

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR 2018 MULTI-FAMILY AND COMMERCIAL \$66 BILLING

### Background Questions:

1. Q: What is this invoice/fee for and why am I being billed now?  
A: The invoice you received is for the Recycling Program and System fee that is required for all multi-family and commercial properties in Arlington under Chapter 10 of the Arlington County Code. The fee is billed annually. This is the bill for fiscal year 2018.
2. Q: Who approved this fee and when?  
A: The \$66 recycling system fee was adopted by the County Board on February 21, 2009 (§ 10-39 of County Code) to support costs associated with administering the program. It's a fee, not a fine or a penalty, and is paid by all regulated properties.
3. Q: I have never seen this before. Why does my business have to pay this fee?  
A: The fee initially only applied to about 1,400 properties. Code changes adopted by the County Board in 2015 expanded that number to 4,000 businesses and properties. The SWB began assessing the annual fee for all regulated properties in 2016 and 2017.
4. Q: Why am I being charged a programmatic fee for a recycling program I did not join?  
A: All commercial and multi-family properties are required to recycle and submit a trash and recycling plan as specified in Arlington County Code Chapter 10, Article IV. The fee covers the costs for the program.
5. Q: I already recycle. Why am I being fined or penalized?  
A: The \$66 fee is not a fine or a penalty. It is paid by all regulated properties. The \$66 recycling system fee was adopted by the County Board on February 21, 2009 (§ 10-39 of County Code) to support costs associated with administering the program.
6. Q: What does this fee cover?  
A: This fee is for administrative and programmatic costs associated with supporting the multi-family and commercial recycling program (personnel and administrative costs) and the recycling education and outreach materials that are made available.

7. Q: Can I opt out of this recycling program?

A: No. MF/C recycling requirements have been on the books since the mid-1990s. The recycling program is a mandatory program in which each multi-family and commercial establishment must participate. Arlington County's MF/C sector makes up two-thirds of the total solid waste stream and has a lower overall recycling rate than single-family residential program. The recycling requirements were implemented as an effort to divert waste and lessen the environmental impact of commercial and multi-family sector.

8. Q: Where can I find a copy of Arlington County Code?

A: **You can find the Code on the County's website at:**  
<https://countyboard.arlingtonva.us/county-code/>

**You can access Chapter 10 directly by following this link:**  
[content/uploads/sites/22/2017/06/Ch10\\_GARBAGE-REFUSE-AND-WEEDS.pdf](https://content/uploads/sites/22/2017/06/Ch10_GARBAGE-REFUSE-AND-WEEDS.pdf)

### **Multi-Family & Commercial Inspections:**

9. Q: Why am I being charged a \$66 fee when my establishment has not yet been inspected?

A: This fee is not exclusively a recycling inspection fee but an annual programmatic fee that all multi-family and commercial establishments are charged to support the operations of the recycling program. This includes free educational materials, which are available through our online toolkit:  
<https://recycling.arlingtonva.us/recycling-system-toolkit/>.

### **Fee Structure (current vs. proposed):**

10. Q: As a small business, why am I being charged a \$66 fee when I was told that my business would be incorporated into a more equitable fee structure?

A: The County Manager's FY 2019 operating budget recommends a more equitable fee structure that will replace the flat \$66 fee with fees that are more equitable across business types. The County Board will be voting on the FY 2019 operating budget in April.

We will be communicating the results of that process as soon as a decision to the fee structure and County code requirements have been finalized.

Please note that this decision will not impact the cost for this year. If the new fee structure is approved by the Board, regulated properties will see new invoices (at the new fee schedule) in January, 2019.

11. Q: What will the new fee structure look like?

A: The recommended new fee structure takes into account factors such as business type, number of employees, size, and solid waste generation. It will result in a decrease in the program fee for more than 70 percent of the multi-family and commercial properties in. Some 60 percent will see their fee reduced by 50% or more.

The County Board will be considering this fee change as part of the FY 2019 budget at its April 21, 2018 meeting. The request to advertise is posted in the Board's February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda. You can view the agenda report and find more information about the fee structure by following this link:

[http://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view\\_id=2&event\\_id=1229&meta\\_id=173183](http://arlington.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=2&event_id=1229&meta_id=173183)

### **Fee vs. Civil Penalty (fine) For non-compliance with Recycling Requirements:**

12. Q: I received a Civil Penalty about my recycling program previously. Is this charge different from that charge and why am I being charged twice?

A: The Civil penalty is the result of your recycling program not being compliant with the County's recycling requirements. The program fee is separate and distinct from the Civil Penalty.

### **Payments:**

13. Q: What if I refuse to pay this fee? What happens if my unpaid invoice is turned over to the Treasurer's Office?

A: Failure to pay within 60 days of the billing will result in the addition of a \$100 late fee. Payments not remitted by the due date will be turned over to the County Treasurer's Office for collections and are subject to further penalties.

14. Q: Can I pay this on-line?

A: No. Payments must be made to (on invoice):

Arlington County Solid Waste Bureau  
MF/C Recycling Program  
4300 29th Street, S.  
Arlington, VA 22206

### **Other Questions/Who to Contact?**

15. Q: If I have questions or concerns about this program, who can I contact?

A: Please send your questions or comments to [arlrecycles@arlingtonva.us](mailto:arlrecycles@arlingtonva.us) or to Phil Bresee, Manager of the Solid Waste Bureau's Environmental Management Office at [pbresee@arlingtonva.us](mailto:pbresee@arlingtonva.us).

### **Prior Communications & Surveys:**

16. Q: I expressed my opinion regarding the fee in a recent survey you distributed to businesses. What was the point if you weren't going to take my feedback into consideration?

A: We have received a considerable amount of feedback from the business community. The feedback was heard and was instrumental in helping frame new recommendations for the new system beginning in FY 2019.

17. Q: What else does my business have to do to be in compliance with the County's requirements?

A: In order to be in compliance, a business must:

- **Establish and/or participate in a recycling system** for employees that collects mixed paper, cardboard, metal, glass, and plastic food and beverage containers for recycling. County Code also requires that visitors be able to access recycling as well if recyclables are generated in front-facing areas.
- **Co-locate recycling containers with trash containers.** If there is a trash container provided for use, then a recycling container must also be provided if it is expected that recyclable materials would be disposed of at the location.
- **Label recycling containers** to clearly distinguish them from trash containers.
- **Provide educational materials** to employees and/or tenants on the recycling system at least once per year. This can be in the form of a flyer, e-mail, posters or bulletin board notices. We recommend that you review our Recycling System Toolkit available at <https://recycling.arlingtonva.us/recycling-system-toolkit/> for resources, including customizable flyers and posters.
- **Register and submit a trash and recycling plan** on the County's online management tool at: <https://connect.re-trac.com/registration/Arlington-county>.
- **Pay an annual multi-family and commercial recycling fee of \$66**, which covers the County's program costs, which may include site inspections, outreach materials, and technical assistance.