

**City of Allentown
Bureau of Recycling and Solid Waste**

SWEEP – Process Flow Narrative

Solid Waste Education and Enforcement Program (SWEEP) provides compliance with Allentown’s solid waste, recycling, and neighborhood improvement ordinances.

§ 393-1: Ord. No. 14262: Purpose,

“The quality of life and community pride of Allentown's citizens are negatively affected by litter, dumping, and graffiti. Recognizing these are community problems, the purpose of this chapter is to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the City by helping to create a clean environment for the citizens of Allentown.”

Allentown’s SWEEP Officers issue warnings, violation tickets, and Citations for non-compliance with the City Ordinance.

SWEEP complaints, appeals, tickets, overdue notices and Citations are logged and maintained in an internal SWEEP Database.

Initial Complaint and SWEEP Investigation Assignment

1. The Bureau of Recycling and Solid Waste receives a complaint.
 - a. Anyone can contact the Bureau.
 - i. Email, by phone, in person, or 311 app
2. SWEEP Department reviews the complaint to determine if it is a potential SWEEP complaint.
 - a. If the complaint is not a potential SWEEP complaint, the SWEEP Department forwards it to the proper department.
 - b. If a complaint is brought to a SWEEP Officer in the field, the SWEEP Officer can take an image of the infraction and provide it to their supervisor.
3. If the complaint is a potential SWEEP complaint, the SWEEP Department searches the address of the complaint on the SWEEP Database.
 - a. If the address exists, all previous complaints and tickets will be shown underneath the address on the SWEEP Database.
 - i. If the complaint has previously been submitted, the complaint is not added to the SWEEP Database.
 - b. If the address DOES NOT exist, the SWEEP Department contacts the complainant to verify the address of the complaint.

4. The SWEEP Department logs the complaint into the SWEEP Database and prints out an Investigation Report (IR).
5. IRs are given to the designated SWEEP Officers that are responsible for the address on the IR.
 - a. The SWEEP and Animal Control Manager designate the routes of the SWEEP Officers.

SWEEP Officer Investigation

1. Using the IRs received from the SWEEP Department, the SWEEP Officer drives to the addresses on the report and searches for the complaint listed.
2. The SWEEP Officer reviews the complaint and determines if it is a valid SWEEP violation.
3. If the SWEEP Officer determines that the property has a valid SWEEP violation the SWEEP Officer can:
 - a. Issue a Warning. A Warning can be written or verbal. Written warnings per the Neighborhood Improvement Ordinance are only required for violations related to:
 - i. A16: High grass and weeds (Minor)
 - ii. A17 High grass and weeds (Major)
 - iii. PK1: Vehicle parked on grass, dirt, stone, or landscaped surface.
 1. Written: An educational letter gets mailed to the property owner's address stating the violation and the corresponding ordinance number of the violation. PK1 violations need to be complied in 3 days, and A16/17 need to be complied in 5 days.
 2. Verbal: Sometimes, a SWEEP Officer may see the property owner at the property and directly advise them that they have a certain number of days to correct the violation, depending on the severity of the violation, or they will receive a SWEEP Ticket.
 - a. SWEEP Officer documents that a verbal warning was given to the property owner by recording it on the IR under the comments section.
 3. SWEEP Officer will recheck the property 10 calendar days after the warning has been given.
 - a. If weather prevents them from correcting the violation, a few days may be given to remediate.
 - b. If the violation has been corrected, there will be no SWEEP Ticket issued.

