

Jan 24, 2021

GARBAGE

DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION
100 NASSAU ST. NEW YORK, N.Y. 10038

Garbage is waste food and other things that are thrown away into wastebaskets and trash cans. In most cities getting rid of garbage is the job of the Department of Sanitation. Sanitation means cleanliness for the purpose of health. In history there have been cases of great cities that ceased to exist because they had no proper way of getting rid of garbage. Disease germs that bred in the garbage caused epidemics.

The Department of Sanitation is one of the largest and most important departments in most cities. In New York City, the Department employs more than 14,000 persons, uses 1,800 trucks, and costs \$110,000,000 a year. Engineers, chemists and other scientists are constantly looking for new ways to get rid of garbage more cheaply, and to make it serve useful purposes. One use of garbage is to fill in wastelands such as swamps; this dries them out so they are suitable land for farming and building.

Some garbage is burned in huge furnaces called incinerators. The ashes may be used to fill in land, or are dumped in the ocean if the city is near a coast. Some garbage is chemically dissolved. One way of doing this is to dump it into a big airtight vat and spray it with superhot steam (called live steam). The steam melts the garbage down into a slimy mass, with oil and grease floating on the top. The solid matter underneath may be used as fertilizer, to enrich the soil.

New York City uses ashes and rubbish (bottles, cans, rags, wood, shoes, and metals) to fill in swampland and marshland, changing them into parks and recreation areas. The ashes and rubbish are deposited, sprayed with disinfectant, covered with earth to prevent odors and keep away insects and rats, and brought to a proper grade by the Department of Sanitation. The Park Department then plants grass, trees, and shrubbery, and builds baseball diamonds, benches and play areas to complete the job.

When garbage and rubbish contain too much moisture to burn properly (because they are rain-soaked or because of large amounts of watermelon

rinds, corncobs, or similar fruits and vegetables), fuel oil is added. The residue (all unburned material) is then taken to the landfill.

Incinerators are not cheaper to run. Incineration costs \$4.75 a ton while the landfill process costs \$2.42 a ton.

New York City's Department of Sanitation collection trucks haul three tons of garbage, or the contents of approximately 250 full garbage cans. The trucks average three loads a day, or 750 cans.

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