

# PROP **FACT** Sheet

## Mandatory Trash Collection

Instituting mandatory trash collection can be a divisive and difficult issue for a community. Opponents of mandatory trash collection cite a loss of resident control in deciding how to handle their garbage. Proponents of it cite the environmental benefits, including a decrease in illegal dumping and open burning. This fact sheet is intended to dispel some of the myths surrounding mandatory collection. We hope counties will work with their communities in encouraging mandatory collection requirements.

*Myth: Mandatory trash collection eliminates a resident's right to choose a trash hauler.*

*Fact:* Mandatory trash collection simply means that a resident must contract and pay for trash service. The issue of how a hauler is chosen is a separate matter that may or may not be addressed when mandatory trash collection is instituted.

*Myth: Mandatory trash collection will put small haulers out of business.*

*Fact:* Mandatory trash collection by itself does not dictate who may or may not haul garbage within a community. In communities with contracts, smaller haulers are given the option to bid on services. In private subscription communities, smaller haulers compete for business just like larger haulers do. The ultimate choice is driven by price and ability to perform a given service.

*Myth: Mandatory trash collection will not affect illegal dumping issues within a community.*

*Fact:* In 1999, PROP completed a survey of the factors influencing illegal dumping within the state of Pennsylvania. Respondents to the survey included county and municipal officials. This survey found that mandatory collection contributed to a significant decrease in illegal dumping within a community. Results showed that if residents were given convenient and affordable access to disposal facilities and collection options, they generally used them. To read the full report, please visit our website: [www.proprecycles.org](http://www.proprecycles.org).

*Myth: Residents that don't generate any trash don't need a trash hauler.*

*Fact:* With all of the packaging used in today's manufacturing processes, it is virtually impossible to find someone who doesn't generate any waste. Even the best composters and recyclers will generate a small quantity of garbage each week. Pay-as-You-Throw or volume based waste collection systems can be instituted to reward low volume generators but it is unrealistic to think that anyone today can be a "zero waste" generator.

*Myth: Trash haulers will not provide service to our municipality because it is too small. Our township is bounded by state forest land and is very rural, making it hard for trash haulers to provide service to our residents.*



*Fact:* If a municipality opts for mandatory trash collection, it can require that all haulers servicing its community be able to provide affordable service before being allowed to contract with residents. In some cases a municipality is too small for curbside trash collection. In those instances, a municipality desiring to institute mandatory trash collection should investigate alternative service delivery methods, including siting a dumpster on public land for resident use.

*Myth: We have a large number of residents on fixed incomes who won't be able to afford a large trash bill.*

*Fact:* Variable rate structures or pay-per-bag fees are included in many haulers options. Encouraging or requiring haulers to offer a variety of rate structures within your community will ensure that small quantity generators and elderly residents on fixed incomes will be adequately serviced without paying disproportionately high bills.