



## **Richland County Ordinance Change Chapter-12 Garbage, Trash and Refuse Public Input Response Document**

### **Comments through Email:**

1. **From:** Crystal Ford

**Comment:**

My name is Crystal Ford. I read the yard ordinance about the clippings and such. I think it is a cool idea personally because it also poses a problem for the roads as well.

My question to you is does this apply for all of Richland County? I know that sounds crazy but I want to make sure. I live off of Fairfield Road/ Bowling Ave area and I know a large part of the community here works in their yard and most of the time the clippings and such trail down the road posing a issue on the road ways. Especially during the cold seasons when we have a lot of rain and ice. Creates unnecessary slick spots.

My next question to you is that should the council decide to go towards to create composting in one's yard, is the county willing to provide containers and information on how to maintain those containers to the people in the county.

Thanks for your time in answering my questions. Have a nice day.

**Our Response:**

The County Staff recommendation was to apply the ordinance for entire unincorporated parts of Richland County. However, the County Council amended the ordinance to apply only for properties in residentially zoned districts with one (1) acre or less. The amended ordinance will be coming for third reading. It is agreed that piles of yard debris on curbside is a safety issue.

The primary goal of the proposed bagging requirement is not to begin a composting operation, although such an operation could be incorporated if the Council desires.

2. **From:** Susan Harvin

**Comment:**

Just have to sound off on this absurd idea which sounds like the idea of someone who lives in a condo with a small yard, is required to bag their trash and just can't get over the fact that someone else doesn't.

Since most people in this economy will stop grooming their yards rather than pay for the privilege of raking the yard Richland County should have no problem in finding an new county slogan... something like RICHLAND COUNTY, SMILING FACES, UNKEPT PLACES.

Please reconsider this proposed before we are all chased down the streets by rolling bags of debris on a windy day. Perhaps a better solution would be to have the yard trash hauled to a recycling center, grind it into mulch and return to the public for use. A much better use of materials and fewer bags going to the land fill. What is the life time of a "biodegradable bag" anyway?

Thank you for listening.

**Our Response:**

The idea behind the ordinance is to not allow placing the yard debris curbside since this may lead to clogging of storm drains. Bagging is required only if you choose to keep leaves/yard debris curbside and if you want them to be picked up by County. Leaves/Yard raking is not required. Bagging of leaves is not required. Leaves/Yard debris cannot be raked into the street as this may cause clogging of storm drains. There is wide range of bags available in market that claims various life cycles. There is option of paper bags also. A minimum of 90% biodegradation of bag within 180 days in compost and a minimum of 90% of bag disintegration into less than 2mm pieces in compost within 12 weeks is industry standard.

3. **From:** Caroll DuBose

**Comment:**

Regarding the \$1087 fine, the phrase "too exhorbitant" is redundant. "Exhorbitant" alone is sufficient to describe the absurd amount of the fine for violation of this onerous ordinance.

**Our Response:**

Apologize for redundant use of words in website. This language is not part of the Ordinance and hence soon will be corrected in the website. As far as the amount of fines are concerned, it is a standard fine for any misdemeanor.

4. **From:** Martha Rogers

**Comment:**

I will comply with this ordinance. However, I am not sure my bags are biodegradable. Of the three different boxes I currently have in my house, none is marked "biodegradable". How can I tell? What wording should I look for on my next purchase? I've always used bags. They look nicer on the street, are easier for the workers on the trucks and nothing can blow into storm drains. Thanks

**Our Response:**

Your consciousness is appreciative. Any bags that are marked "biodegradable".

5. **From:** Debbie Kiser

**Comment:**

I can see the benefits however such things as blown down limbs should be considered differently since they would be hard to bag.

**Our Response:**

Bagging is only for sticks, hedge clippings, small brush, and leaves. Bagging is only if chosen to keep yard debris curbside. As per current ordinance, tree branches and heavy brush which do not exceed four (4) inches in diameter shall be cut in lengths not exceeding four (4) feet in length and stacked in a compact pile in front of the residence adjacent to the curb, but such piles shall not extend into the streets. This is still going to be the case for heavy brush.

