

Sort It recycling centre booking system

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Why is the system being introduced?

The system is being introduced to meet new government requirements related to the disposal of household DIY waste. This allows residents to dispose of a **limited** amount of DIY waste for free.

This type of waste is heavy and therefore expensive to dispose of, so it is important that limits are enforced. A booking system helps us to support our residents to dispose of DIY waste while preventing commercial traders and non-residents from misusing the sites.

It is also likely traders or non-residents are using the sites, leading to unnecessary disposal costs for residents. Replacing the old ANPR system is not an option as it cannot support the legislative changes.

Many councils, including Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset and Gloucestershire, have introduced booking systems with high resident satisfaction once in place. The system offers key benefits, including:

- **Reduced disposal costs:** Prevents non-residents and commercial traders from using the sites unfairly, reducing costs for South Gloucestershire council taxpayers.
- **Better resident experience:** Helps prevent long queues, particularly during peak periods, and improves traffic flow.
- **Improved health and safety:** Allows better scheduling of site operations, reduces risk to residents and helps deter abuse towards staff by tracking visitor details.

A booking system is the most cost-effective and practical way to make improvements while ensuring fairness for residents and efficient operation on-site.

Will the new system increase fly tipping?

According to research commissioned by DEFRA, most councils that have introduced a booking system have not experienced an increase in fly tipping. South Gloucestershire Council has teams in place to monitor and respond to fly tipping, should it arise. Fly tipping is a criminal offense. People who fly tip can be face five years in prison and an unlimited fine if prosecuted.

Will I need to book before visiting a Sort It recycling centre?

Yes, you must book a timeslot in advance to visit any Sort It recycling centre. This can be done up to two weeks in advance, including on the day you wish to visit provided there is a slot available. It is quick and easy to do online.

How can I book a timeslot?

You can book a slot:

- **Online:** Using our [booking system](#).
- **By phone:** Call the customer contact centre during office hours at 01454 868000.
- **In person:** Visit a council One Stop Shop.

When can I book a timeslot?

You can book a visit at any time using the online booking system, which is available 24/7. Bookings can be made for the same day (subject to availability) or up to two weeks in advance. This means you can choose any available timeslot from today up to 14 days ahead.

How many timeslots can I book?

For regular household waste, you can book as many visits as you need with no restrictions.

If you are bringing DIY waste, you are limited to four visits within a rolling four-week period, in line with government legislation.

What about residents unable to get online?

Residents who are unable to book online can:

- Call the customer contact centre during office hours at 01454 86 8000.
- Visit a council One Stop Shop to make their booking.
- Use a library computer with staff assistance.

Family, friends and neighbours may also book a slot for a resident without internet access by entering their details into the system for them.

Can I book multiple timeslots?

Yes, you can book multiple timeslots, including on the same day, subject to availability.

What do I need to bring with me?

- Proof of address.
- Your booking reference. This is included in your confirmation email.
- If using a hired vehicle to dispose of household waste, a copy of the hire agreement is required.

What is included as proof of address?

Proof of address must show your current South Gloucestershire address. Examples of acceptable documents include:

- Council tax bill or utility bill
- Bank statement
- Driving licence
- Council-issued bus pass
- Council-issued blue badge

Can I change or cancel a booking?

Yes, you can change or cancel your booking:

- **Online:** Use the links in your confirmation email.
- **By phone or in person:** Contact the customer contact centre on 01454 868000 or visit one of our One Stop Shops.

What happens if I arrive without a booking?

- You will not be able to dispose of waste.
- You will be asked to book a timeslot and return later.

What happens if there's an unforeseen site closure?

We rarely have to close a site urgently, but it can happen and usually without much notice due to an incident.

If your booking needs to be cancelled due to an unforeseen site closure:

- You'll be notified by email if you booked online.
- If you booked via phone or in person without providing an email address, we will try to inform you, but this cannot be guaranteed.

What types of vehicles are permitted?

- Standard vehicles under 3.5 tonnes designed for domestic use, including cars of any size.
- Commercial vehicles, if it is your household's only vehicle and you are disposing of your own household waste. You must apply for a permit and will be limited to 12 visits per year. You must also bring proof of ownership or permission to use the vehicle to access the site.
- Restricted vehicles with a valid permit that are being used to dispose of non-commercial household waste are limited to 12 visits per year. Restricted vehicles include:
 - 4x4s, pickup trucks or people carriers without rear seats and/or windows or with an open back.
 - Flat beds, box vans, horse boxes with integrated cab or agricultural vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes.
- Rental vehicles under 3.5 tonnes (with a copy of the hire agreement).

