Junk Removal Business Startup Checklist

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Key takeaways

- Start with residential cleanouts and single-item pickups
- Know your landfill and transfer station fees before you quote
- Price by volume (fractions of a trailer load) with a minimum charge
- Donate and recycle usable items to lower disposal costs

1. Plan

- [ ] Choose your niche and the services you'll offer first
- [ ] Define your service area (keep it tight to cut drive time)
- [ ] Write a one-page plan: who, where, what you charge, how you'll get 10 clients
- [ ] Check local competitors' services and prices

2. Register & insure

- [ ] Pick a business name and check your state registry, trademarks and the .com domain
- [ ] Choose a structure (sole proprietor or LLC)
- [ ] Get a free EIN from the IRS (irs.gov)
- [ ] Check city/county business license requirements
- [ ] Open a separate business bank account
- [ ] Get general liability insurance before your first paid job
- [ ] Use commercial auto insurance for your truck as well as general liability. Check your city or county rules: some areas require a hauling permit, and some items (paint, chemicals, tires, electronics and appliances with refrigerant) have special disposal rules.

3. Equipment

- [ ] Pickup truck or box truck
- [ ] Dump trailer or enclosed trailer
- [ ] Hand truck and furniture dolly
- [ ] Moving blankets and straps
- [ ] Work gloves, boots and back support
- [ ] Brooms, shovels and contractor bags

4. Pricing

- [ ] Track your real job times on your first jobs
- [ ] Set a target hourly rate that covers pay, taxes, insurance, fuel and admin time
- [ ] Create a simple price menu and a minimum charge

- [ ] Use estimate and invoice templates for every quote
- [ ] Check your numbers with the free calculator on ServiceStartKit.com

5. Get online

- [ ] Register a short domain and set up a professional email
- [ ] Launch a 4-page website: home, services & prices, reviews/photos, contact
- [ ] Create a Google Business Profile with photos and your service area

6. First clients

- [ ] Google Business Profile with before/after photos
- [ ] Partner with realtors and property managers for move-out cleanouts
- [ ] Offer estate cleanout help to estate sale companies
- [ ] Post in local Facebook groups and Nextdoor
- [ ] Put your brand and phone number on the truck
- [ ] Ask every happy client for a review and a referral

7. Money

- [ ] Invoice every job and log every expense
- [ ] Keep a mileage log for business driving
- [ ] Set money aside for taxes each month
- [ ] Review prices at least once a year

General information, not legal, tax or insurance advice. Rules vary by state and city.