

City Page

NEWS & INFORMATION FROM THE CITY OF CHARLOTTE

Improper yard waste disposal could lead to stormwater pollution

It's the time of year when the leaves fall, and homeowners are outside raking them into piles. But, most homeowners don't realize that what you do with that pile of leaves could be illegal. In the City of Charlotte, it's against the Storm Water Quality Ordinance to dispose of yard waste down storm drains or in creeks. It's also recommended that homeowners don't leave them to decompose on creek banks.

The storm drainage system flows directly to creeks and lakes without any treatment, which means that when leaves are blown into the streets or piled on stream banks, yard waste becomes a storm water pollutant. Yard waste, when left to decompose in our surface waters, super-fertilizes the water and becomes toxic to the aquatic community. Yard waste, when left to decompose on stream banks, can contribute to stream blockages and smother vegetation stabilizing the banks.

The City of Charlotte Solid Waste Services has suggestions for homeowners looking to dispose of leaves properly. Homeowners can place leaves in clear plastic bags at the curb for pickup. Dark trash bags also may be used but the bags must not be tied.

Solid Waste Services will pick up the yard waste during normal routes.

For more information, visit <http://stormwater.charmeck.org> and click on Pollution Prevention.



It is unlawful to dispose of yard waste down storm drains.

Get Involved!

South Corridor Open House

3–8 p.m., Tuesday, November 15

South Corridor Construction and Information Center
4035 S. Blvd.

The open house will provide an opportunity for citizens to ask questions and get the latest information on light rail, roads, sidewalks, water and sewer construction, transit-oriented land use and economic development opportunities in the South Corridor. For more information, visit charlottefuture.com or call 311.

Northeast Corridor Public Workshops

These meetings will discuss station locations, station access, parking and station area planning for the transit corridor.

6 p.m., Tuesday, December 6

University Place Hilton Hotel

8629 JM Keynes Drive

Fountain View Room (Lobby Level)

Stations: City Blvd to I-485/N. Tryon

6 p.m., Wednesday, December 7

Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church

101 Sugar Creek Road

Fellowship Hall

Stations: 9th St. to Tom Hunter

For more information, call (704) 336-RIDE or visit www.ridetransit.org.

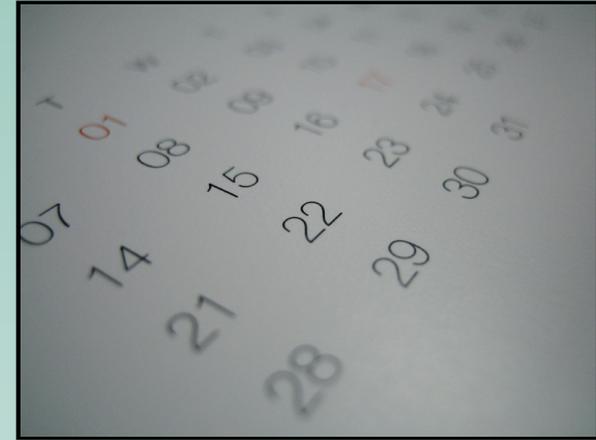
Sick leave consistent with national average, overtime better for bottom line

Recently, the City of Charlotte released figures for employee sick leave, vacation leave and overtime pay for the period covering January 1, 2003 – September 16, 2005. The information offers some comparison to national averages as well as some insight to how much the sick, vacation and overtime affects the City's bottom line.

City employee sick leave averaged 5.2 days, which fell at the lower end of the national average of 5.2 to 5.8 days annually. The City credits the low figure to its employee wellness initiative, a disease management program and competition with the private sector for service contracts. With federally mandated Family Medical Leave Act leave factored in, employees used an average of 6.3 days a year. FMLA covers such situations as serious illnesses and the birth or adoption of a child.

Vacation time for the City workforce averaged 148.40 hours. Because their departments are usually staffed during holidays, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, Charlotte Fire Department and 311 Call Center employees, which include 2,703 workers received an additional 80 hours of vacation in lieu of holiday pay. City employees can only keep double their annual vacation accumulation before losing hours. In the last two years, 1,000 workers lost a combined 39,000 vacation hours.

Finally, the average overtime pay for the City's 4,600 eligible employees was approximately \$1,600 a year. Overtime pay accounts for approximately 3% of the City's total salary expenses. Paying these employees overtime is more productive and cost effective compared to the expense associated with hiring new workers. Currently, 76 percent of the workforce qualifies for overtime pay.



City employee sick leave averaged 5.2 days, which fell at the lower end of the national average.

Avoid creating smelly garbage juice

One-fourth cup of spoiled milk; a splash of grass drippings; and a touch of rain water mixed with applesauce, gravy from last night's dinner, and a hint of vanilla ice cream from dessert. Mix it all together and you have the newest beverage craze sweeping the Charlotte area – garbage juice. Wanna drink? Now that you're alert and a little grossed-out, let's talk about how garbage juice relates to your solid waste collection program.

Garbage juice and its horrid smell, are the result of leakage from yard waste and garbage trucks traveling Charlotte roads. In most instances, leakage comes from containers that haven't been emptied or insulated; rain water that has seeped into rollout carts; or fermented (decomposing) yard waste.

Here are a few tips to help you put an end to garbage juice in your neighborhood:

- Be sure that all liquid materials are properly insulated during garbage preparation. For example, use kitty litter or newspaper to absorb grease.
- Solid Waste Services requires that bags of yard waste be left open. Customers using plastic garbage cans also are required to leave the cans open. Leaving bags and cans open prevents the yard waste from fermenting and allows drivers to collect yard waste efficiently. Before placing yard waste at the curb, consider composting. Composting is a natural alternative to managing waste. To learn more about composting, visit www.wipeoutwaste.com.
- It's also important to follow proper guidelines for paint disposal. For latex-based paint disposal, pour the paint into a paper bag and add an absorbent material such as kitty litter or newspaper to speed drying. The paint can (with the lid off), and the dried paint can then be placed in the rollout cart. If oil-based paint has solidified in a closed can, it also can be disposed of, with the lid off, in the rollout cart.
- Motor oil and a number of other household waste materials also can be recycled at local recycling facilities. For more information, visit www.wipeoutwaste.com.
- Keep rollout cart lids closed so that when it rains, the inside of the cart and its contents won't get wet.



Garbage juice results from leakage in yard waste and garbage trucks.

For more information on the City of Charlotte Solid Waste Services, visit <http://curbit.charmeck.org>.