What is the rationale behind raising the refuse collection fees for households in 2024? Will the National Environment Agency (NEA) be implementing any measures to help lower-income households?

Public Waste Collectors need to keep up with the rising operational and manpower costs of providing household refuse and recyclables collection services.

The household refuse collection fee for HDB flats can be offset by the permanent GST Voucher – U-Save and the Assurance Package (AP) U-Save. U-Save rebates for FY2024 are disbursed in April, July, October this year and January the following year. It is credited directly into eligible households' utilities accounts managed by SP Services. This scheme helps eligible households with their utility expenses¹, including the refuse collection fee.

As announced at Budget 2024, additional U-Save rebates will be provided to help Singaporean HDB households cope with increases in their utility bills. In total, eligible households will receive two-and-a-half times the amount of regular U-Save, or up to \$950, in FY2024. On average, this will cover about eight months of utility bills for those living in 1- and 2-room flats, and about four months of utility bills for those living in 3- and 4- room flats.

2. How are the household refuse collection fees derived?

Singapore is divided into six geographical sectors for the collection of waste. NEA appoints a public waste collector (PWC) to collect refuse from households for each of these sectors via open competitive tenders. The refuse collection fee for each of these housing types is derived by considering the weighted average of the PWCs' charges, as well as changes arising from contractual adjustments.

All households of the same housing type island-wide under the public waste collection scheme pay a flat refuse collection fee for refuse collection services.

From 1 July 2024, the refuse collection fees for households will be revised by \$0.39 per month to \$10.20 per month and by \$1.33 to \$34.00 per month (both inclusive of GST) for HDB/ non-landed private housings and landed homes respectively.

3. How often were the refuse collection fees for households revised in the past? When is the next revision scheduled?

NEA reviews the fees biennially to ensure that they keep up with the cost of providing household refuse and recyclables collection services. The refuse collection fees for households were last revised in 2022.

¹ More details on the Goods and Services (GST) Voucher – U-Save rebates can be found at <https://www.gstvoucher.gov.sg/am-i-eligible/u-save/>, and details on the Assurance Package (AP) U-Save can be found at <https://www.govbenefits.gov.sg/faqs/ap-u-save/>

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4. If my condominium would like to opt in or opt out of the public waste collection scheme, how can we do so and who can we approach?

Once appointed, the public waste collector (PWC) will contact all the condominium MCSTs in the sector to enquire if each MCST would like to be served by the PWCs. Condominiums can opt in or out of the PWC scheme at the start of a new PWC contract.

5. What is NEA doing to keep the public waste collectors' (PWCs) costs as low as possible?

NEA will continue to work with the PWCs to implement initiatives and technologies to enhance productivity and efficiency, with the aim of moderating the refuse collection fees for households.

6. What steps will be taken to prevent or rectify lapses in refuse and/or recyclables collections by the appointed public waste collectors (PWCs)?

The PWCs will make operational changes, such as increasing the frequency of collection at locations with higher recycling demand where feasible. NEA conducts both routine and ad-hoc checks on the PWCs and may impose financial penalties on them for service lapses.

The public can provide feedback on refuse or recyclables collection to NEA through the feedback form available on the NEA website at (www.nea.gov.sg/feedback), as well as the myENV (www.nea.gov.sg/myenv) or OneService (www.oneservice.gov.sg) mobile applications.

7. Why are some residential premises allowed to opt out of the public waste collection scheme? Which companies are engaged to handle the waste collection from these premises? How much do the households in these premises have to pay compared to the standardised fees implemented by NEA?

Private condominium and apartment Management Corporation Strata Titles (MCSTs) may choose to engage other licensed general waste collectors via their own business-to-business contracts, as these MCSTs may wish to engage other waste collection services not provided by the Public Waste Collection scheme.

8. NEA has implemented some automated collection services (e.g., side-loader recycling trucks, pneumatic waste conveyance system, etc.) to help manage the manpower cost in waste collection. Does it mean that all these initiatives have not succeeded?

These initiatives were introduced to reduce reliance on manual labour and improve productivity in waste collection. They have been implemented successfully in some areas of Singapore. To scale up the implementation of such initiatives depends on factors such as location constraints (e.g., space for collection vehicles to manoeuvre), and the roll-out timeline of new HDB precincts incorporating Pneumatic Waste Conveyance System (PWCS), etc.

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9. Why does NEA only parcel the collections to six sectors and three Public Waste Collectors (PWCs)? Would more sectors and PWCs invite more competition and therefore lower costs?

Singapore is currently divided into six geographic sectors for refuse collection. Through the open competitive tendering process conducted between 2017 and 2021, three PWCs have been appointed, with each PWC responsible for two sectors. There were formerly nine sectors when the PWC scheme was implemented in 1999, which was then reduced to six by 2018, to optimise efficiencies in the PWC industry.

10. Would NEA consider directly managing the waste and recyclables collection and would this result in lower fees for households?

Outsourcing of public waste collection services allows for greater flexibility and efficiency in the provision of waste collection services by professional waste collectors. NEA will continue to explore different options to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of the waste and recyclables collection services.