



Shopping Cart Control

Frequently Asked Questions



- 1. Why did the City of El Paso adopt an ordinance targeting off-property shopping carts?**
 - At retail and service establishments, such as grocery stores, shopping carts are essential to being able to shop conveniently. However, these same carts can become a significant nuisance when they make their way onto City streets, medians, storm water conveyances, arroyos and even into residential neighborhoods. In an effort to minimize shopping carts from becoming a nuisance, the City adopted an ordinance that addresses shopping cart control requirements at retail and service establishments. The ordinance was adopted in August 2010. Enforcement will begin in March 2010.
- 2. What does the ordinance require of businesses that offer shopping carts to customers?**
 - Owners of shopping carts will be required to label carts (identifying cart owner); recover carts at least once weekly within a 1-mile radius of the store; and immediately recover any off-property cart where the store manager is notified verbally or in writing (by either a private citizen or City official).
- 3. Which City department enforces regulations related to shopping cart control?**
 - The Environmental Services Department (ESD) has been charged with enforcing this ordinance. The department's Code Compliance Division will handle complaints and enforcement related to off-property shopping carts, and various other divisions of ESD will support the process involving impounded shopping carts.
- 4. Does the City have the ability to impound off-property shopping carts?**
 - Yes, once a store has received more than two Notices of Violation within a 12-month period, the City may impound any shopping cart found off the property of the cart's owner. The carts will be held at a City impound storage facility for 30 days, which will be indicated on a claim ticket that will be provided to the cart owner.
- 5. Are cart owners notified by the City that their carts were found off their property?**
 - Once a cart is impounded, the manager of the business indicated on the cart will be notified in writing that carts have been impounded, and will be provided with the appropriate claim tickets for the impounded carts. Carts that are not labeled with cart owner will be treated as illegal dumping and disposed of by the City, since the cart owner cannot be identified and notified.

City of El Paso Environmental Services Department



6. Do businesses have to pay a fee for recovering impounded shopping carts?

- Yes, cart owners must pay a \$50 fee per cart recovered from the City. This fee is used to recover the costs the City incurred during the impound process. Any carts not recovered within 30 days will either be disposed or recycled by the City, and any expense incurred in this process may be billed to the cart owner.

7. What can businesses do reduce the number of off-property shopping carts in the community?

- Post signs warning customers that taking carts off-property is not allowed.
- Install loss-prevention wheel-locks on carts.
- Provide parking lot security guard.
- Provide (for sale or deposit) two-wheeled, collapsible wire shopping carts to customers that may be used to walk home with purchased items.
- Provide regular patrol for recovery of off-property shopping carts in areas where carts normally accumulate.

8. How can I report an off-property shopping cart?

- The ordinance requires cart owners to immediately (within 24 hours) recover an off-site shopping cart upon notification by either a private citizen or City official. As a private citizen, you may call the store manager directly and expect that he/she respond to your notification by recovering the cart within 24 hours. If the cart is not recovered by the store within that time frame, you may call the City's Code Compliance Division at (915) 599-6290, and a Code Compliance inspector will investigate your complaint.

9. Do other cities have similar enforcement programs related to off-property/abandoned shopping carts?

- Yes, other cities from Los Angeles, California to Ithaca, New York have implemented similar programs related to the control of shopping carts, in an attempt to prevent them from accumulating off-property and becoming abandoned, thereby causing a nuisance.

10. Where can I learn more about the ordinance related to shopping cart control?

- **At the ESD website:**
www.elpasotexas.gov/environmental_services/shoppingcart_control.asp
- **If your specific question was not included here, please contact:**
Karl Rimkus, Senior Environmental Scientist
(915) 599-6237
rimkuskc@elpasotexas.gov

City of El Paso Environmental Services Department

