

# 5 TIPS TO KEEP YOUR CITY CLEAN

A BRIEF GUIDE ON WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES



Texts by

**Cinzia Pollio** – projects for Consumer policies, Cittadinanzattiva  
with

**Tina Napoli** – Consumer policies, Cittadinanzattiva

**Tiziana Toto** – Energy and the Environment, Cittadinanzattiva

Editing

**Alessandro Cossu** – communication, Cittadinanzattiva

Illustrations

**Thea Pontecorvo**

Graphic adaptation and layout

**Alessandro Casanova**

*This short guide is part of our information and awareness campaign part of the project “Consumatori in rete: diamo forza ai nostri diritti” - Consumers in the web: let’s make our rights stronger - carried out together with the Ministry for Economic Development and three other Consumers’ Associations.*

*The main objective of the project is to promote and facilitate assistance and consultancy services, the upholding of consumers’ rights and the knowledge of opportunities and tools for the protection of citizens’ rights through information campaigns.*

## INTRODUCTION

### CITTADINANZATTIVA AND THE WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICE

Cittadinanzattiva has been promoting for several years now a series of policy initiatives and information and awareness campaigns with the aim of promoting a new approach to the role of users of local public services: **a role which provides full involvement of citizens in the definition, accessibility, quality and care of services.**

The purpose of this guide is to inform people on how to actively participate in the shaping of their rights, and which means of protection may be used to assert them, since for us ***acting as a citizen is the best way to be one!***

### WHAT IS URBAN WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste management includes the entire cycle, from mixed/undifferentiated and differentiated waste collection to its transport; from the selection of different types of refuse to recycling and their reuse; from the treatment of mixed/undifferentiated waste to its collection and disposal.

The Law of reference for the management of solid waste is the Legislative Decree no.152 of April 3, 2006, “Environmental regulations”. This decree, in line with the strategy of the European Union, defines a list of priority actions in the treatment of waste by placing at the bottom landfilling and thermal treatment, and giving priority to prevention in waste production, reuse, waste collection and recycling. It also restates the European principle that **“the polluter pays”**.

Please note that the main goal of any political action in waste disposal should be to **minimize the negative consequences** deriving from the production and management of waste on both human health and the environment.

## PRINCIPLES

When supplying urban waste management services, the company in charge must observe the following basic principles:

- ✓ *equality and impartiality* – when supplying the service there must be no discrimination on grounds of gender, race, language, religion or political opinion. Particular attention should be given to citizens with disabilities and to the elderly, and to those belonging to vulnerable social groups;
- ✓ *continuity* - waste management services should be provided on an ongoing basis and adjusted according to the procedures laid down by the service agreement and by reducing inefficiencies;
- ✓ *participation* - the participation of users in the service must be guaranteed in order to protect the right to a correct supply and foster collaboration;
- ✓ *efficiency and effectiveness* - the provider of the service must ensure, by adopting the most appropriate measures, both effectiveness and efficiency.

### Did you know that ...

... the first measures to curb the messy accumulation of citizens' waste in urban streets and to improve hygiene in the cities in northern Italy and in Europe date back to around the year 1000. There were in fact ordinances requiring, for example, to dispose of solid waste which in those days consisted mainly of rotten meat, carcasses of dead animals, manure, marc, mortar and plaster outside the city walls. Even the emptying of chamber pots from windows was regulated and only permitted in certain hours at night and after shouting three times the warning call "Gardyloo!"

## (1) KNOW YOUR WASTE!

*Remember that you are a producer of waste and that it is important to know what waste is and how best to treat it*

### URBAN WASTE

**Urban waste** is all the waste produced in our homes and in public areas. It may be organic or inorganic. **Organic waste** is biodegradable, meaning that it decomposes if left in the environment, although it may take long (e.g. an apple core decomposes in 6 months). **Inorganic waste**, however, is not biodegradable and therefore if abandoned in the environment it remains there for many years (e.g. a plastic bottle "survives" up to 1000 years).

**Hazardous urban waste** is man produced and contains dangerous substances, therefore it must be handled differently from other types of refuse. One example is expired medicines and batteries.

Knowing the composition of the waste produced in cities allows administrators to better manage the service and therefore its recycling and possible landfilling.

### Did you know that ...

...if you do not dispose of the waste you produce every day properly you cause serious damage to the surrounding environment and to future generations.