Can I bring DIY waste?

Yes, but there are limits:

- DIY waste only includes waste generated through building or renovation work carried out by a resident in their own home.
- Residents may dispose of up to 100 litres of DIY waste in a single visit. This is the equivalent of approximately six bags or a car boot load or a bathroom suite.
- A resident may make a maximum of four visits in a four-week period to dispose of DIY waste (this is restricted by address and not by vehicle registration plate).
- Commercial vehicles requiring a permit are also restricted to four visits in a four-week period to dispose of DIY waste (and no more than 12 visits per year including those to deposit DIY waste).

Do I still need to register my vehicle?

No, you will no longer be required to register your vehicle to use our sites. You will be asked to provide details of the vehicle you will be using when booking your visit.

You will need to apply for a permit to make a visit using a restricted vehicle, such as a commercial vehicle or a van, which can be done through the booking system.

What materials are accepted at each site?

Check [our website](#) for a full list of accepted materials. Please note that Little Stoke has limited capacity and restrictions on vehicle size.

Can someone else book or visit on my behalf?

Yes, you may make a booking on behalf of someone else who is unable to use the booking system. You will need their contact details, vehicle registration and details of the recycling and waste they wish to bring to the site to do this.

A non-resident may support a resident who is unable to access a recycling centre for any reason by making the booking using the address of the resident. The non-resident must bring proof of address for the resident they are supporting.

What is DIY waste?

DIY waste, or construction and demolition waste, is generated through building or renovation work carried out by a resident in their own home, by themselves. It does not include waste created by a business or tradesperson paid to do the work. This waste should be disposed of at a commercial waste site.

Examples of DIY waste include:

- Hardcore, rubble or bricks
- Paving slabs
- Plasterboard
- Roofing materials
- Soil or turf
- Bath, toilet or basin units
- Central heating system components
- Tiles
- Doors, windows, and frames
- Kitchen units and wardrobes
- Shed or fence panels
- Laminate flooring
- Timber, MDF or hardboard
- Paint

Residents may dispose of up to 100 litres of DIY waste in a single visit. This is the equivalent of approximately six bags, a car boot load or a bathroom suite. Visits to dispose of this type of waste are limited to four visits within a four-week period.

Non-DIY visits to the Sort It Centres are allowed as many times as residents want but must still be booked.

What do I need to be aware of when visiting the sites?

- We have allowed a 15-minute slot for your arrival. Please separate materials before coming to site so you complete your visit as quickly as possible.
- For your safety: Children and animals must always stay in your vehicle. You should wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Smoking is not permitted. All visitors should follow marked walkways and not climb or move barriers.
- All waste must be sorted so no recyclable materials are put in general waste. You will be asked to split bags of general waste to ensure this is the case.
- Our recycling centres can only be used for domestic waste from your household. Waste from business or commercial activity, including waste produced by a business or tradesperson in your home, must be disposed of through commercial waste disposal providers. If we suspect trade waste is being tipped, we will investigate and if appropriate take enforcement action.
- Providing incorrect information to make your booking may result in you not being permitted to use the site at that time.
- Verbal and physical abuse of our site staff and other site users is not tolerated and may result in a resident being banned from using the site for a period of time.
- We do not accept black bags until the contents have been separated. We recommend that you sort your black bag waste before arriving.

What assistance is available?

We want to make sure everyone can access our Sort It recycling centres fairly and easily. Assistance is available on site if you are a blue badge holder or pregnant.

This service is restricted to those who genuinely need it. Staff can only assist you once you have removed the items from your vehicle and if they are able to safely move them. Staff will not move items they judge to be too heavy or unsafe to move. Staff are not liable for any damage to the items being disposed of.

Staff are not able to provide support with moving asbestos from your vehicle to the storage facility.

If you are unable to load or unload your vehicle, the council offers a chargeable large household item collection [service](#) with a discount for residents on certain benefits. with a discount for residents on certain benefits.

What if I am not using my own car?

If you are not using your own vehicle, you can still visit the recycling centre. You'll need to:

- Provide proof of address.
- Ensure the vehicle you are using complies with the site rules (e.g. size and weight limits).

What if I am using a hire vehicle?

