

Waste collection strike to impact majority of Caledon

By Rob Paul

Due to a labour dispute between Emterra Environmental, one of Peel's waste collection contractors, and its employees, some residents in Caledon, Brampton, and Mississauga will experience temporary changes to their curbside waste pickup.

The service disruption could impact more than 150,000 households.

The disruptions began Monday, December 6, with no clear end date.

On Monday morning, after voting against management's most recent offer, upwards of 175 Emterra Environmental workers left the job.

LiUNA Local 183, who represents the waste collectors, is calling on Emterra to immediately come to the bargaining table with the same terms of employment offered by the Region's other waste management firm.

"Our members are very proud to serve their communities and apologize for any impact that this may have on Peel Residents," said Jack Oliveira, LiUNA Local 183 Business Manager. "We were forced to take these measures after Emterra has refused to provide fair and equitable compensation for all of its workers. Our members continued to provide an essential service throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. It is simply not fair for two workers with the same duties to have such a disparity in wages. Our members want to get back to work serving Peel residents, but Emterra has to come to the table with a fair offer for our members."

With Emterra Environmental and LiUNA Local 183 unable to agree to terms on a deal, Emterra Group believes a settlement can be reached in the near future, but, for the time being, they ask residents to be patient and work with the Region to ensure the waste that can be collected during the disruption is collected.

"Emterra Group is proud to serve the residents of Peel Region as one of its recycling and waste management partners, since 2016," said Brad Muter, Chief Operations Officer, Emterra Group. "We value all our employees and the work that they do. We remain committed to our customers and business partners and are doing our best to minimize the impact during this labour disruption. Any updates to collection service are provided on the Region of Peel's website at www.peelregion.ca/waste. For additional service-related questions, residents may also contact the Region of Peel.

"A fair and competitive, fully recommended deal was presented, and we ask that the union reconsider its actions given the impact this disruption could have on residents in the community, the environment, as well as our employees and their families. Our pledge is to do our best to minimize the impact on our valued residents, customers and business partners and thank them for their patience and understanding as we work towards a fair settlement."

The Region asks that strike-affected residents during their garbage week continue to put garbage and organics at the curb on your scheduled garbage collection day. Residents may experience collection delays but are asked to please leave garbage and organics at the curb until further notice, even on the weekend. No bulky items will be picked up during the labour disruption.

The strike will not affect waste collection in apartment and condominium buildings or other types of multi-residential units. Regular waste collection will continue for multi-residential complexes.

As for strike-affected residents during recycling week, due to the labour dispute, recycling will not be picked up. Residents are asked to hold onto their recycling until further notice. Organics will not be collected on recycling week, only during garbage week.

Yard waste collection will also not be picked up for strike-affected residents during the labour dispute. Residents are asked to hold

onto their yard waste until further notice.

“We thank everyone for their patience as we work to support waste collection during this labour disruption,” said Norman Lee, Peel Director of Waste Management. “Keeping public health and safety top of mind for our communities, we’ve temporarily changed the collection program to allow collection crews to focus on our first priority of picking up garbage and organics from homes affected by the strike. We encourage residents to visit our website or social channels often for updated information.”

Without much warning that the strike would happen, Mayor Allan Thompson says he is unhappy with the lack of communication regarding a potential labour dispute and encourages Caledon residents to connect with the Region if they are unsure of the interim process for waste collection

“This is a frustrating situation for our residents and for me as Mayor as we had no indication talks were breaking down,” said Thompson. “The Region has taken quick action to set up a strike response plan and affected residents can ask questions and get information by calling 905-584-2216 or by email: wasteinquiry@peelregion.ca.”