Look at the table below showing how long some common items take to break down if not recycled or disposed of properly.



item	break down time
tissue paper	3 months
apple core	6 months
newspaper	10 years
aluminium can	10 to 100 years
plastic bottle	100 to 1000 years
plastic bag	100 to 1000 years
glass	4000 years
polystyrene	1000 years
filter cigarette	2 years

Source: APAT, I quaderni della formazione ambientale - rifiuti

### THE 10 RULES FOR A CORRECT WASTE RECYCLING

In 2013 each Italian produced on average 487 kg of urban waste, less than in previous years but still too much when considering that more than a half of it ends up in landfills or is incinerated. Last year only 42.3% of urban waste was recycled, an amount far below the target set by law (65% by 2012).

In this respect, we citizens can actively contribute by recycling and here are some tips.

- 1) **separate** and recycle correctly packaging according to the material it is are made of. In this way you will help to give a new life to steel, aluminium, paper, wood, plastic and glass;
- 2) **reduce** the volume of packaging to make recycling more effective (crushing cans and plastic bottles, compressing paper and cardboard);
- 3) **divide** packaging made of different materials, such as glass jars from their lids. In this way you will help to reduce impurities and improve recycling;
- 4) **remove** all food residues from packaging before recycling. In this way you will help to improve the quality of recycling;
- 5) **it is good to know** that food paper-wrapping dirty with earth, chemicals, and

- shopping receipts do not go in the bin because they worsen the quality of recycling;
- 6) **remember** that wood packaging (e.g. fruit and wine crates) can all be recycled if you take them to a recycling area;
  - 7) **put** in the plastic recycling bin all types of plastic packaging except toys, stationery, etc. .;
  - 8) **recognize** and correctly **dispose of** steel packaging which usually shows the letters FE or ACC;
  - 9) **recognise** and **dispose separately of** aluminium packaging;
  - 10) **be careful** not to put in the glass bin ceramic items.

Excerpt from the *Decalogo della Raccolta Differenziata di Qualità - CONAI*

### Did you know that ...

- ... with 37 aluminium cans you can make a coffee pot
- ... with polyester yarn from recycled PET - Polyethylene terephthalate (e.g. plastic bottles) - you can produce yarns and fabrics for home furnishings
- ... there are recycling artists who make works of art from recycled materials

**(2) RETHINK YOUR CONSUMER HABITS**

*Find a new way of consuming in 3 simple steps: prevent, reuse, share!*

The priority of the environmental policy of our country is to reduce the amount of waste through prevention, reusing materials and thinking about landfilling only as a last resort.

Here are some ideas to think about your consumption patterns and how to change them:

- before buying something new, think if you really need it and, if you think you do, try to choose an item with a low environmental impact. Try to **prevent** the production of waste!
- before throwing an object away, look at it as if it were a resource and try to give it a new life by **reusing** it for a different purpose. If you want to know more check out creative workshops for reuse and recycling which have become increasingly popular in many cities;
- before throwing away an object, think if it might be useful to somebody else, and before you buy something new, think if someone might have what you are looking for and has discarded it. Promote **sharing** against ownership!

**Please note** that the spread and increase in disposable products, single portion packs and voluminous packaging are all social phenomena that have brought an increase in both the amount and in the variety of waste. The first and most important way citizens can influence the management of waste in their cities is to adopt **more sustainable consumption patterns**.

**Good Eco-habits**

Here are a few wise tips for a practical contribution to the management of waste in your city:

- buy local seasonal fruit and vegetables in order to reduce transport and packaging;
- prefer products made from recycled materials;
- buy soaps and detergents from dispensers or buy biodegradable ones;
- when buying packaged products choose those with small packaging which are not bulky and are easier to recycle;
- avoid using plastic bags to carry your purchases and choose instead carrier bags made of fabric;
- reduce the use of plastic tableware opting for a reusable or biodegradable type;
- reduce the waste of paper by printing or photocopying on both sides of the sheet;
- always recycle your waste (plastic, glass, paper, aluminium, organic waste, etc.).
- do not use the streets, the beaches and the parks of your city as dumping grounds.



### (3) KNOW AND PARTICIPATE

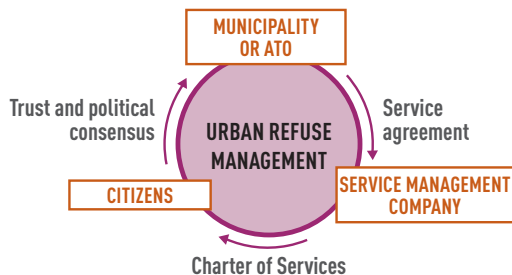
*Learn how waste management in your city is organized and how you can contribute to its improvement. Remember, your contribution can make a difference!*

#### THE WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

To know in detail how the urban waste management service is run in your city consult the **Charter of Services**. You can find it on the website of the company which takes care of the service, or at its offices. The Charter is the document in which the company undertakes to guarantee the improvement of the quality of services as per **Service Agreement** signed with the ATO (Optimal Territorial Agencies), if these have been established and are operational, or with the local administration.

