

<http://www.torontosun.com/news/torontoandgta/2009/06/23/9894696-sun.html>

News | Toronto & GTA

Garbage, tempers sizzle

Pickets prevent residents from dumping their trash at transfer stations

By [DON PEAT](#) AND BRYN WEESE, SUN MEDIA

Last Updated: 23rd June 2009, 3:18am

What a dump.

Just hours into the strike by City of Toronto unionized employees, bags of garbage were piling up outside some waste transfer stations where civic officials told residents they could drop off their junk in the event of a strike.

Dozens of black garbage bags were sizzling in the soaring summer temperatures yesterday outside the Commissioners St. transfer station.

Unionized workers manning the picket kept anyone from crossing their lines. Strikers warned residents not to drop the garbage along the road or else city managers would send bylaw officers after them for illegal dumping.

LINE BLOCKED

At the Bermondsey transfer station, pickets kept all vehicles from crossing their line.

That meant the garbage wasn't the only thing simmering, with tempers between residents and pickets flaring as members of CUPE 416 maintained the hardline approach that no garbage should pass.

Sure enough, some garbage toters didn't heed the warnings and dumped the trash onto a growing pile.

A city manager could be seen jotting down licence plates of dumpers as they sped away.

Bylaw officers were also seen cutting into garbage bags looking for incriminating trash that could lead them to a person to give a ticket.

In a bid to discourage dumping of household waste in street-level garbage bins, officials had already taped off many of the city's garbage cans and placed signs on them asking people not to litter.

So far, city officials say an unspecified number of fines have been handed out for illegal dumping. The ticket carries a \$380 fine and can be levied even for leaving bags of trash beside public trash cans or leaving them in parks or ravines.

The city's top bureaucrat, Joe Pennachetti, said there will be "zero tolerance" for illegal dumping, even though some people haven't been able to cross the picket lines at the city's seven transfer stations.

"The city will investigate and charge people proven to be dumping illegally," he said yesterday at Metro Hall.

"While a certain amount of inconvenience is to be expected, pickets cannot completely stop people and their vehicles from coming and going."

Pennachetti said the city wasn't seeking a court injunction yet to let people in and was working with the unions to open the transfer stations.

'REMAIN CALM'

"The city will resolve the issue as quickly as possible. In the meantime ... please remain calm," he said.

In the leadup to the strike, the city encouraged residents to drop garbage at transfer stations around the city, saying residential waste would be accepted free of charge and should be double-bagged.

Two transfer stations -- Bermondsey and Ingram -- will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week to accept both residential and commercial garbage. Five additional transfer stations will be open 12 hours a day, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week, to accept both residential and commercial garbage.

Geoff Rathbone, general manager of Toronto's solid waste, said that already yesterday "several" tickets were issued to people who left garbage bags outside the gates at transfer stations where pickets wouldn't let cars through.

"We have seven transfer stations across the city, and we've had similar issues at three or four of those," he said, noting yesterday wasn't a regular garbage collection day so the need to access the transfer stations shouldn't be too great yet.

"(Monday) is not a regular garbage collection day. We always collect Tuesday through Friday, so therefore there really should be no immediate need for residents to be accessing our transfer stations," he said.

DON.PEAT@SUNMEDIA.CA