

Guide to Skip Bin Permits

GUIDE

1. Skip bins – top tips to improve processes, simplify requirements and reduce delays

Some councils are automating skip bin permits to help free up time and make better use of resources in their teams. Efficient approaches can include:

- **Instant online permits** – for routine on-road bins, suppliers can lodge a three-step form, pay required fees and get an auto-issued approval
- **Annual permits** – permits that facilitate bulk applications for skip bins throughout the year without needing to apply for an additional permit.

Clear, visual guidance lets suppliers get placement right on the first attempt and saves councils from fielding basic ‘do I need a permit?’ calls:

- **Publish a one-page guidance graphic** – show, at a glance, that bins kept wholly on private land **do not** require a permit, while any encroachment on council land needs a permit
- **Add a photo line-up of right versus wrong placements** – illustrate key rules such as staying within marked parking bays, keeping 20m clear of intersections and fitting reflective tape on corners
- **Remove the need for a site plan** – this allows for simpler alternatives such as attaching photos or providing a written description of placement, freeing up time for both councils and businesses.
- **List prohibited locations in plain English** – No Stopping zones, clearways, school crossings, tram safety zones and arterial roads above 70 km/h

- **Provide a printable site notice** – a small A4 sheet suppliers can cable-tie to the bin, showing dimensions, maximum 10t loaded weight, supplier contact and permit/notification number
- **Develop clear compliance and enforcement measures tailored to your context** – include specific measures in local laws to guide council action in event of non-compliance. Councils may also use inspection powers under the *Local Government Act 1989* to manage risk and enforce compliance where appropriate.

2. Benefits to your council and local businesses

- **Protection and risk management first** – bins that block footpaths or sit too close to intersections create hazards for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers, especially at night. Heavy steel containers can crack kerbs, paving and road surfaces; councils otherwise foot the repair bill.
- **Reduce demands on your teams** – standard conditions and clear triggers reduce officer callouts, enforcement disputes and applicant confusion.
- **Streamlined processes** – automating lower risk activities associated with skip bin placement reduces the administrative burden for both councils and businesses, freeing up time and resources to better support operations.

Time savings for your council

Automating 2 000 permit applications throughout the year can save council teams at least one day every week.¹

¹ Savings based on feedback from one Victorian council that has automated skip bin permits, estimating a processing time of 10 minutes per permit x 2 100 permit applications across one year

3. Two approaches for approving skip bins on council land

Two approaches for approving skip bins on council land already in use by councils:

Permitting solutions	Key features	How it works	Benefits to councils and businesses
1. Automatic permitting per placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skip bins can be placed immediately once application has been submitted and paid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councils are encouraged to automate permits if placement is for shorter durations, e.g. Ten days or less, to reduce administrative efforts by councils and businesses alike. Key risks are managed by informing the applicant of necessary permit conditions when the automatic approval is issued. Allows immediate placement of skip bins, but businesses must apply for each placement. 	Highest – minimal officer time.
2. Annual permitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows contractors to place bulk rubbish container on council land throughout the year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual permitting gives recognised skip bin contractors a single, year-long approval that covers every placement they make on council land. After lodging one application the contractor simply submits a short online notice (street address, proposed dates, bin size) before dropping each bin. This eliminates repeat paperwork and speeds up delivery while letting councils keep oversight through fixed, 'deemed-to-comply' rules. One off application and payment process for businesses. 	High – streamlined check against fixed rules.

4. Model local law requirements

These model, risk-based local law requirements for administering Skip Bin Permits give councils ready-made clauses and supporting guidance to adopt in their own policy guidance as relevant. The content has been co-designed with Victorian councils.

Better practice example – *Whitehorse City Council Local Law 2024*

These provisions are outlined in one or two brief sentences. This concise approach ensures additional guidance – which may be subject to more frequent changes – is outlined in procedural documentation.²

For example: 'A person must not, without a permit, place or cause to be placed a bulk rubbish container or shipping container on a road or council land.'

