



**TO:** Hyun Kim, Interim City Manager  
**FROM:** Shane Pettit, Assistant Division Manager, Environmental Services Department  
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**COPY:** City Council and City Clerk  
**SUBJECT:** Ordinance – Amending Sections 12.09.140 and 12.09.190 related to Dangerous/Hazardous Waste Pilot Projects – December 9, 2025  
**DATE:** December 1, 2025

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### SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

An Ordinance amending sections 12.09.140 and 12.09.190 of the Tacoma Municipal Code, relating to fees for solid waste services and restrictions on the handling of prohibited material to allow for the collection and safe disposal of hazardous materials from specific commercial customers and residents.

### BACKGROUND:

**This Department's Recommendation is Based On:** The Tacoma Recovery and Transfer Center has a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility for residents of Tacoma and Pierce County. These HHW services are currently funded in part by residential garbage rates as well as interlocal agreements with Pierce County.

Small Quantity Generators (SQGs) are businesses which produce small amounts of hazardous material. Such businesses in Tacoma face a service gap when attempting to dispose of their hazardous waste. The private vendors who once served these customers no longer offer affordable quarterly events for SQGs to dispose of their material and the Tacoma HHW Facility does not accept hazardous waste from small businesses due to operational and regulatory constraints. This leaves SQGs with limited options since contracting directly with private vendors is cost prohibitive unless large quantities of hazardous material are being disposed.

The adopted 2025-2026 biennial budget included a pilot project to provide services to SQGs focusing on a variety of business types and representing all areas of the City. This pilot project will begin by working directly with commercial customers in classifying the hazardous materials they produce before offering them an avenue to properly dispose that waste. The intention of the program is to prevent pollution and ensure public health by preventing improper disposal of hazardous waste. These amendments would update the pilot project provision enabling the department to collect, dispose, and charge for hazardous waste from commercial entities which currently lack access to economically feasible options for safe disposal, and for specific materials from residents that are not currently accepted for disposal in Tacoma.

There are some materials, such as ammunition, vape pens, and marine flares, that are not currently accepted from residents at the HHW Facility due to regulatory handling requirements and prohibitive costs. This pilot would also include fee-based services to allow for residents to dispose of these specific material types.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:

The City was a partner in the development of the regional Tacoma-Pierce County Solid & Hazardous Waste Management Plan, which identified an action to better understand how businesses were managing their hazardous waste. As part of this effort, the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department conducted a survey of SQGs in the Winter of 2024 through Spring of 2025. The results of that survey indicated the need for dedicated services for SQGs and a willingness on the part of businesses to responsibly dispose of materials for a reasonable fee. Environmental Services (ES) has also been working with other departments and agencies for customer research and identifying potential SQGs throughout the City from a variety of business types.



On November 4, ES staff presented the proposed amendments to the Municipal Code to the Government Performance and Finance Committee, who approved bringing the proposed amendments to the full City Council for consideration.

## 2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

### Equity and Accessibility:

This legislation will ensure that small businesses in every district of Tacoma will have access to a safe, reliable, and affordable disposal option for certain hazardous materials.

### Livability: High Opportunity

Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

### Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s).

Establishing a pilot project to collect hazardous materials from SQGs would prevent environmental contamination and ensure public health by providing a viable alternative to indefinite storage or improper disposal of hazardous waste.

## ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative(s)	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
1.Status Quo	Operational and resource efforts could be utilized towards other projects.	SQGs may not have access to affordable options to safe disposal of hazardous waste. Improper disposal or storage could result in environmental damage.

## EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

ES staff will monitor usage of the SQG pilot project and return to the City Council by the end of 2026 to present findings from the project.

## STAFF/SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

ES recommends amending Sections 12.09.140 and 12.09.190 of the Municipal Code to allow for the implementation of a pilot project to collect hazardous materials from commercial entities and currently unaccepted materials from residential customers effective January 1, 2026.

## FISCAL IMPACT:

The proposed changes to the municipal code do not have any fiscal impact, it only provides the option to set fees. There may be a fiscal impact if fees are determined at a later date.

## What Funding is being used to support the expense?

N/A

## Are the expenditures and revenues planned and budgeted in this biennium's current budget?

NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN BELOW



City of Tacoma

## City Council Action Memorandum

There is no fiscal impact to amending the Tacoma Municipal Code.

**Are there financial costs or other impacts of not implementing the legislation?**

No

**Will the legislation have an ongoing/recurring fiscal impact?**

No

**Will the legislation change the City's FTE/personnel counts?**

No

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- Draft Municipal Code Amendments