

Residents Urged to Recycle Holiday Waste

San Diego County, CA – The holidays are a time for celebration, but all that celebrating can result in a lot of excess waste. Household waste increases by more than 25% from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day. Knowing what is recyclable in blue bins and at local recycling centers can help reduce the glut of waste.

With the start of the holiday season, I Love A Clean San Diego and the County of San Diego want to educate residents on countywide recycling opportunities. Technological advances and industry initiatives are continuously expanding the list of what can be recycled. Some of the newest items added to the “yes” list for local recycling are rigid plastics and food and drink cartons. Examples of rigid plastics are clear clamshell food packages, plastic toys, and yogurt and salsa tubs. Aseptic cartons include milk and juice cartons and soup/broth boxes.

Cartons and rigid plastics are now accepted in mixed recycling around the county. Even large blocks of plastic foam, such as polystyrene packaging, can now be placed in curbside bins for recycling pickup in many areas or taken to drop-off recycling centers. To find out what is accepted in your curbside recycling or to find a recycling center near you, contact our recycling database, available online at www.WasteFreeSD.org or toll free at 1-877-R-1-EARTH (1-877-713-2784). Polystyrene packing “peanuts” cannot be recycled curbside, but can be taken to some postal stores for reuse.

Another category of waste that is commonly recycled commercially includes fats, oils, and greases from cooking can now be dropped off at select recycling centers by residents. These should never be poured down kitchen sinks or drains. Instead, residents should save their used cooking oil for proper disposal at a local collection facility.

When cooking oil is discarded into your kitchen sink, it accumulates inside the sewer pipes making it difficult for wastewater, which includes waste from showers and toilets, to flow freely to the wastewater treatment plant. When wastewater cannot make its way through the sewer pipes, it overflows into homes, streets, lawns, and storm drains, eventually making its way to the ocean. Washing cooking oil down the drain with soap or at room temperature will not prevent these damaging effects.

There are a number of free collection sites that accept cooking oil from the public in San Diego County. For unincorporated County residents, there are collection sites at Ramona Disposal, as well as EDCO facilities in San Marcos and Lemon Grove. City of San Diego residents may take their used cooking oil to Miramar Recycling Center, provided that it is less than 30 quarts.

To find the closest drop off location for cooking oil and get recycling questions answered, unincorporated County residents can visit the County's Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste database at www.wastefreesd.org or call 1-877-R-1-EARTH (1-877-713-2784).

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