² Separate clauses in Whitehorse City Council's Local Law 2024 cover permits, enforcement and detailed requirements associated with skip bins. Further information is published on their council website.

Conditions

Skip bin definition

A skip bin is a container designed to be transported and placed within private property, a road reserve, or on other land for the disposal of builders' rubble, waste, tree loppings, household and other rubbish, or earth. Under the program guidelines, you can't use a cage bin.

General placement

Skip bins must be placed on premises that the skip bin is servicing, where there is sufficient space. If there is insufficient space, skip bins can be placed on a road, street or public place (council land, reserves, open spaces, shopping centres and car parks).

If you place the skip bin on a road, it must be:

- in a place where vehicles are allowed to park under Victorian Road laws. It must be placed in the parking lane and within parking bays if marked
- clear of footpaths, nature strips, landscaped areas and vehicle crossings
- at least 5m of clear road in a two-way street for passing vehicles, and 3m in a one-way street or laneway
- next to the hirer's property if possible.

If you place a skip bin within a road reserve, you must:

- fully comply with these conditions for placement on any part of a main road (arterial road) managed by the Department of Transport and Planning. Main roads in urban areas are roads used for through traffic and in rural areas it includes both the road and the roadside, or
- obtain written permission from the relevant council to place skip bins on roads managed by council, including municipal roads and various parts of a main road in an urban area (e.g. outer separator, service road, nature strip, roadside, footpath/pathway). Refer to the Code of Practice for Operational Responsibility for Public Roads.

You can only place a skip bin on a footpath, nature strip or road verge where:

- it is impractical to place the skip bin within the premises that the skip bin is servicing
- adequate provision is made for the safe movement of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders
- the footpath, verge, and public utility assets are adequately protected from potential damage
- motor vehicles can easily get past (including service vehicles, such as garbage collection trucks)
- access is not unduly or unreasonably obstructed
- the skip bin is adequately identifiable and clearly visible.

Conditions

Road and pedestrian obstruction

In placing the skip bin, you must:

- not obstruct the passage of any vehicle, cyclists, pedestrians or other lawful traffic
- not obscure motorists' view
- ensure the skip bin does not present a physical hazard, e.g. risk of injury to a pedestrian
- obtain the consent of any resident who will be immediately affected by the placement of the bin – generally this includes neighbours or adjoining businesses
- maintain the safe and efficient operation of the roadway.

Placement

In placing the skip bin, you must:

- ensure bins are not located in high volume pedestrian and vehicle traffic areas, unless there is no other alternative
- not place the bin on the roadway of an arterial road with a speed limit of 70 km/h or greater
- not place the bin on the centre median of a divided road
- not place the bin on any part of the roadway of an arterial road used for through traffic where the arterial road has adjoining service roads
- provide clear access to laneways and right of ways (or cul-de-sacs) at all times
- maintain reasonable access to private driveways
- not place bins where they would cause an obstruction to delivery vehicles
- not place skip bins in any area where the stopping of motor vehicles is prohibited under the Road Safety Road Rules, such as:
 - on a length of road or area to which a 'no stopping' or 'no parking' sign applies
 - within 20m of an intersection with traffic lights, and within 10m of an intersection without traffic lights
 - within 20m before and 10m after a school crossing, pedestrian crossing or bus stop
 - within 10m before a tram safety zone or tram stop, and within 10m after a tram safety zone
 - within 20m either side of a railway crossing
 - in a clearway, in a taxi or bus zone, or in a loading zone
 - on a median strip or traffic island.

Access

- Comply with all parking regulations (other than restrictions on timed parking) unless signs indicate otherwise.
- Position bins as close to, and parallel to, the kerb as is practicable without obstructing the natural flow of storm water.
- Do not obstruct access to utility service covers or devices that require servicing (e.g. traffic signal boxes, telephone boxes, post boxes, and fire hydrants or plugs).
- Do not position the bin on a hill or curve where the view of the skip bin is not clear for at least 100m along the road approaches.
- Do not place the bin in a position that obstructs access to any item legally placed, or any permitted event on any road or public place.

