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Keeping Pittsburgh Fan Ready During One of Football's Biggest Weeks

How WM crews manage waste and recycling for hundreds of thousands of visitors

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Every spring, one of professional football's most anticipated moments transforms its host city into a massive, multiday event to celebrate the next generation of players. This year, Pittsburgh is preparing to welcome 500,000 to 700,000 visitors over three days and WM will be behind-the-scenes to help keep the city clean and support its circularity efforts.

As the waste and recycling service provider for this high-profile football event, WM, North America's leading provider of comprehensive environmental solutions, will manage an estimated 500,000 pounds of materials generated by fans, vendors and event operations throughout the North Shore riverfront district, home to stadiums, fan zones and large-scale activities.

WM teams will handle multiple waste and recycling streams, including cardboard, plastics, aluminum and food packaging. The goal is to collect materials efficiently in high-traffic areas while minimizing contamination — even as crowds and schedules shift throughout the week.

"Preparation for an event on this scale starts months in advance," said Garrett Boxall, roll-off operations manager for WM's North Huntingdon hauling facility. "From lining up equipment and inventory to mapping exactly where service will be needed, this has been a true team effort. Seeing that planning come together is something our entire crew takes a lot of pride in."

Planning Months Ahead to Support Event Operations

In the months leading up to the event, local teams forecast waste volumes, coordinate service schedules and plan container placement across fan zones, viewing areas, vendor corridors and activation spaces.

Once crowds arrive, crews will adjust operations in real time, using routing technology, on-the-ground coordination and overnight service windows to respond as attendance and waste volumes fluctuate.

“Most fans never see what happens after midnight,” said Eugene Wapiennik, senior district manager at WM. “But that’s when a lot of the heavy lifting happens. Our drivers and crews work through the night, so the city wakes up clean and ready for another full day.”

While much of the city sleeps, WM teams are resetting the event area — emptying containers, repositioning assets and preparing for the next surge of visitors before morning.

Keeping Businesses Running as the City Welcomes Visitors

In addition to event operations, supporting a major live event while meeting everyday business needs is critical to keeping Pittsburgh’s infrastructure running smoothly during one of the busiest weeks of the year.

To maintain normal WM service levels despite road closures and increased foot traffic, 10 to 11 dedicated WM drivers will be deployed nightly to service nearby businesses.

Balancing those demands is familiar territory for Wapiennik, who continues overseeing daily operations across multiple local sites while preparing for the event.

“When your city is in the spotlight, you feel that responsibility,” he said. “We want visitors to experience Pittsburgh as clean, welcoming and environmentally responsible.”

Turning Event Waste Into Environmental Opportunity

Recyclable materials collected during the event will be transported to [WM’s state-of-the-art recycling facility](#), where they will be sorted and processed for recycling as part of the company’s broader commitment to supporting the circular economy.

For WM employees supporting operations throughout the week, the work represents both a professional challenge and a point of pride.

“This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for a lot of us,” Boxall said. “At the end of the week, being able to say, ‘We helped make that happen,’ for our city and for WM, is something our team will carry with them.”

<https://mediaroom.wm.com/Keeping-Pittsburgh-Fan-Ready-During-One-of-Footballs-Biggest-Weeks>