

Standard responses to booking system enquiries

❖ **When is the booking system being launched?**

From Monday 13 March 2023, you will have to book a slot in advance to visit any Essex County Council recycling centre. The booking system will open 2 weeks in advance, on Monday 27 February.

❖ **Why has a booking process been introduced?**

The booking process is being introduced to help manage waiting times, reduce offsite queues and improve the customer experience at recycling centres.

❖ **Why have you waited until now to implement a booking system for all vehicles?**

We felt it was important to trial an all-vehicle booking system at one busy site before extending the trial to all locations. Rayleigh Recycling Centre was chosen as the initial test site as the size and location of the site was causing significant queues and congestions within the area. Since the booking process was introduced, we have seen a significant reduction of queues and have received an overwhelming amount of positive feedback from residents.

❖ **How long will the booking system be in place for?**

The booking system will be frequently reviewed to ensure it is working efficiently, however the trial is set to be in place until December 2023.

❖ **Why can I not book on the same day that I want to visit?**

Bookings will close one day in advance to allow for detailed lists to be provided to the sites and administrative teams. Very soon we will be trialling same-day bookings at Rayleigh Recycling Centre to see if this is a viable option to extend to all sites.

❖ **Do you think fly-tipping will increase now that a booking system is in place?**

In February 2022, we introduced a booking system for large vehicles at our van-friendly sites. In May 2022, we introduced the booking process for all vehicles at Rayleigh Recycling Centre. Since launching both booking systems, we have received no reports of increased fly-tipping incidents in the county. Please remember, there is never any justification for fly-tipping. It is a criminal offence that can result in prosecution.

Please make sure to report fly-tipping incidents to your local council, and the situation will continue to be monitored. Thank you.

❖ **Can I book more than one visit per day/week?**

. All residents will have the chance to secure a booking slot to dispose of their household waste. To ensure fair usage, we ask residents to limit visits to one booking per week. However, the booking system will allow residents to book multiple slots which could be useful for those who are going through a major change, for example moving house.

❖ **The slots keep filling up and I'm struggling to book a timeslot. What should I do?**

The capacity of the slots is set individually for each site and will be continuously reviewed. If it is apparent that the slots are reaching their capacity then additional slots will be considered against safe operating practices.

❖ **Do I need to book if I am a Blue Badge holder?**

If you are a Blue Badge holder, you do not need to book a slot to visit a recycling centre. Remember, as a Blue Badge holder you are also eligible to visit any Essex County Council recycling centre in a van, pick-up or large trailer, even if they don't usually allow this type of vehicle.

❖ **Do I need to book if I am a pedestrian?**

If you are visiting the sites as a pedestrian, you do not need to book a slot to visit a recycling centre. Please note, any resident that parks outside and attempts to walk waste in will be refused entry. For full site restrictions, please visit: <http://www.lovesessex.org/news-and-ideas/recycling-centre-policy-and-site-restrictions/>

❖ **How do I book if I can't access the internet?**

If you have limited internet or accessibility issues that may restrict you from booking your slot online, there are alternative options to book a slot. In the first instance, could you receive assistance from a friend, family member, colleague, carer or neighbour? You are also able to visit your local library where you can use the internet free of charge to book a slot and can also print your confirmation. As a last resort, you can phone the Essex County Council contact centre on 0345 743 0430 Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5:00pm who will make the booking on your behalf.

❖ **What if I don't have an email address?**

The email address doesn't have to be personal to you, and it would be perfectly acceptable to supply an email address that belongs to another member of the household, a neighbour, friend, relative or carer. So long as this can then be printed and given to you in advance of your visit, or a screenshot be taken on a mobile phone that you come to site with. If your booking has been made on your behalf by the Essex County Council Contact Centre, you will be advised to provide your name on arrival at site for checking against daily site bookings.

❖ **What if I don't receive my confirmation email?**

First step, check your junk mail folder.