If you're using a hire vehicle to visit the recycling centre:

- Bring a copy of the hire agreement showing the vehicle details and the rental period.
- Ensure the vehicle is under 3.5 tonnes and you must adhere to the same rules as non-commercial vehicles.

What if I am a pedestrian or cyclist?

If you are coming by bicycle or foot, please email NonVehicleEntry@southglos.gov.uk

Remember to include your name, address and contact number in your email. You will still need to provide proof of address when you arrive.

Can I visit a recycling centre outside of South Gloucestershire?

South Gloucestershire residents are not permitted to use sites in other council areas. Those sites are also controlled and you will be turned away.

Can I take other people's waste material off-site?

You are not permitted to remove other people's recycling or waste from the site. Reusable items will be made available for sale at the reuse shop at Thornbury Sort It centre.

Can I visit a site in a foreign vehicle?

Vehicles must be taxed and registered in the UK to use the booking system. You can check if you need to register your vehicle in the UK [here](#).

If you are a South Gloucestershire resident using a foreign-registered vehicle on a temporary basis, email NonVehicleEntry@southglos.gov.uk and request a Non-UK Registration Form.

Why can't the system show me available times first?

The timeslots you can book depend on several factors, such as your vehicle type, the type of waste you're bringing and the site you want to visit. We need this information first so we can show you the times and dates available for your booking.

Why can't the system remember my details?

We ask you to enter your details each time to make sure the information is up to date and accurate.

If you'd prefer not to retype your details, you may be able to use your browser's autofill features to save time.

How was this change advertised?

We used a wide range of digital and traditional communication channels to raise awareness of the new booking system. These included:

- Press releases
- A feature in The Voice, delivered to most South Gloucestershire households
- Posts on our social media channels
- Notices in the council's resident newsletter
- Leaflets handed out at Sort It centres, libraries and One Stop Shops
- Banners outside Sort It recycling centres
- Electronic signage on roads near the centres
- A leaflet alongside council tax bills which highlighted the introduction of the system

As a result, most people visiting Sort It recycling centres following the introduction of the booking system had successfully booked in advance of arriving.

Why do I need to show proof of address?

Visitors are asked to show proof of address on arrival to prevent misuse of the sites by non-residents. Proof of address includes driving licences or other forms of address-based ID such as a utility bill.

We also accept council-issued travel cards (such as a Diamond travel pass) and Blue Badges. These do not show an address but are only issued after address verification, so they serve as valid alternatives.

Sort It recycling centre staff only have limited access to booking details, which include:

- Vehicle registration, make and colour
- Whether DIY waste is being brought in
- Time and date of the booking

They do not have access to personal details, or the address used when booking. Proof of address checks are visual only and no information is recorded. This process has been reviewed by our data protection team and is covered under the 'legitimate interests' basis for data processing.

Is this a reduction in council services?

All four Sort It recycling centres remain open seven days a week. The only change is that you must book in advance of visiting the site.

Will this system reduce the amount of recycling?

There has been no reduction in the recycling services on offer. The council continues to offer comprehensive weekly kerbside recycling collections. Residents can request additional boxes if needed.

For materials not collected at the kerbside, you are still able to take them to a Sort It recycling centre if you book in advance of visiting.

Why couldn't I access the site without a booking when it looked empty?

All visits to Sort It recycling centres must be booked in advance, even if the site appears quiet at the time. The booking system helps spread visits evenly throughout the day, which means the site may not always be at full capacity.

Allowing entry without a booking would undermine the benefits listed in '[Why is the system being introduced?](#)'. Site staff follow the booking policy consistently for it to work effectively.

What are the terms and conditions / where can I find your data privacy notice?

You can find the terms and conditions for using the Sort It recycling centres here:

- [Recycling centre terms and conditions](#)

You can find our privacy policies here:

- [General privacy notice](#)

We store data in a secure system, with access restricted to staff involved in managing the booking system. This data helps us identify patterns of misuse, such as commercial traders attempting to access the centres.

All processing is carried out in line with data protection regulations.

Why can't you accept my trade waste?

The site operates under a strict environmental permit, which means we must ensure only permitted types of waste are accepted. If we were to allow commercial waste, such as waste that appears to be from trade activity based on its type or volume, we would be in breach of our permit conditions. This could put the site's permit at risk. If the permit were revoked, we would be unable to accept any waste at all.

For this reason, we have a responsibility to monitor and manage the waste entering our sites. Businesses or individuals disposing of waste as part of a commercial activity must hold a valid Waste Carrier's Licence and use an authorised commercial facility.