6. **From:** Bob Marriott

**Comment:**

My wife and I are both in poor health and cannot do our own yard. We must pay someone to do it. The service we use has guessed that the fee we pay will go up at least \$ 40.00 per month if they have to rake up all yard trash and bag it.

I can see our yard and many others becoming eyesores because of this requirement. Please reconsider passage of this requirement. I would rather see grass and leaves piled up in front of yards than having these yards ignored and grown up. After all, nature sees to it that debris eventually ends up in rivers and streams. Stuff flows down hill – that’s the way it is supposed to happen.

**Our Response:**

Leaf raking is not required. Leaf bagging is not required. The proposed bagging requirement does not require a homeowner to rake the leaves from his/her yard. If the homeowner wishes to leave the yard in a natural state, he/she may do so. The debris must be placed in a biodegradable bag or reusable container only if the homeowner elects to rake the yard and place the debris at curbside for collection.

7. **From:** Anne Spears

**Comment:**

- 1) The people who pile leaves at the curb are our best neighbors; most neighbors and their services **blow the leaves into the streets**. This ordinance could not affect the “blowers” unless they were caught red-handed. NOTE: I have seen people in County uniforms doing the same “blowing.”
- 2) If my yard-man, in spite of my instructions, does not bag my leaves because he was “in a hurry,” I hope there is a way to charge the service and not the homeowner?
- 3) Over one-thousand-dollars is an unreasonable fine. Laws and punishments must be reasonable, or they lose all effectiveness.

- 4) Remember, you are fining homeowners who are raking their yards and working to keep our neighborhoods beautiful. You need a WARNING or two WARNINGS; then a \$25 fine; then a \$50 fine, etc., etc. You MUST be reasonable. What is the fine for the neighbor who never rakes his yard, never plants a tree or a flower, and cuts his grass only twice a year, or has no grass?
- 5) This is a small thing, but I have bought huge boxes of “leaf bags,” and I did not know I could buy biodegradable leaf bags. Could you start with bagging leaves, and after 12 or 24 months move to biodegradable bags?
- 6) Is it correct that this ordinance would only cover leaves, as sofas and piles of cut tree limbs do not fit into leaf bags, and that would be an impossible requirement?
- 7) THIS ORDINANCE WOULD NOT APPLY WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS OF COLUMBIA, but only where Richland County is responsible for trash pick-up, correct?

**Our Response:**

- 1) Next time when you see it happen, please call County Ombudsman at 929-6000
- 2) The site owner/resident is responsible for his/her own yard debris. This can be dealt on case by case basis.
- 3) This is the standard fine for the majority of County Code violations, which constitute a misdemeanor.
- 4) Such method is unmanageable and causes too much verbiage in the Ordinance.
- 5) This may lead to confusion in Public and send multiple messages.
- 6) Please see the ordinance language below:  
Yard trash and other household articles shall be collected in the entire unincorporated portion of the county under the following conditions:
  - (1) Yard trash, including all bagged or boxed trash and the equivalent of two (2) roll carts of loose trash, placed at curbside of the nearest public road, shall be collected once each week.
  - (2) Yard trash and other household articles not suitable for placement in a roll cart, plastic bag or trash container sack may be placed for collection as follows:
    - a. Tree branches and heavy brush which do not exceed four (4) inches in diameter shall be cut in lengths not exceeding four (4) feet in length and stacked in a compact pile in front of the residence adjacent to the curb, but such piles shall not extend into the streets;
    - b. Sticks, hedge clippings, small brush, and leaves shall be placed in neat piles at curbside; provided, however, for properties in residentially zoned districts with one (1) acre or less, leaves and/or grass clippings shall be placed in thirty (30) to fifty (50)-gallon biodegradable bags or in thirty (30)-gallon unlined garbage cans that are clearly marked “YARD WASTE” and placed at curbside. The bags or cans shall be procured by the residents at their own cost.
- 7) The County Staff recommendation was to apply the ordinance for entire unincorporated parts of Richland County. However, the County Council amended the ordinance to apply only for properties in residentially zoned districts with one (1) acre or less. The amended ordinance will be coming for third reading.

