



Cayman Islands Government

STATEMENT TO
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
BY
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MLA, JP

MINISTER FOR HEALTH,
ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND
HOUSING

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Statement to the Legislative Assembly by

Minister of Health, Environment, Culture and Housing,

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour

29 June 2018

Ministers and Members of this Honourable House,

Good morning,

I rise to update you on the status of garbage collection in the Cayman Islands.

I will begin with a summary of the most recent bulletin on the subject, issued this morning by the Department of Environmental Health, known as DEH.

The report reads:

The Department of Environmental Health (DEH) assures residents of Cayman Brac that garbage collection in the vicinity of the Public Works Compound to West End including Old Airport Road will resume today (Friday, 29 June 2018).

In addition, garbage pick-up will also begin in all Cayman Brac communities that are scheduled for collection today. Garbage collection on Grand Cayman will also take place as scheduled.

The DEH apologises to residents for the recent delays in garbage collection.

For more information on garbage collection, please contact DEH by telephone at 948-2321 on Cayman Brac, 949-6696 on Grand Cayman or by email at dehcustomerservice@gov.ky

A review of updates issued earlier this week for Grand Cayman shows that all trucks are currently operational and routes fully staffed. Any

delays in garbage pick-up were the result of a backlog carried over from the previous week.

Pick-up last week was impacted by downtime for garbage collection trucks in need of repair, as well as low levels of employee attendance on some days due to illness and vacation.

Honourable colleagues I am convinced you will agree that today's bulletin from the Department reflects the months of hard work which has gone into addressing challenges of which we are all aware.

You may also recall some of these yourselves. In a statement to the press early last month, Deputy Governor Franz Manderson noted that work remains ongoing to address human resources concerns, such as absenteeism. This is being tackled through performance management and fostering increased accountability within the Department. To provide support in this area, Ms Nancy Barnard, Deputy Chief Officer in the Ministry of Health, was also temporarily seconded to the DEH.

In addition, as Mr Manderson promised, mission critical vacancies were filled by ten temporary hires in the roles of heavy vehicle drivers, landfill attendants, solid waste drivers assistants, and a welder to assist in the repairs to the commercial containers. We have also sought to manage scheduling to avoid unsustainable overtime claims, and reduced these from over \$100,000 per month late last year, to most recently \$25,000 per month.

Unfortunately, our fleet of vehicles and other equipment has many pieces that are also past their prime, which comes with its own challenges. While the Government has invested heavily in the fleet over recent years, unfortunately we are still very much in “catch up” mode trying to make up for past years where the capital investments were not being made.

To this end the Department has partnered with the private sector to fill the gaps in residential collection caused when equipment failures trigger unscheduled maintenance. DEH officials stress that this takes place only when absolutely necessary.

In addition, the department collaborates with the Department of Vehicle and Equipment Services to provide daily troubleshooting, which has resulted in much quicker turnaround of repairs. Another notable benefit from this arrangement was the repair of the Dopstatt, a machine that processes vegetation, and which, when functioning, frees considerable space at the landfill.

DEH and DVES are also working closely together on reviewing the fleet and identifying a replacement strategy for vehicles and equipment whose service costs now exceed their lifetime value. This information will be invaluable in identifying, in a strategic manner, an investment plan for new vehicles and equipment.

To help us better plan the garbage collection process, the DEH's engineering section has also just started work on a review of routes in Grand Cayman to try and optimise efficiency. This project aims to make the best use of resources, including vehicles and staff, and is expected to be complete in some three months.

Mister Speaker, I would like to thank the people of the Cayman Islands for the patience they have continued to show during this period. As Minister with responsibility for Health, I am extremely conscious of the understandable concern that many feel when they realise it has been somewhat longer than usual since their last garbage pickup.

Although I cannot promise that these challenges will end imminently, I can assure you that we are doing everything in our power to provide reliable, consistent service. I am confident that with the continued efforts by the hard-working staff at the Department of Environmental Health we will continue to see the situation improve and normalize.

To this end I would like to urge all members of the public to like the DEH social media pages. These can be found on Facebook at “DEH Cayman Islands” and on Instagram at DEHCayman. This will ensure that you immediately see the posts that announce when and where the DEH is behind schedule. On these pages you can also find tips on ensuring that your garbage handling and packaging process is safe for you and our collectors. There is also guidance on useful services provided by the George Town Landfill, such as the 24-hour drop-off.

Another alternative is to stay tuned to local media which receives the daily garbage collection updates.

I would like to end by expressing lasting gratitude to the staff of the Ministry, the Department, and all our partner agencies who have worked so hard to get us to this point. Your efforts have helped to improve the lives of the public that you serve and are truly appreciated by the Government.

Thank you Mister Speaker.