Conditions

If you plan to place the skip bin on an arterial road in a way that differs from what is allowed under these conditions, contact the Department of Transport and Planning to discuss road occupancy arrangements.

Size

- The skip bin must be a maximum of 7.5m long, 2.5m wide and 1.5m high.
- Where a skip bin is placed on any part of the roadway of an arterial road used for through traffic, the width of the skip bin should not exceed 2.4m.
- To place larger skip bins, contact council.

Damage

- The placement or removal of the skip bin must not cause damage to council infrastructure or community assets.
- If damage occurs, tell the council as soon as possible.
- Any costs for damage to council assets resulting from the placement, occupation or removal of the skip bin will be borne by your business.

Visibility

You can place a skip bin as long as:

- It is easily seen at all times during hours of daylight and darkness
- the bin uses either:
 - a yellow flashing light, or
 - yellow retroreflective tape fixed to the corners of the bin (to provide enhanced visibility and early recognition and identification of bins during hours of darkness, particularly for vehicle drivers). The tape must be kept clean and you must inspect it frequently. If damaged the tape must be replaced to ensure adequate visibility is maintained.
- Both flashing lights and retroreflective tape must be used:
 - when you fail to maintain the retroreflective tape
 - in a heavily trafficked area
 - where vertical or horizontal curves of a road reduce visibility
 - where background conditions reduce the effectiveness of the tape
 - in unlit areas.
- Reflective tape must be placed at the top corner of each side in an inverted 'L' to identify its length, width and height. The tape must be clean and undamaged.
- Markings at opposite ends of each side shall be placed at the same relative height.
- The material must be:
 - at least 50mm wide, and
 - a minimum horizontal length of 200mm and 350mm high.

Conditions

- The tape material is microprismatic retroreflective material, and bears the European 'E' marking on 'C' class material. 'C' class material is used for contour/strip marking and has specific retroreflective properties. These material requirements are based on the European Regulation UN/ECE 104 – 'Uniform Provisions Concerning the Approval of Retro-Reflective Markings for Heavy and Long Vehicles and their Trailers'.
- The tape material is pressure sensitive and applied in accordance with manufacturer's specifications and instructions.
- If the bin is placed on a main arterial road, a road with reduced visibility, in low-lit or unlit areas the bin must be fitted with flashing yellow lights on the corners of the skip bin from sunset to sunrise.
- The name and contact details of your business are easily identified on the bin.

Contents

- Material stored in the skip bin must not include food or waste that contains organic matter and must not rot or cause offensive odours.
- Material must not protrude from the waterline level of the bin.
- Material must not contain any prescribed or reportable wastes.
- The total bin weight must not exceed 10 tonnes.

Responsibilities for applicants

You must:

- have a public liability insurance policy that covers the permit period. If the policy expires during the permit period, the permit is invalid
- ensure that the skip bin is maintained in good order, and that the company name and telephone number are clearly visible
- ensure that the specified retroreflective material is affixed to the skip bin to ensure its visibility at all times, in particular the hours of darkness, and when required by council, ensure that a flashing light is attached to the waste bin
- Obtain approval, where required, from a council, as the responsible road authority, for the placement of a skip bin on a municipal road and the various parts of an arterial road in an urban area for which it is responsible (e.g. outer separator, service road, nature strip, roadside, footpath/pathway where present).
- Ensure that these conditions are complied with where a skip bin is to be placed on any part of a roadway or roadside of an arterial road for which the Department of Transport and Planning is the responsible road authority (e.g. the roadway of an arterial road in an urban area used by through traffic, or the roadway and roadside of an arterial road in a rural area).
- Ensure that the hirer is aware of the type of waste that may be placed in the skip bin and their responsibility to reduce litter. The hirer shall, where possible, ensure that:
 - the skip bin does not cause an obstruction
 - all waste placed in bins is secured and cannot be readily dislodged
 - the skin bin is not left in an overloaded state
 - the skip bin is made safe and removed when directed by council or the responsible authority.
- Instruct the hirer to load the bin in such a way to prevent the escape of wind-blown litter.