8. **From:** Joseph

**Comment:**

I agree that bagging is needed but requiring residents to purchase expensive biodegradable bags is wrong. If the county is requiring this they should provide the bags. The labor saved should make up for this in tax dollars since you will need less workers not having to clean up the yard trash.

Has anybody looked into how many sanitation workers will be let go and how much this will save the county? Less labor equals less laborers. Simple math.

I would also agree that the fine is ridiculously high. How can you fine someone the same excessive amount for different infractions? Sounds a bit like backwards thinking to me. \$50 would be more realistic and appropriate. Especially in a deep recession.

You just may end up with hundreds of yards full of leaves all year with attitudes like this.

The fine for violation of the proposed bagging requirement would be \$1,087

**Our Response:**

Providing bags by County becomes expensive and may lead to unnecessary government intervention. The usage of bags from one person to another varies; distribution and other logistics become more cumbersome. Ultimately, this option may cost Citizen more than buying bags from grocery store. County has to buy these bags too and obviously the money will be from taxed dollars.

Since County does not have street sweeping program in-place, letting the sanitation workers go is a non-issue. The primary goal of the proposed bagging requirement is not to reduce the maintenance required on the County's storm drainage infrastructure, although this is a secondary benefit that will be realized if the amendment is adopted.

It is a standard fine for any misdemeanor violation (irrespective of kind of infraction). It recently got increased little bit to \$1092.50. For multiple infractions, the fines are calculated per violation, per day.

9. **From:** Carol Heitlinger

**Comment:**

My neighbor mows his grass on Fridays, yet yard debris is not picked up until the following Wednesday. His yard is mostly weeds; mine is grass which I hand pull weeds. When wind blows, as it does frequently in the spring, his weeds, and their seeds, find their way onto my lawn. Not good. First, yard debris should not be put out roadside prior to the day of pick up, but since no one polices that, at least have them bagged for the sake of the neighbors.

**Our Response:**

The proposed ordinance, if approved, solves your problem. Bagging of yard debris or containing it in a container prior to placing it at curbside should improve the aesthetics of neighborhoods by not allowing loose debris to be scattered all over the place.

10. **From:** Micheael Henderson

**Comment:**

When does the yard debris bagging requirement take effect in the City of Columbia?

**Our Response:**

The proposed ordinance was only for unincorporated part of Richland County. City operates under its own ordinances and it had to be checked with City.

11. **From:** Sandy Barden

**Comment:**

I think commercial contractors or yard services that blows leaves and debris into the street or into the drains themselves should receive a hefty fine. Are they going to be required to bag? What about fines for them? Hopefully commercial contractors or an institution would not receive any exemptions from this very important ordinance.

**Our Response:**

Blowing leaves into the drains is illegal in entire unincorporated County and can be fined.

Per the existing storm water ordinance, it is unlawful for any person to discharge non-storm water to any storm water conveyance with the exception of certain discharges. Blowing leaves and debris into drains is currently unlawful and can be assessed with fines.

The ordinance was exempted per the zoning instead of citizens/contractors. The Council amended the ordinance there by applying the ordinance only for properties in residentially zoned districts with one (1) acre or less. Rests of the areas are not required to bag.

However, this does not imply that commercial contractor can blow leaves or debris into storm water conveyances. It is illegal all over unincorporated County to blow leaves into storm water conveyances.

12. **From:** Wood, Torina

**Comment:**

I see on your website that a 3<sup>rd</sup> reading of the proposed ordinance on yard debris was tentatively scheduled for April 9.

Can you please provide an update on the proposed ordinance? Was the ordinance passed or it still being proposed?

**Our Response:**

The ordinance reading was deferred and ties to Stormwater regulations ordinance change. The ordinance had passed 2 readings and is coming for third reading in October 2009.

