

Refuse Collector

Refuse collectors work in a team made up of several loaders and a driver. They collect rubbish and put it in a refuse lorry to take to a recycling centre, tip or incinerator.

The Work

Loader

You could be:

- wheeling bins to the edge of the pavement and loading them on the automatic tipping machine to empty them into the lorry
- picking up plastic bags full of rubbish and throwing them into the lorry
- operating controls at the back of the lorry to crush the rubbish
- returning empty bins to houses and perhaps supplying new bins
- emptying public litter bins or skips
- collecting garden rubbish or large items such as old furniture or carpets
- sorting rubbish for recycling
- removing dangerous materials such as chemicals or hospital waste.

Driver

You could be:

- driving the refuse lorry slowly down a street and waiting while loaders empty bins into it
- driving full loads to the refuse tip or incinerator
- doing routine maintenance of the lorry – checking oil, water, fuel, tyres
- driving a vehicle at a refuse tip.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Pay rates for refuse collectors vary depending on your local council, but recent vacancies in Scotland have been in the range of around £23,000 to £30,000 a year.

Conditions

- Work is outdoors in all weathers, which can be difficult in winter.
- It can be dirty, smelly and dusty, and you might come across rodents and insects.

- You could be at risk of cuts or other injuries if you don't follow health and safety rules.
- You would spend a lot of time on your feet.
- You need to wear a high visibility jacket, protective clothing and gloves.
- There might be shower facilities at the depot where you start and finish.
- You may have to work unsociable shifts including early starts or late finishes.
- You could get overtime, or bonus payments, for working public holidays – especially Christmas and New Year.

Getting In

- A good general education is useful.
- You should be over 18 for health and safety reasons.
- A current driving and Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) licence with Category C or C+E is required to be a driver.
- You should apply to the DVLA for a digital tachograph driver smart card (digicard) and the DVSA for a Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) card. The CPC card is given after 35 hours periodic training.
- You should be fit and healthy as there is a lot of lifting, carrying, bending and walking.
- If the job involves driving, you will need to pass a medical examination.

You could work for a local authority, a private contractor employed by a local authority or a private company specialising in recycling or disposing of industrial waste.

You can search for jobs on the local authority website www.myjobscotland.gov.uk or [Find a Job](#) website.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- strong and willing to do heavy, outdoor work
- able to cope with bad smells, dirt and vermin
- able to communicate well with others
- aware of health and safety
- able to work fast and keep up with other crew members
- responsible and reliable
- able to use your initiative and follow instructions
- able to work safely in traffic
- able to work as part of a team.

Training

Training is on the job and includes short courses on health and safety and manual handling.

Getting On

- You could take lessons and sit the test for an LGV licence to become a driver.
- With experience you could become a supervisor.

- You might move on to become head of a refuse depot or an inspector.

Contacts

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.