Conditions

- Ensure that the skip bin delivery driver is aware of the need to place skip bins in accordance with these conditions - in particular the driver should ensure that:
 - Council approval has been obtained to place the skip bin in the agreed location, prior to accepting the skip bin for delivery
 - the skip bin is placed in accordance with these conditions
 - all parking restrictions in relation to intersections, driveways, clearway hours etc. are observed, unless alternative written permissions have been granted by council
 - the skip bin is appropriately located from a road safety aspect as detailed in these conditions
 - advice is given to the supplier if it is not possible to place the skip bin in accordance with these conditions
 - the conditions are explained to, and understood by, the hirer
 - the skip bin is not in an overloaded state at any time, or in a state that permits spillage, while in transport.
- Ensure that the vehicle depositing the skip bin does not deposit hydraulic or engine oil on the roadway or leave loose waste.
- Ensure that the skip bin is removed within the allowable period to avoid overloading by unauthorised persons.
- Rectify damage to assets (including the road reserve, nature strip or other assets) as a consequence of placement or pickup of bins.
- Remove all waste within a three-metre radius of the skip bin, or any waste that has spilt or been blown from the skip bin. All litter brought to the bin by other members of the public and stored inside or within a three-metre radius of the skip bin is your responsibility.
- Empty the skip bin often so that its contents don't overflow. If loose materials or particles can be blown out of the skip bin, it must be covered.
- Make sure waste that won't fit in the skip bin isn't put in other rubbish or waste bins in the area.

Conditions

Declaration by applicant

Applicants are required to make a standard declaration confirming that the information they have provided is true and complies with the conditions outlined in the model local law.

By allowing businesses to place skip bins on roadsides, the council expects compliance with the set of conditions and expectations of a responsible business owner. Failure to meet any of the conditions may result in penalties.

By lodging a skip bin application with your council, you declare that:

- you understand you are participating in the automatic approvals program, and you must operate your business in line with the conditions specified
- the Council reserves the right to take enforcement action for non-compliance
- you will ensure that all supporting documents are kept up to date and a copy is provided to the council when renewed or changed
- you have provided the council with a copy of your current certificate of currency for the insurance required
- your business has all the permits and licences required to operate
- you agree to indemnify the Council, its servants and agents from and against all actions, costs, claims charges, expenses, penalties, demands and damages which may be brought, made or claimed against them in connection with your participation in the automatic approvals program, due to your breach of the terms and conditions of the program or in connection with your negligent acts or omissions. This means that:
 - you are agreeing to compensate the Council if a claim is brought against it by a third party, such as a member of the public, if they suffer (or claim to have suffered) loss or damage (including property damage, personal injury, and death) due to your acts or omissions. This will include any legal costs of the Council associated with such a claim or action. This indemnity is binding, and the Council will rely upon this indemnity if a claim is brought against it in connection with your participation in the automatic approvals program
- you agree to release the Council, its servants, and agents in relation to all claims resulting in loss, damage, death, or injury, in connection with the automatic approvals program. This means that:
 - you are agreeing that Council will not be liable for any loss or damage you suffer because of your participation in the automatic approvals program. You are agreeing that you cannot bring a claim against the Council for loss or damage caused by your participating in the program. This is legally binding, and the Council will rely upon this release if you do bring a claim
- you indemnify the Department of Transport and Planning against claims for damage and injury arising from the placement of the skip bin where it is to be placed on any part of a roadway or roadside of an arterial road for which the Department of Transport and Planning is the responsible road authority.