Please visit Richland County website at <http://richlandonline.com/departments/publicworks/storm.asp> for continuous updates. The ordinance had not passed yet and is still being proposed.

13. **From:** E. J. McElhaney

**Comment:**

NO NO NO!!!!!! We are already be-deviled by too many little laws for which we can get an (exorbitant) misdemeanor fine.

This would be a hardship on too many people who are already stressed out right now. If you all wanted to be re-elected, I suggest you forget about this.

You might however try supervising your sanitation services more. Apparently Southland doesn't pick up on the side streets in the Capital View neighborhood. I have had limbs cut to proper length on Glendale Dr. long enough that there are termites and weeds in them. They go down the main drag (Patricia Dr.) but NO side-streets. And I haven't been able to contact them. This whole neighborhood looks trashy right now. Just drive around and look.

**Our Response:**

Un-contained yard debris on curb side clogs storm drains and cause pollution. The Clean Water Act promulgates doing such ordinances to reduce water pollution. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) delegates County through National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to control the discharge of leaf litter, grass clipping etc from entering storm water conveyances. It is Federal mandates.

The request has been forwarded to solid waste manager to follow-up on the trash issue in Capital View neighborhood. In future, please contact County Ombudsman office at 929-6000 for any of such issues.

14. **From:** Walter Robinson

**Comment:**

Why bag natural yard debris that would decompose? Instead there is going to be a requirement to bag it up in what plastic?

Could be used for compost/mulch.

Would this apply to the City?

**Our Response:**

Leaf bagging is not mandatory. Bagging is needed only if you keep yard debris curb-side and wants County to pick it up. Such yard debris, if not bagged, washes to storm drains, clogs drains and cause flooding.

Also, the fertilizers associated with grass clippings pollute streams adding nutrients to stream. Nitrites & Nitrates (mg/L) is the 7<sup>th</sup> pollutant of Richland County from County's

Top 10 storm water pollutants list. Stormwater Management comes up with the list every year based on its sampling and monitoring.

The tables below illustrate the County’s pollution problems.

**Prioritized Pollutants from Wet Weather Monitoring**

Parameter	Overall Rating for all Sites
Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD <sub>5</sub> ) (mg/L)	5
Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) (mg/L)	2
Total Suspended Solids (TSS) (mg/L)	4
Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) (mg/L)	3
Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen (TKN) (mg/L)	7
Nitrite & Nitrate Nitrogen (N) (mg/L)	8
Oil & Grease (mg/L)	6
Total Recoverable Zinc (Zn) (mg/L)	11
Dissolved Phosphorus (SP) (mg/L)	10
Total Phosphorus (TP) (mg/L)	9
Total Recoverable Copper (Cu) (mg/L)	13
Total Recoverable Lead (Pb) (mg/L)	14
Total Recoverable Cadmium (Cd) (mg/L)	12
Fecal Coliform (FC) (#/100mL)	1

The ordinance requires using biodegradable bags, if chosen to keep the yard waste curbside. County encourages composting and mulching.

No, it does not apply to City.

15. **From:** Mary Donohue

**Comment:**

So are we suppose to be bagging leaves from the bushes we trim now?  
 Is there any ordinance regarding the height of bushes or trees that are blocking the neighbors view when backing out any you cannot see who is coming up the sidewalk due to trees and bushes blocking the sidewalk view?

**Our Response:**

No. Bagging is required only if you keep yard debris on curb side for County pick up.

The personal question is forwarded to related traffic related personnel and you will be contacted soon.

16. **From:** Anneliese Dessart

**Comment:**



I'm glad to see this ordinance in regard to yard debris. Lots of people put their yard debris basically in the street, almost halfway into the street. This is a hazard for drivers, especially at night.

I don't agree with the bagging even using biodegradable gas. No bags is less bags do degrade and less money for me.

However, as I'm doing already now, I'm all for placing my yard debris in a reusable container.

**Our Response:**

We appreciate your support for better environment.