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# Selecting Environmentally-Conscious Trash Haulers

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The more we try to reduce kitchen waste, the more packaging seems to come with grocery purchases. We attempt to manage this in multiple ways. Having reusable bags, buying food packaged in biodegradable material, swearing off single use plastics, or even growing your own veggies in the garden. Our family of four produces upwards of a few bags of landfill trash and nearly an equal amount of recyclables.

Trash hauling is no doubt a dirty business, however some companies are cleaner and more reputable than others. If you're shopping around for the best service you may want to look beyond the low bidder. Consider getting a few quotes and

asking some important questions before making a decision. Here's a handful of ideas to help you find the right company:

- Does your company take waste to a landfill or an incinerator?
  - If your company owns landfills, how many do you have? Have they been issued citations by the EPA before? Are these landfills able to recover any methane to create useful energy?
  - If the waste goes to an incinerator, what powers the incinerator? Is it natural gas, oil or coal? How much carbon monoxide does the incinerator emit? Does it use scrubbers to reduce ash?
- How many trucks does your company have? Are you a large company that uses subcontractors? If your company uses subcontractors, how will I know who is picking up my trash from week to week?
- Are there restrictions on the types of waste you will pick up from our home? What happens if my can gets full and I need to put out additional bags? Will you pick up large objects like mattresses, couches or old furniture? How do you handle Christmas tree or yard waste removal?
- In terms of recycling, can you provide me with a list of "good and bad" items that can be recycled? What happens to things put in the recycle bin that are on the "bad" list like single use plastics?

If you think these questions are too deep or if you're prodding too far, that's good. Put some pressure on their sales people. It's their job to field tough questions so don't be bashful to challenge them in order to make a cleaner planet for our children.