- b. SWEEP Ticket: A SWEEP Ticket is issued listing the violation with a fine \$ amount in accordance with the ordinance.
 - c. Citation: A Citation may be immediately issued depending on the condition of the property or repeated offenses of the same violation.
- 4. The SWEEP Officer completes the IRs that were printed out by the SWEEP Department and takes pictures of the violation(s).
 - a. Writes in SWEEP Officer Identification number.
 - b. Location and Description of the violation.
 - c. Action code, date, and comments.
 - i. Action Codes:
 - 1. 01: Education
 - 2. 02: Verbal Warning
 - 3. 03: Referral (SWEEP Ticket)
 - 4. 04: Re-check
 - 5. 05: Citation Issued
 - d. SWEEP Database systematically generates the following on the IRs:
 - i. Property owner information:
 - 1. Owner Name,
 - 2. Address, and
 - 3. Phone number.
 - ii. Complainant information
 - 1. Name,
 - 2. Address, and
 - 3. Phone Number
 - a. May stay anonymous.
- 5. The SWEEP Officer completes his daily log while completing the IRs. On the daily log, the SWEEP Officer writes:
 - a. Time the property was checked,
 - b. The type of problem,
 - i. Complaint (C)
 - ii. Survey (S)
 - c. Description of violation,
 - d. Action needed, and
 - e. Recheck date. (If applicable).
- 6. After completing a review of the assigned IRs, the SWEEP Officer proactively surveys their designated route to look for any other potential SWEEP violation(s).
 - a. The SWEEP Officer's designated routes change every 2 years.

7. If a SWEEP violation is identified, the SWEEP Officer will take pictures of the address number and the violation(s).
 - a. If the yard is landlocked (no access for pictures), the SWEEP Officer can request permission from a neighbor to take pictures from their yard.
 - i. The SWEEP Officer will advise the neighbor that if they comply the property owner may be able to tell that the photos were taken from their yard.
 - ii. The SWEEP Officer may also contact the complainant through email, by phone, or in person asking them to take pictures from their yard.

Ticket Issuance

1. The SWEEP Officer returns to the office and gives the SWEEP Manager the completed IRs with pictures.
2. SWEEP Officer decides if the properties need a SWEEP Ticket for the SWEEP Violation that has occurred.
 - a. If the SWEEP Officer decides to ticket the property owner, the SWEEP Officer gives the IRs of the properties being ticketed to the SWEEP Manager.
 - i. If the property needs cleanup or cutting of overgrown grass, the SWEEP Manager makes the decision to have the City or it's grass cutting contractor go to the property and remediate the violation. This will be at an additional cost for the property owner. This additional cost will be added to the SWEEP Ticket.
 - b. If the SWEEP Officer decides not to ticket the property owner, the SWEEP Officer may hold onto the IR(s) and re-check the property in 10 calendar days for compliance.
3. The SWEEP Manager prints out the SWEEP tickets for the violations that were discussed with the SWEEP Officer.
 - a. The SWEEP Officer fills in the ticket number on the IR.
4. The SWEEP Ticket is then mailed to the property owner's mailing address with pictures providing proof of the violation.
 - a. The SWEEP Ticket is mailed to the mailing address of the property owner.
 - b. The property owner has 14 calendar days to pay for the ticket in full (including if applicable, additional costs).

- i. Payment plans can be put in place but still need to be paid in full within 14 days.
- c. The property owner has 14 days to formally file an appeal for the violation.
 - i. The property owner does not need to pay before filing an appeal.
 - ii. The SWEEP ticket is placed on hold with an appeal submission.

Appeal Process

1. A SWEEP Ticket can be appealed by the property owner within 14 days of the original ticket date by:
 - a. Emailing the SWEEP Office with the following information:
 - i. The SWEEP Ticket Number,
 - ii. The property owner's:
 1. Name,
 2. Address, and
 3. Phone Number and
 - iii. Property Owner's reason for the appeal.
 - b. Completing an on-line SWEEP Ticket appeal.
 - i. Going to the website, allentownpa.gov, the departments section and selecting recycling and solid waste. Then select SWEEP and select "Online SWEEP Appeal" and completing the form. The form will ask the property owner for their:
 1. SWEEP Ticket Number,
 2. Address,
 3. First and last name,
 4. Phone Number,
 5. Email, and
 6. Reason for appeal.
 - c. Writing and appeal in person at the Bureau of Recycling and Solid Waste's office.
2. An appeal ticket request is reviewed by the SWEEP Manager.
 - a. Using the SWEEP database, the SWEEP Manager looks up the ticket number and confirms the violation information.
3. A SWEEP Officer will return to the property with the IR and recheck for compliance.
 - a. If the property has corrected the violation, the SWEEP Ticket may be modified to a lesser amount or withdrawn in full.
 - b. If the property has NOT corrected the violation, the SWEEP Ticket may be upheld in full.

