

City Auditor's Highlights

Audit of the City's Bulky Item Collection Service



Improvements are needed to improve timely bulky item pickups, reduce complaints from residents, and reduce overtime costs.

Problems at the refuse collection yards related to excessive sick leave, staffing shortages, and union memoranda of agreements have resulted in untimely bulky item collections and excessive overtime. ENV also needs to increase its efforts to educate residents on bulky collection guidelines, expand their monitoring and enforcement of violations, improve staffing in the Refuse Inspection Section, and improve residents' compliance with bulky collection rules.

Sick leave and LWOP are excessive.

From July 2015 to July 2016, 102 (of the 122) manual collection employees took 17,815 hours (2,227 days) of sick leave. The most sick leave taken by an employee was 928 hours (116 days). Between July 2015 and April 2017, 21 employees took over 3,900 hours of leave without pay (LWOP) due to insufficient leave balances. The most LWOP taken by an employee was 1,137 hours (142 days).

Bulky full loads are not maximized.

From January 2016 to July 2016, the majority of bulky item loads collected by each collection yard were below six tons (Honolulu 61%, Kapaa 69%, Laie 54%, Pearl City 61%, Wahiawa 61%, and Waianae 53%). The Waiialua collection yard (57%) was the only yard where the majority of the bulky item loads were six tons or more.



Overtime is excessive.

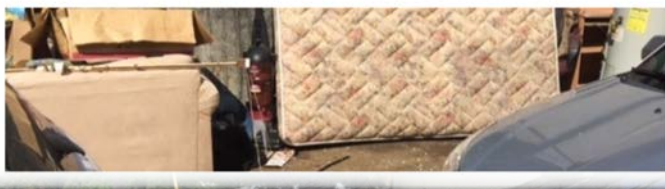
From July 2015 to July 2016, 153 employees received \$1.7 million in overtime for bulky and white goods collection. The most overtime received by an employee during the period was \$75,570.

Crews are picking up non-bulky items.

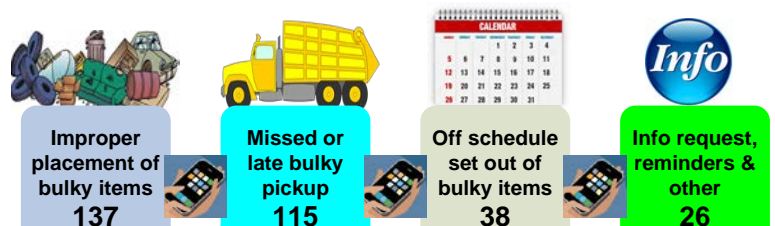
O'ahu residents are using the bulky item collection service to dispose of non-bulky refuse, as well as bulky refuse, and are not complying with bulky collection rules and guidelines. Refuse, recyclables, and green waste that should have been disposed of in the gray, blue and green carts were set out for bulky pickup. The only public education on refuse communicated to residents is done by the collection yard supervisors and refuse inspectors after a violation occurs.

Inadequate staffing for bulky collections and inspections.

The number of employees available for manual collection routes are insufficient to fully staff bulky item crews even if every scheduled manual employee reported to work on a given day. For example, because the Pearl City collection yard does not have enough drivers and collection employees to cover all of its manual routes on regular time, there are days when bulky items are not collected or collected on overtime. ENV's refuse enforcement program has inadequate staffing to monitor the entire island. Inspectors are constantly addressing complaints, and have neither the time nor resources to monitor the entire island and respond to violations. Although the collection yards and refuse inspection section have inadequate staffing, vacant positions are not filled.



Types and Number of Bulky Item Collection Calls Received by CSD from Residents



We made recommendations to improve timely bulky item pickups, reduce complaints from residents, and reduce overtime costs. We also looked at how other cities with bulky item collection services compared with Honolulu (Appendix A).