



You are here : [City News](#)

New City Ordinance Seeks to Eliminate Hazards

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City wants to keep shopping carts where they belong

Abandoned shopping carts continue to be a public eyesore and safety hazard throughout the community, which prompted the Renton City Council to pass an ordinance allowing city personnel to remove them from public streets, bus shelters, and other improper areas where carts are commonly left. The ordinance also sets fines for carts picked up by city staff. Collection of abandoned carts began last week.

“For years, residents and business owners have expressed their concern over the blight and the safety hazards caused by shopping carts that are abandoned throughout the city,” said Mayor Denis Law. “We are taking steps to resolve this problem and want businesses to be our partners in curbing this public nuisance.”

The primary purpose of the ordinance is to provide for the prompt retrieval of lost, stolen, or abandoned shopping carts in order to promote public safety and improve the image and appearance of the city. It puts the responsibility on businesses to use the means available to them to deter, prevent, or retrieve shopping carts that have been taken from their premises. Fines will be issued to the store owners of any carts retrieved by city staff from public right-of-ways. Each cart impounded by the city will constitute a separate violation. As per the new regulations, the city can take the following actions:

- Immediately impound lost, abandoned, or stolen carts--there are no exemptions.
- Issue a \$100 fine to identified cart owner for each cart that is impounded.
- Dispose of or sell the cart(s) that lack ownership information or after 14 days have lapsed.

The city has been working with businesses that routinely use shopping carts to educate them on their responsibilities under the new ordinance. The stores have been notified of the day of the week that city staff will be out collecting carts from public property, providing the stores with time to do their own retrieval and avoid fines.

Abandoned carts can be reported by sending an email to carts@rentonwa.gov or by calling the Maintenance Services Division at 425-430-7400.

