



2021 Analysis of Odor Complaints

King County’s Solid Waste Division (SWD) occasionally receives complaints regarding odor emitted from its facilities, and we take these complaints seriously.

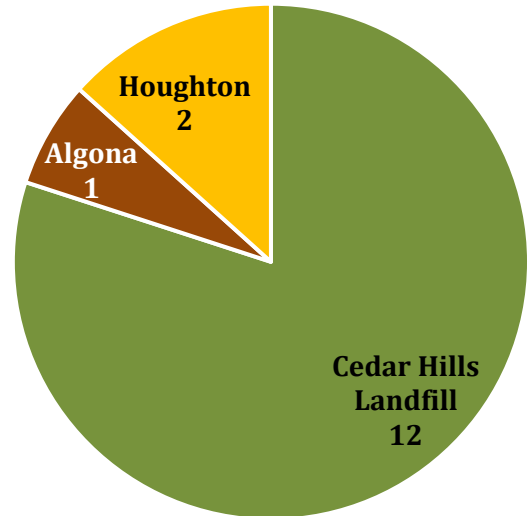
In 2021, SWD received 15 odor complaints. Twelve complaints were attributed to operations at the Cedar Hills Regional Landfill and three complaints related to other SWD facilities (Algona and Houghton transfer stations).

Prevention is our most effective strategy. In the next few years, both the Houghton and Algona transfer stations will be replaced with modern recycling and transfer stations whose design will provide significantly better odor control. At the Cedar Hills landfill, active areas are covered at the end of each working day to control odors and wind-blown litter and to reduce the potential for wildlife to get into and carry away garbage. SWD Operations staff are continually researching and testing other means by which landfill odor can be reduced.

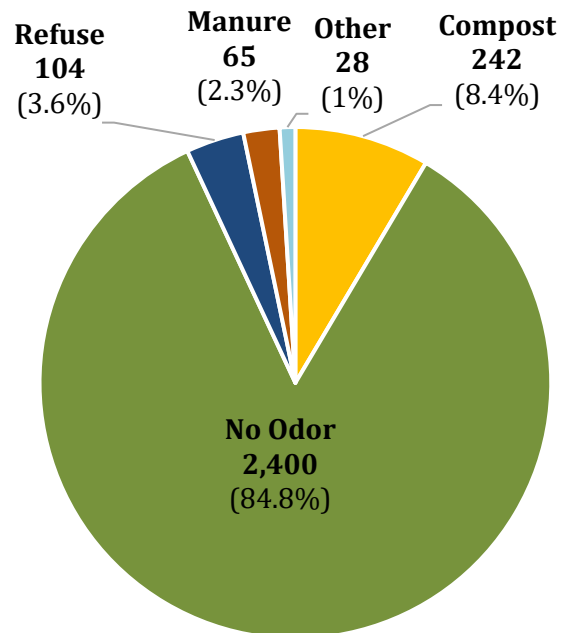
Monitoring and investigation are additional means of odor mitigation at the landfill and inform new prevention strategies. On weekdays, specially trained staff conduct odor checks five times per day across the landfill and once per day through the surrounding neighborhoods. On weekends, odor checks are conducted across the landfill three times a day. In addition to these regularly scheduled checks, trained staff monitor areas commonly associated with previous odor complaints.

In 2021, SWD increased its neighborhood odor checks from 590 to 2,839.¹ In 2,400 instances (84.8 percent), no odors were detected. Odors that were detected were classified into four categories: Refuse, Compost, Manure, and Other. Examples of “other” odors include sewage, odor from the contaminated stormwater pond, chlorine, and unidentified odors. Data analysis of the 2021 neighborhood odor checks shows that refuse accounted for less than 3.6 percent of the odors detected.

12 of the 15 odor complaints called in to SWD were attributed to the Cedar Hills landfill



Refuse accounted for less than 4% of odors detected in daily neighborhood checks in 2021



¹ The reason for the increase is that, in addition to the daily neighborhood odor checks, SWD staff perform odor checks four times per day near the homes of two Cedar Hills neighbors who have regularly reported odor problems.

Solid Waste Division

Anyone who notices odors or any other issue they feel is related to the landfill operations can call the Solid Waste Division at 206-477-4466 to get an immediate response. *People should always call 911 first if they believe there is a potential emergency or a risk to safety, health, or property.*

The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) has jurisdiction over King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties, where they seek to protect public health, improve neighborhood air quality, and reduce our region's contribution to climate change.

PSCAA maintains records of odor complaints from across its jurisdiction but does not generally provide field investigations for complaints received. In 2021, PSCAA received 550 odor complaints for the Maple Valley area of which 241 (44 percent) cited Cedar Grove Compost, 86 (16 percent) specified the landfill, and 223 (40 percent) were uncertain as to whether the source was the landfill or Cedar Grove.

16% of the complaints to PSCAA in 2021 for the Maple Valley area were specifically attributed to the Cedar Hills Landfill

