Unattended Donation Bin Permits FAQs Sheet

Permit & registration information for property owners and bin operators

When is a City permit required?

An exterior, unstaffed donation bin for clothing, shoes, books, toys, household goods, or similar items generally requires a City permit. Each bin needs its own permit, tied to the approved operator and the exact location shown on the site plan.

Apply online

OpenGov Permit Portal | ennistx.portal.opengov.com

Select the Unattended Donation Bin permit application, upload the supporting documents, and pay the applicable nonrefundable permit fee.

Information and documents to submit

1. **Operator and property contacts:** Legal names, mailing addresses, phones, emails, and an active maintenance contact.
2. **Property-owner authorization:** A signed statement expressly allowing the operator to place and maintain the bin at its proposed site-plan location.
3. **Scaled site plan:** A legible plan showing exactly where the bin will be placed and the surrounding site conditions.
4. **Bin specifications:** Appearance, dimensions, materials, deposit opening, signage, and locking mechanism.
5. **Proof of lawful principal use:** Evidence of the existing lawful use and a valid Certificate of Occupancy when required. *City Staff will verify existing use.*
6. **Maintenance and servicing plan:** Collection schedule; overflow, litter, graffiti, and outside-donation response; responsible contact.

What should the site plan show?

Property & bin location	Access & site features
Property boundaries; existing buildings; exact bin location and dimensions; distances to property lines, buildings, rights-of-way, and other improvements.	Driveways and access points; parking and drive aisles; fire lanes and access areas; accessible parking; easements; trash enclosures and service areas.

Before submitting: Confirm that the property has an active lawful principal use and that the property owner has authorized the exact proposed location.

Already have a bin on site? Lawfully existing bins must generally apply within 90 days after the ordinance takes effect and meet operational standards within 30 days. Confirm the effective date with the City.

Placement, Operation & Renewal

Important requirements for maintaining an approved unattended donation bin

Site placement & bin standards

Approved location No placement on vacant or undeveloped sites. Generally, only one bin per development site unless the City authorizes otherwise.	**Unobstructed access** Keep required parking, fire lanes, sidewalks, accessible routes, building entries, drive aisles, and public rights-of-way clear.
Size & construction Maximum 175 cubic feet (exterior volume) and 6 ft. 6 in. tall. Use durable, weather-resistant, secure construction on an all-weather surface.	**Lighting & location limits** At least 1 foot-candle at grade in front of the deposit opening during darkness. Avoid prohibited setbacks, landscape areas, easements, and visibility triangles.

Operating & maintenance responsibilities

1. **Keep the area clean:** No items may be intentionally stored outside the bin. Maintain the surrounding 30-foot area on the property free of bin-related debris.
2. **Service regularly:** Collect items often enough to prevent overflow; promptly address outside donations, litter, graffiti, damaged components, and maintenance complaints.
3. **Post clear identification:** Display operator name and phone, accepted items, servicing schedule, no-outside-donations notice, and City permit medallion or number. Additional state disclosures may apply.
4. **Accept permitted items only:** No food, garbage, hazardous materials, flammable liquids, medical waste, chemicals, or prohibited batteries.

Routine servicing hours Monday–Friday: 7:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. | Saturday–Sunday: 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.

Review timelines & permit renewal

Completeness review	Within 10 business days after application submission.
Permit decision	Within 15 business days after the application is determined complete.
Permit expiration	December 31 each year, unless the adopted permit schedule provides otherwise. Submit renewals before expiration.
Changes to a permitted bin	Permits cannot transfer to another operator. New bin locations require prior City approval; report material changes within 10 business days.