The Charter also shows the indicators of quality of services provided, so as to enable citizens to verify the correspondence between the level of service stated and the real output, and the forms of protection available.

This picture shows the relationship among the parties involved



For further information, you can also read the **Regulations for the management of urban waste** adopted by your municipality. Inside you'll find useful information on how the service is organized.

#### Box

**The powers of public authorities in the field of waste management** (according to *Legislative Decree 152/2006*)

The **State** is responsible for planning and coordination.

The **Regions** are responsible for the preparation, adoption and updating the regional plan for waste management and its collection, the promotion of integrated management and incentives to reduce the production of waste.

The **Provinces** plan and control the disposal and the recovery of waste at provincial level.

**Municipalities** or the **Comunità Montana** manage urban and similar waste and disposal operations through exclusivity contracts.

#### CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION

→ **Citizens participate in the definition and assessment of the quality of urban waste management services.**

The 2008 Budget, Article 2, **paragraph 461**, introduces a number of provisions for the protection of consumers' rights in the field of local public services, and therefore also urban waste management services. The most significant new feature is the involvement of consumer associations and the general public in determining and monitoring the standard of operation of the services. Basically, the rule binds the service provider to adopt the Charter of quality of services prepared and advertised in accordance with business and consumer associations. Moreover, the consultation with the associations is mandatory as the periodic monitoring of the adequacy of qualitative and quantitative parameters of the service (and any citizen can submit comments and proposals).

**What can you do?**

- know the regulation;
- push your local administration for action;
- contact the local offices of Cittadinanzattiva (or other organizations for the protection of consumers' rights and take part actively in the local assembly)

**→ Actively interact with the service provider.**

The Charter of services lists all contacts (call centres, websites, information offices, etc..). Use these contacts to offer your suggestions and contributions in order to improve the service in your community.

**→ Learn about public activities and encourage the participation of your Local Authorities.**

Since 2008, we celebrate the **European Week for Waste Reduction** with the aim of making institutions, stakeholders and all consumers aware about strategies and policies for the prevention of waste put in place by the European Union. Citizens and local authorities can participate by proposing measures to reduce waste both at national and local level.

Since 2004, there is also an initiative called **Comuni Ricicloni** -Recycling Municipalities-, organized by Legambiente, in which many local authorities are already involved. This event, which provides for the assessment of waste management systems of the participants, allows the most "virtuous" municipalities to publicise their results and to see their effort and that of the citizens duly recognised.

**(4) BE INFORMED BEFORE PAYING**

*Learn about changes in the tax on waste and about any relief you could be entitled to*

**REFUSE COLLECTION TAX**

Since 2014, this new tax is called TARI (no longer TARSU, TIA or TARES).

The council can define the composition of the new tariff in two ways and citizens can then be faced with:

1. a tariff composed of a **fixed** part - determined by the essential components of the cost of the service, referring to the investments in the works and related depreciation - and a **variable** part- in relation to the amount of waste collected, to the service provided and to the costs of management (as was in the case of TIA).

*How do I calculate how much I have to pay? a) Find in the table of households rates of your Municipality the "variable" and the "fixed" amount that apply to your case depending on the number of members of your family; b) multiply the fixed amount identified by the square metres of your house; c) sum the fixed amount thus obtained to the variable indicated in the table.*

1. a tariff applied according to the quantity and quality of the average ordinary waste produced per square metre related to the uses and types of activities as well as to the cost of the service (as was in the case of TARSU).

*How do I calculate how much I have to pay? Multiply the tariff approved by your Municipality for household services by the number of square meters of your home.*

In both cases, in addition to the resolutions passed by the Local Authority you have to add also the **provincial tax** (from 1 to 5% of the tariff).

**THE CORRECT TARIFF ... AN UNKNOWN ENTITY!**

The correct tariff is the fairest way of making citizens pay for the service of waste collection and disposal: in addition to a fixed part, each user pays according to the mixed waste actually produced and collected.

It is a simple basic principle: you pay according to the amount of unsorted waste produced. This method benefits all parties involved:

- the Municipality, which can be seen as virtuous and fair in its administration;
- the service provider, which can rationalize the costs of collection;
- users, who find the tariff reduction an economic advantage (pay by the number of collections of unsorted waste) and see their efforts recognised.

**Did you know that ...**

...in several municipalities throughout the country - e.g. Ponte alle Alpi (BL), Laives (BZ), Capannori (LU), Felino (PR) and Saracena (CS) – the correct tariff already exists. Demand that this tariff be applied also in your city!

