

Frequently Asked Questions

New City of Boulder Ordinance to Secure Waste and Protect Bears

Does the new ordinance only apply to trash and compost, or does it also apply to recycling?

[Ordinance No. 7962](#) requires trash and compost to be secured at all times in a bear-resistant cart, dumpster, or enclosure. Recycling is excluded from the requirements of the ordinance.

An existing city ordinance requires all waste containers to be stored so that the contents are not scattered by animals, wind, or other elements. This ordinance is more reactive to waste problems and does not provide specific storage requirements, but if waste is scattered by an animal, you are in violation. This existing ordinance does apply to recycling.

Am I required to have a bear-resistant container? If so, by when?

If you live within the city limits west of Broadway and south of Sumac Avenue, you are required to have bear-resistant containers for compost and trash. The City of Boulder has not yet determined dates for enforcing the new ordinance, but enforcement will begin in the [First Trash Implementation Zone](#), and later include the entire [Secure Trash Regulation Zone](#).

The city will determine and announce the ordinance enforcement date for the [First Trash Implementation Zone](#) later in 2014, once local waste haulers better understand their timelines for producing bear-resistant containers for all residents and businesses in that zone. The enforcement date for the entire [Secure Trash Regulation Zone](#) will be determined at a later date.

My compost and trash containers are stored in my garage at all times except when placed at the curb on the morning of waste collection. Do I still need a bear-resistant cart?

Yes, trash and compost containers need to be secure at all times until collected by a waste hauler. If you put your containers outside at any time (even just before pick-up on the morning of collection), the carts or containers must be bear-resistant.

If I want to build an outdoor enclosure for my compost and trash carts, will I need a building permit? If so, are there any exemptions from other city regulatory procedures?

Outdoor enclosures that are fixed in-place and designed to shelter or protect any kind of property are required to satisfy all applicable [codes and regulations](#), including (but not limited to) minimum setbacks, building separation, maximum building coverage, site triangles, etc. In most residential [zoning districts](#), some types of outdoor enclosures may contribute to the property's maximum allowed floor area ratio (FAR) if the floor-to-ceiling height within the enclosure is greater than six feet.

Contact [Planning and Development Services](#) at 303-441-1880 or plandevlop@bouldercolorado.gov to discuss the specifications of your proposed enclosure with a Project Specialist so they can provide information specific to your property. Project Specialists are generally available for walk-in consultations during P&DS business hours.

**Can I develop my own securing system to make my trash and compost carts “bear-resistant?”
I have a system that works well and have never had a problem with bears (see photo example).**

No, the city’s “bear-resistant” standard includes testing the cart for 60 minutes with a grizzly bear that wants food inside the cart.

View the specific minimum requirements in the [Rule Establishing Requirements for Bear-Resistant Containers, Dumpsters and Enclosures](#).

