

Pickets ease wait time

New rules allow quicker dumping

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Trash tossers, time is now on our side.

If you're trying to toss your trash at Toronto's garbage transfer stations, pickets shouldn't be making you wait, CUPE officials said yesterday.

CUPE spokesman Pat Daley told the Sun last night that a kinder, gentler new strike protocol for transfer station picket lines is being rolled out across the city.

In the first few days of the civic workers strike, residents wanting to dump their trash legally at several transfer stations around the city were facing long waits as pickets were limiting dumping to one person every 15 minutes.

"We're not asking people to wait," Daley said. "There may be a delay because of lineups but they were holding people for 15 minutes and they're not doing that now.

"Our folks will help unload garbage up to a certain point where management can come and pick it up."

And while the new protocol is still subject to change, Daley said it just makes sense in the heat wave.

BE PATIENT

"It's hot and people get impatient," she said, adding she hopes the public will continue to respect the picket lines. "The points being made, they see the workers there and they're still not entering the transfer station.

"We hope the public will continue to be patient and not take their frustration out on our members."

Daley said members didn't go on strike to inconvenience the public.

"They did it because you have to defend your collective agreement rights," she said.

Later today, city officials will announce the location of 19 temporary dump sites they'll open for residents to drop off their trash.

All of the sites, including several along the western waterfront beside the Martin Goodman Trail, are approved by the ministry of environment and will be open by tomorrow morning.

Outside the Commissioners Rd. transfer station yesterday, things were fairly calm as pickets maintained their line, helped residents with trash while a bylaw officer sat in her truck watching them.

'NOT UNREASONABLE'

"We're not unreasonable people, we want to get back to work," said strike captain Bill Steele. "We're trying to be fair with everybody."

What did bother Steele was that no one, apart from union members on the picket line, cautioned residents not to violate the city's own rules about what's accepted at transfer stations.

He said he saw non-household garbage, even recyclables, thrown into city garbage trucks.

Earlier in the day, a man showed up with 30 bags of garbage that clearly looked like commercial organics, he said. He couldn't believe the bylaw officer at the scene let it happen.

"What's she here for?" Steele said, pointing to the bylaw officer's truck.

The officer directed media requests to the city.

Officers have been a staple at the transfer stations, threatening to issue tickets to residents unwilling to wait to dump their trash legally and even going through dumped garbage bags.

The city's solid waste general manager, Geoff Rathbone, told reporters yesterday 59 tickets have been handed out for illegal dumping.

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