

**Section 3.23. Local Office.** A franchisee shall maintain a local office and a published local telephone number in Lowndes County which shall be open for business at all times between the hours of at least 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. of each business day, excepting Saturday, Sunday, and holidays observed by Lowndes County. Such local office shall be staffed by a sufficient number of trained employees to efficiently and timely handle the volume of transactions, inquiries, complaints, and other business at such local office, and who shall be available at such office and telephone number for subscribers, other County citizens, and the County's employees, representatives, and agents, to discuss or refer any complaint, inquiry, billing or payment issue, or initiation, modification, or termination of a subscriber's service, or to otherwise communicate and transact business regarding the franchisee's residential solid waste collection, transportation, and disposal services. In doing so, the franchisee shall maintain a subscriber service system reasonably equipped, staffed, and designed to promptly and courteously resolve disputes with or complaints by its subscribers. A franchisee shall provide to each of its subscribers and to the County a written policy specifying the terms, conditions, and fees for each and every service provided its subscribers. Such policies shall be subject to and not conflict with the provisions of its franchise and this Ordinance.

**Section 3.24. Complaints.** All subscriber complaints about residential solid waste collection services provided by a franchisee shall be made directly to the franchisee, which shall give prompt and courteous attention and follow up to each complaint. In the case of alleged missed scheduled collection, the franchisee shall investigate and, if such allegations are confirmed, shall arrange for the collection of the residential solid waste not collected within two (2) business days after the complaint is received.

**Section 3.25. Independent Status; No Agency.** A franchisee shall be an independent operator, and not an agent, contractor, or employee of the County and will operate its residential solid waste collection service and business in its own manner and method subject to the overall requirements of its franchise and this Ordinance and at its sole risk and expense. A franchisee and its officers, employees, agents, and representatives shall have no authority, express or implied, to act on behalf of or bind the County in any capacity whatsoever as agent or otherwise.

**Section 3.26. Non-Transferability of Franchise.** A franchise issued pursuant to this Ordinance shall not be transferable or assignable in whole or in part without the prior written consent of the County, which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld. Any direct or indirect change in ownership or control of a franchisee shall be considered an assignment of its. Any successor to the business or operations of a franchisee shall be required to obtain its own franchise pursuant to this Ordinance.

**Section 3.27. Taxes, Fees, Assessments.** In addition to franchise fees paid pursuant to a franchise, a franchisee shall pay to Lowndes County any other taxes, fees, and other assessments imposed by Lowndes County, including occupation taxes, applicable to the franchisee.

**Section 3.28. Permits and Licenses.** In addition to its franchise, a franchisee shall also obtain any governmental permits and licenses applicable to the franchisee's residential solid waste collection service, business and operations which are required of the franchisee by any government or agency.