**HOW MUCH DO I HAVE TO PAY IF ...**

**... I live in an area that is not served.** If your home is located in an area outside the collection zone you can apply for a reduction of the tariff. You will pay an amount not exceeding 40% of the whole tariff, further reduced proportionally to the distance from the collection point nearest to you. For example, in **Bologna** if the distance does not exceed 500 meters, you pay 40% of the tax, if it is between 500 and 1,000 metres you pay 30%, if the distance exceeds 1,000 metres you pay 20%.

You can find further information on the perimeter of your area in the *Regulations for the management of the service of urban waste* of your municipality;

**... If the service is not regular.** If the service is not supplied or is not provided as per local regulations or is interrupted, even if for Union actions or unforeseeable organizational obstacles which determine harm or danger to people or the environment

recognized by the health authorities, the TARI is payable up to a maximum of 20% of the whole amount;

**... I recycle.** If you recycle there are tariff cuts defined in the *Municipal Regulations for the implementation of the TARI*.

For example, in **Savona**, there is a reduction of 10% of the variable part of the tariff for users who independently treat organic waste for compost.

**Miscellaneous.** Each municipality may autonomously define a series of **tariff reductions and exemptions** applicable to some cases, such as if you are the sole occupant of your home, or if it is a holiday home.

Other facilities may be determined according to the family's **ability to pay**, as in Caserta (if the total annual income is less than € 6,500 there is a reduction of 50% of the tariff).

For a detailed and precise list of possible concessions/exemptions provided and the discount percentages refer to the Regulations for the application of TARI in your municipality.

You can find it, along with the Regulations for the management of municipal waste, on the website of your city, or you can request it at the municipal offices (URP).



**(5) FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHT TO LIVE IN A CLEAN CITY!**

*Living in a healthy environment and enjoying a clean city is your right. Make your voice heard!*

→ **Be active and protect your city: it belongs to all of us**

Be proactive and improve the hygiene and dignity of your city. Many already do by participating in movements such as Retake (Rome), CleaNap (Naples), or initiatives such as *Puliamo il mondo* of Legambiente.

→ **Forward a complaint**

Your rightful quality standards are listed in the Charter of Services. There you can find all the contacts to forward a complaint.

**Please note** that if for example the waste bins are not enough in your neighbourhood or are not maintained in good order, **show your dissatisfaction in your complaint!** Besides being your right, your complaint is a civic duty since it is the basis for change.

→ **Contact agencies responsible for the quality of local public services.**

These agencies have already been set up in some cities such as Genoa, Grosseto, Rome and Turin. Citizens can contact them in order to improve the efficiency and quality of local public services.

→ **Apply to Consumers' Associations**

To give more strength to your recommendations contact the Consumers' Associations. **Cittadinanzattiva** is one of them, recognized since 2000 by the National Council of Consumers and Users, established at the Ministry of Economic Development. To learn more visit our website [www.cittadinanzattiva.it](http://www.cittadinanzattiva.it)

**Do you want to receive information, report an unsatisfactory service or forward a complaint?**

Contact the nearest agency of Cittadinanzattiva by writing to the offices of:

Bologna	<i>segreteria@cittadinanzattiva-er.it</i>
Cagliari	<i>cittadinanzattivaca@tiscali.it</i>
Catania	<i>pit.catania@yahoo.it</i>
Chiaravalle	<i>cittadinanzattiva_ancona@yahoo.it</i>
Chiavari	<i>cittadinanzattivaliguria@yahoo.it</i>
Latina	<i>cittadinanzattivalt@libero.it</i>
Milan	<i>consumatori@cittadinanzattivalombardia.com</i>
Perugia	<i>perugia@cittadinanzattiva.umbria.it</i>
Riva del Garda	<i>info@cittadinanzattivadeltrentino.it</i>
Rome	<i>pitroma.ca@gmail.com</i>
Spoletv	<i>cittattiv.umbria@libero.it</i>
Torino	<i>pit.torino@cittadinanzattiva.it</i>
Urbino	<i>urbino@cittadinanzattiva.it</i>

The National head office can be contacted at: [pit.servizi@cittadinanzattiva.it](mailto:pit.servizi@cittadinanzattiva.it)

**Do you want to learn more about Cittadinanzattiva, participate in its activities organized in your area, or join our Movement?** Visit [www.cittadinanzattiva.it](http://www.cittadinanzattiva.it) look for the assembly closest to you ... *and good participation!*





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promossa dalla CISL



Verbraucherzentrale Südtirol  
Centro Tutela Consumatori Utenti



*Ministero  
dello Sviluppo Economico*

Spesa finanziata dal Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico  
ai sensi del Decreto 21 marzo 2013