- c. If the property owner continues to contest the ticket without correction of the violation, the SWEEP Manager may file a Citation at the local Magisterial Court.

Overdue Notice and Citation –

A SWEEP Ticket is deemed to be OVERDUE when not paid in full within 14 calendar days.

1. An Overdue Notice is issued if the property owner does not pay the full amount of the SWEEP Ticket within 14 calendar days, and it will incur an additional penalty:
 - a. If the person in receipt of a \$25 violation ticket does not pay the fine or request a hearing within 14 calendar days, the person will be subject to a \$10 penalty.
 - b. If the person in receipt of a \$100 violation ticket does not pay the fine or request a hearing within 14 calendar days, the person will be subject to a \$25 penalty.
 - c. Per the ordinance, failure of the person to make payment or request a hearing within 20 calendar days of a ticket violation shall make the person subject to a Citation.
 - d. Overdue Notices are sent out every other week to each individual property owner in violation.
 - e. Overdue Notices are generated by the SWEEP Manager in the SWEEP Database.
 - f. The SWEEP Manager prints the overdue notice.
 - i. The system generates the amount for the penalty automatically when the SWEEP Ticket is unpaid by the due date.
 1. If the SWEEP Ticket is still unpaid 14 days after the due date, sometimes the system will generate a double late fee on the Overdue Notice. The SWEEP Manager will then have to go into the system and change the notice manually to only have one late fee.
2. The SWEEP Manager can file a Citation if the notice is unpaid within 14 days, or the violation is repeated. Citations can also be issued immediately depending on the condition of the property or the nature of the violation.
 - a. If there are multiple violations, a Citation gets issued for each violation.
 - b. SWEEP Officer then sends the Citation(s) to the local Magisterial Court.
3. When the SWEEP Manager files a Citation, the SWEEP Manager changes the status of the ticket on the SWEEP Database from “Pending” to “Citation Pending”.
4. The SWEEP Officer who initially investigated the violation must also be present at the Magisterial Court Citation Hearing. If the SWEEP Manager has evidence to support the case, the SWEEP Manager must also be present. Any other time the SWEEP Officer has the ability to prosecute without the SWEEP Manager’s support.
 - a. Other witnesses may be present at the hearing.

- b. SWEEP Officers may also use witnesses' photos to support their case, but the witnesses must approve the use of the photos and may be asked to be present during the hearing.
 - c. The SWEEP Officer responsible for issuing the violation must go to the property owner's property the morning of the hearing date to check the property for compliance and take pictures of the property.
5. After the hearing, the SWEEP Manager enters the results from the hearing into the SWEEP Database:
- a. Guilty:
 - i. If the city or a city contractor performs work to remediate a violation, the property owner pays the local Magisterial Court the \$300 Administrative Fee, the cost of the violation they committed, and any additional costs for cleanup.
 - ii. The guilty party will always pay court costs (determined by PA Courts), a fine levied by the Magisterial District Judge (MDJ) (\$100 to \$1000), and any restitution.
 - iii. The Court then reimburses the Bureau of Recycling and Solid Waste the cost that the property owner paid for the fine and for any additional costs for cleanup.
 - b. Not Guilty
 - c. Guilty with Restitution
 - d. Pending
 - e. Withdrawn (or abated)
6. If the MDJ permits having the case in absentia, the MDJ may continue the case or issue a Bench Warrant for the defendant if there is a 'no show.'
7. If the property owner does not show up at the Magisterial Court, they will be required to pay the full amount from the Citation or appeal it within 30 days. If neither happens, the property owner can serve up to 90 days in jail.

Payment Process

1. The SWEEP Ticket is paid:
- a. A return payment envelope is provided with the original SWEEP Ticket.
 - b. Payments can be made by Check, Cash, Money Order or Debit/Credit Card (with a processing fee).
 - i. In person in the SWEEP office,
 - ii. Mailed to the SWEEP office,
 - iii. Dropped off outside in the lockbox located outside of the SWEEP office, or
 - iv. Paid in person in Treasury.

