



County of Santa Cruz

# CURBSIDER

SUMMER 2013

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# Paint Stores Now Take Leftover Paint



Since last October, five paint stores in Santa Cruz County have started taking back old latex and oil paint free from residents and businesses. This is an indication of the implementation of the California Paint Stewardship Act of 2010, signed by Governor Schwarzenegger to the delight of environmentalists and consumer advocates.

The stewardship law required the paint industry to develop and finance a consumer-friendly system to collect unused paint and turn it into useful products. The industry founded PaintCare, a non-profit organization that came up with a plan that passed state scrutiny and rolled out hundreds of collection sites in October 2012. Now numbering over 400 statewide, three-quarters of the take-back locations are retail outlets of major paint manufacturers. To provide reasonable convenience throughout the state, independent paint and hardware stores were recruited in areas lacking chain stores.

PaintCare's collection program is funded by a paint stewardship fee assessed on the sale of new paint. Paint is accepted regardless of brand, purchase date or location. Old water-based latex paint is reformulated into top quality new paint, while old oil-based and alkyd paint is blended for use as fuel.

Before the paint law, local government household hazardous waste (HHW) facilities throughout the state handled millions of gallons of paint for recycling annually at taxpayer expense. The stewardship law directs PaintCare to coordinate with existing paint collection efforts by HHW programs. To date, out of 58 counties in the state, only 6 have secured contracts with PaintCare to receive financial relief for doing the work PaintCare was established to finance. The County of Santa Cruz is currently in negotiations with PaintCare for such a contract. The four HHW facilities in the county still accept paint at no charge on their scheduled days of operation, maximum 15 gallons per trip.

While British Columbia and Oregon preceded California in the implementation of a paint take-back system, our state is significant because of its sheer size. Lessons learned here have informed more recent paint legislation adopted in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont and Minnesota. Other states are expected to follow suit. A decade of dialog among stakeholders led to the paint industry's wholehearted endorsement of these laws, which aid paint companies in achieving their economic, social and environmental objectives on a level playing field.

## Santa Cruz County PaintCare Collection Sites and maximum paint accepted per day

**Kelly Moore** - max 20 gal  
1001 Ocean St, Santa Cruz  
831-427-0211

**Sherwin-Williams** - max 5 gal  
408 Front St, Santa Cruz  
831-423-3452

**Greenspace** - max 5 gal  
719 Swift St, Santa Cruz  
831-423-7200

**Kelly Moore** - max 20 gal  
1405 Freedom Blvd, Watsonville  
831-724-3576

**Eastlake Village True Value Hardware** - max 10 gal  
1056 E. Lake Ave, Watsonville  
831-728-3601

## Products Accepted for Free

Interior and exterior architectural paints: latex, acrylic, water-based, alkyd, oil-based, enamel (including textured coatings)

Primers, sealers, undercoatings

Stains, shellacs, lacquers, varnishes, urethanes

## Excluded Products

Paint thinners, mineral spirits, solvents

Aerosol paints (spray cans)

Auto and marine paints

Arts and crafts paints

Caulking compounds, epoxies, glues, adhesives

Roof patch and repair

## Paint Stewardship Assessment Fee

Fee is per can of new paint and is itemized on purchase receipt

Half pint or less \$ 0.00

More than half pint to less than 1 gallon \$ 0.35

1 gallon \$ 0.75

More than 1 gallon to 5 gallons \$ 1.60

**More information about PaintCare [www.paintcare.org](http://www.paintcare.org)**

# Why Recycling Isn't Free

In Santa Cruz County, like most places, curbside recycling was introduced as a “free” service to encourage people to participate. In truth, recycling has never really been free. Cans, bottles and paper must be collected, transported, sorted, stored, and shipped (sometimes over great distances) to a manufacturer to fashion into new products. There are costs at every step of the process, for the people who do the work, the vehicles that move the material, fuel, maintenance of equipment, and more.