Second step, contact waste.management@essex.gov.uk in case there is a system issue that we need to investigate

❖ **Was there a consultation and impact assessment for this trial?**

The booking system is an extension of the trial we already have in place for large vehicles at our van-friendly sites and all vehicles at Rayleigh Recycling Centre. The booking process was introduced in response to resident concerns of increased queues and waiting times at recycling centres.

The decision and associated documents can be viewed online here

https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/essexcmis5/Decisions/tabid/78/ctl/ViewCMIS_DecisionDetails/mid/422/Id/9438/Default.aspx

If you would like to engage with the council further, you can write to your local Councillor or make a formal complaint/suggestion at <https://www.essex.gov.uk/complaints>

❖ **General complaints about sites and site staff**

Thanks for letting us know about this. Please can you complete the complaint / compliment form at [Complaints and compliments - Essex County Council](#). We will then get in contact with the staff at the recycling centre to investigate the issue further. Thanks.

❖ **What happens at sites where there are short closures during operating hours?**

We have planned time slots within the working day to allow for short closures. This is for operational reasons and our transport team will do their best to fit in with these slots. If we have to close the site at other times for operational reasons, you may experience a short delay but the unused slots will help us to catch up.

❖ **How do I cancel my booking?**

Your booking confirmation email will contain a link called 'return to my booking'. If you click this link, you will be able to follow instructions to cancel your booking. If you have made a booking but can no longer attend, please ensure you remember to cancel the booking to allow other residents to book.

❖ **Why are there separate booking systems for cars and vans?**

As vans can often take longer to unload, it is important to ensure that vans visiting the sites are spread out over the course of the day. This will help manage congestion on site and reduce queues.

Holding messages (in the event of booking system issues)

- **Taken down for maintenance/updates**

⚠ Please note the online booking system is down for maintenance so you are currently unable to book a slot to visit a recycling centre. We expect the site to be back up and running by XXXX.
Thank you for your patience.

- **High demand**

⚠ The booking system for vehicles visiting recycling centres is currently experiencing high demand. Due to the volume of people trying to access the website, the booking system is currently facing a few technical difficulties. Please bear with us whilst we get the system back up and running!
Thank you for your patience.

- **Making changes to slots/process following feedback**

⚠ Following resident feedback about difficulty in booking a slot to visit the recycling centres, we are making a few adjustments to the slot capacities. The booking system will be unavailable for the next XXX whilst we make a few changes. Thank you for your patience.

Background information

From Monday 13 March 2023, you will need to book a slot in advance if you want to visit an Essex County Council recycling centre.

There is no charge to book, but you need to make a booking each time you visit.

When making the booking, you will be able to select the recycling centre you wish to visit. Once you have chosen your recycling centre, a calendar will appear displaying the time slots. Fully booked slots will be greyed out, and available slots will be green. You can also view the capacity of each slot in the bottom right-hand corner of the time slot so you can see how busy each slot is.

Once your booking is complete you will receive a confirmation email. Please bring the booking confirmation and proof of address. Only residents of the Essex County Council area will be allowed access.

Please note:

- Booking slots will be made available for a maximum of two weeks in advance.
- Bookings cannot be made on the same day. Bookings will close a day in advance to allow for detailed lists to be provided to the sites and administrative teams.
- To ensure fair usage, residents will be limited to one booking per week.
- Bookings for small vehicles will have a 15 minute timeslot, and bookings for large vehicles (vans, pick-ups and vehicles towing a trailer with more than one axle) will have 1 hour. You can arrive at your designated recycling centre at any point within this timeslot.
- A booking slot does not allow priority access. If you arrive and there is a queue, please do not try and skip the queue as you will be refused access.
- Any residents that park up outside and attempt to walk waste in will be reported and refused entry.
- If you miss your slot, you will have to book another slot to visit on another day.
- If you would like to cancel your booking, the booking confirmation email will contain a link called 'return to my booking'. If you click this link, you will be able to follow instructions to cancel your booking.