2. The SWEEP Clerk receives the payment and looks up the SWEEP Ticket number to verify the fine amount. This also includes any additional costs. The SWEEP clerk will also denote the payment in the SWEEP database.
 - a. In the SWEEP office:
 - i. The SWEEP Clerk collects the cash at the register
 - ii. Enters the amount into Tyler Cashiering
 - iii. Cash gets put in register
 1. IF one clerk is on lunch, another clerk will take over but will need to change the register drawer to a new one. Old register can be put back in when the first clerk is off of lunch, or the second clerk just stays collecting the payments.
 - b. A receipt for any payment will be printed and given to the payer.
 - c. Payment information gets entered into the SWEEP Database.
3. The SWEEP Clerk stamps and sorts check or money order payments and enters them into the SWEEP Database.
 - a. The SWEEP Clerk enters the SWEEP Ticket number into the SWEEP Database to look up the fine amount.
 - b. The SWEEP Clerk enters payment amount, payment date, what type of payment is received, and the check number (if applicable).
 - i. Types of payment can include:
 1. Fines
 2. Administrative Fee
 3. Additional cost accrued
 - c. The Payment information is entered into Tyler Cashiering.

Daily Deposit Process

The SWEEP Clerk stops taking payments at 4 p.m. to allow time to check the drawer and organize the deposit before closing at 4:30 p.m.

1. The SWEEP Clerk counts all of the cash and coins in the register and enters the amounts in Tyler Cashiering.
 - a. While entering the total in Tyler Cashiering, the system will be able to identify if there is a variance in the deposit.
 - i. Overage - Too much money in the cash drawer.
 - ii. Shortage - Too little money in the cash drawer.
2. The SWEEP Clerk verifies all the checks received for that day.

- a. Tyler Cashiering creates a list of all the checks that were run through the register that day.
 - b. The SWEEP Clerk verifies the check number and dollar amount of each check and marks them off the Tyler Cashiering list before moving on to the next check.
 - c. The SWEEP Clerk checks to make sure that the check can be run as-is with the way it's been written:
 - i. Date,
 - ii. Listed payee,
 - iii. Written/figure amounts, and
 - iv. Signature.
3. The SWEEP Clerk closes the batch in Tyler Cashiering and prints two reports from Tyler.
 - a. Settlement Report
 - i. A document providing a detailed summary of financial transactions and their settlement status.
 - b. Batch Report
 - i. The process of multiple data records together in a single run rather than doing them individually.
 - ii. The SWEEP Clerk makes two copies of the "Tender Details" from the Batch Report.
 1. The "Tender Details" is a section of the Batch Report that shows an overview of all of the transactions that are included in that day's batch.
4. The SWEEP Clerk removes the cash amount from the drawer that was processed that day and places it into the deposit bag.
 - a. The SWEEP Clerk then counts the drawer to make sure that it agrees to the prescribed total.
 - i. This is the amount of cash that they always keep in the drawer for processing change.
 - b. Checks are wrapped in a copy of the "Tender Details" from the Batch Report and placed in the deposit bag along with the deposit slip.
 - c. The signed receipts from all credit card transactions and the invoice stubs from all commercial trash payments are attached to the Settlement Report.
 - i. The SWEEP Clerk signs the last page of the Settlement Report.
5. The SWEEP Clerk prints out all of the SWEEP payments that were entered into the SWEEP Database for that day.
 - a. The SWEEP Clerk compares the SWEEP system report vs. the SWEEP payments run in the register from the "Tender Details" page.

6. The SWEEP report, “Tender Details”, and cash receipts are stapled together.
7. The SWEEP Clerk gives the SWEEP report, Settlement Report, Batch Report, Deposit Bag, and drawer to a Recycling Manager to confirm the deposit.
8. The SWEEP Department will take the Deposit Bag, Settlement Report, and the Batch Report to Treasury the next morning.