In fact, because of all the special handling, collection and processing of recyclables can cost as much as a comparable volume of trash. And recycling is getting trickier. As more and more materials are added to the recycling stream, new systems must be developed to handle them. Challenging products like electronic waste, fluorescent light bulbs and batteries are now banned from the trash but require careful separation and processing, all at additional expense.

What about all the money local governments make from selling recyclables? While it's true that recycled materials are sold, the value of some materials can be far less than the cost of collecting and processing them. Paper, glass and plastic typically sell for pennies per pound. More valuable commodities such as aluminum that can pay their way in a recycling system rarely enter the County's recycling bins, but are most often cashed in directly by consumers or private collectors.

When recycling was young, none of this mattered very much. The volume of recyclables was small, and the costs were easily subsidized by fees collected for disposing of garbage. But times have changed. In a community like Santa Cruz County where recycling represents 75% of the overall stream of discards, this means that more and more of the costs are being covered by a declining volume of garbage. In fact, many local governments no longer consider themselves to be in the trash business, but rather the “resource recovery” business, with trash disposal as a sideline. Like Santa Cruz County, many are wrestling with how to pay for the new way of doing business. Some have added “resource recovery” fees onto monthly bills or at local landfills. Some industries, such as carpet, paint and battery manufacturers, have begun developing and financing their own programs to take back their products when people are done with them. The County of Santa Cruz has initiated studies to determine the best approach to a fiscally sustainable resource recovery operation that continues to meet the high environmental standards expected by local residents.



## New Fluorescent Bulb Recycling Site



ProBuild in Felton now accepts burned out fluorescent light bulbs from residential customers. This store joins 17 other hardware and lighting retailers throughout the county that accept compact fluorescents and tubes up to 48" in length, with a limit of 10 per day. Business customers may properly dispose of bulbs at Household Hazardous Waste Facilities for a fee. Fluorescent bulbs are banned from the garbage can because they contain a small amount of toxic mercury. The full list of take-back sites may be found at [www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org](http://www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org) or by calling 831-454-2160.

# Styrofoam Sales Now Banned



One of the worst sources of pollution in our local rivers and ocean is polystyrene foam, commonly known by the trade name Styrofoam. Local ordinances now prohibit the sale of Styrofoam picnic ware, such as plates, cups or coolers, in the Cities of Santa Cruz and Capitola and in the unincorporated areas of the County of Santa Cruz. Styrofoam products have long been banned from use by local food service establishments throughout the county.

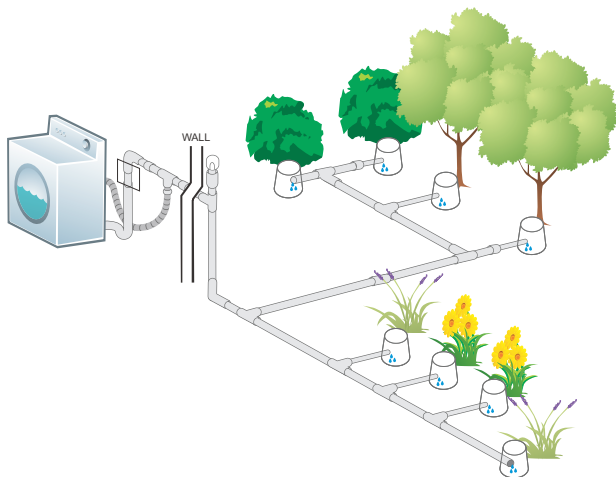
## Grow Your Garden with Greywater and Mulch

If you grow flowers, a vegetable garden, fruit trees, or other thirsty plants, your household could reuse thousands of gallons of water a year by irrigating with laundry greywater. Diverting water from your washing machine for irrigation reduces summer water demand and prevents water pollution by reducing stress on overloaded septic system leach fields. A laundry-to-landscape greywater irrigation system requires no alteration to your home's plumbing and can be constructed with recycled materials. The key ingredient is recycled wood chip mulch, and lots of it! Greywater is delivered by the washing machine pump directly to your garden via basins filled with mulch. The mulch acts like a sponge that prevents greywater from surfacing and running off-site.

This summer, public agencies, Ecology Action, and volunteers of the Central Coast Greywater Alliance are sponsoring hands-on weekend workshops to teach residents how to install low-



cost laundry-to-landscape greywater irrigation systems. These workshops are part of the Monterey Bay 100 Greywater Systems Challenge. Workshops are open to all, and those who sign up for Greywater Challenge workshops will receive a 2-for-1 mulch coupon from Vision Recycling. Depending on the location of their residence, attendees may also be eligible to receive rebates on materials or a laundry-to-landscape installation kit. The first participants to sign up for a workshop will receive free help with their installation from a trained greywater installer.



### Pre-register to attend a Laundry-to-Landscape Workshop at [www.centralcoastgreywater.org](http://www.centralcoastgreywater.org)

**Saturday, July 13, 10am-2pm**  
Live Oak Grange, Live Oak

**Saturday, July 13, 10am-2pm**  
Highlands Park Senior Center,  
Ben Lomond

**Saturday, July 27, 10am-2pm**  
Scotts Valley Water District,  
Scotts Valley

**Saturday, August 24, 10am-2pm**  
Scotts Valley Water District,  
Scotts Valley

**Saturday, August 24, 10am-2pm**  
Alladin Nursery, Corralitos

# Clean Out Your Medicine Cabinet

Most of us have a medicine cabinet stuffed with reminders of all of our encounters with doctors and druggists over the past decade. Do we need to keep it all?

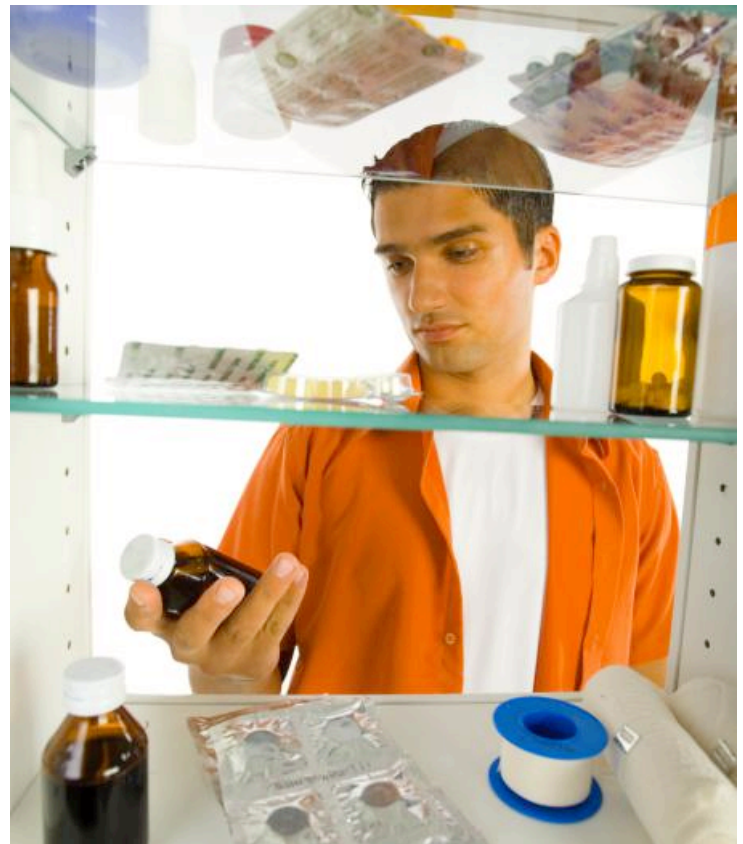
Past practice of flushing medicines down the toilet or throwing them in the trash is now widely discredited. Our modern sewage treatment plants are not designed to remove the potent compounds in drugs, and chemicals can pass through into the Monterey Bay where they could harm marine life. Drugs thrown in the trash may leach into the groundwater.

Still, cleaning out the medicine cabinet is imperative. According to the 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health published by the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, twice as many people in the U.S. regularly abused prescription drugs compared to those who used illicit drugs and inhalants combined. More than 70% of people who abused prescription pain relievers obtained them from family or friends. A quarter of high school students have abused prescription drugs, which can lead to addiction and overdose. Ridding the medicine cabinet of unused medications can prevent unnecessary tragedy.

Three mantras – Monitor, Secure and Dispose – are critical to protecting young people against prescription drug misuse and abuse.

**Monitor:** Take Inventory. Count your medications from the pharmacist and keep track as you use them.

**Secure:** Lock up medications in a drawer, cabinet or lock box .



**Dispose of Properly:** Never dispose of medication in the trash, toilet or sink. Deliver unused medicines to a convenient take-back location. The Sharp Solutions for Home Medicines Program in Santa Cruz County offers take-back at many pharmacies, medical clinics, police stations, and household hazardous waste facilities. Most sites also accept used medical sharps delivered in an approved sharps container. For locations, visit [www.sharpsmedsolutions.org](http://www.sharpsmedsolutions.org) or call (831) 454-2160.

# What's Up with Plastic Bags?

Business owners want to know about the recent big changes in local laws regarding plastic bags, with new ordinances taking effect in Watsonville, Capitola and both the City and County of Santa Cruz. This chart may clarify the differences among the various ordinances.

Ordinance Provision	Unincorporated Areas of County	City of Capitola	City of Santa Cruz	City of Watsonville	City of Scotts Valley
Retail businesses prohibited from providing plastic carry-out bags	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Restaurants prohibited from providing plastic carry-out bags	✓				
Amount businesses giving out paper bags must charge	25¢	25¢	10¢	10¢	0
Amount restaurants giving out paper bags must charge	0	0	0	0	0
Bag charges must show on the receipt	✓	✓	✓	✓	

## Frequently Asked Questions About Bags:

### Are bag charges taxable?

No. The State of California has ruled that bag charges are NOT taxable.

### What about produce bags?

The ordinances only apply to carry-out bags. Free plastic or paper bags may still be offered for consolidating or protecting products such as produce, bulk items, meat, and prescriptions.

### How do I determine which rule affects my business?

For a business within the city limits of Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Capitola, or Scotts Valley, the city's rules apply. Businesses outside of the incorporated cities must abide by the rules of the County of Santa Cruz. A mailing address doesn't always correspond to a political jurisdiction. For example, a Live Oak location in the unincorporated area will have a Santa Cruz mailing address. If you're not sure which rules apply to your business, feel free to call County Public Works at (831) 454-2160.

### How can I learn more?

Go to [www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org](http://www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org) or call (831) 454-2160.

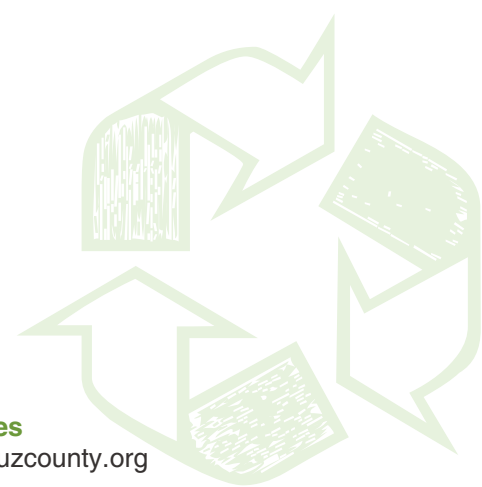
**County of Santa Cruz Public Works**

701 Ocean Street, Room 410  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2160

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# Recycling Resources

**Recycle Information Line . . . . . 831-454-2333**

- What and where to recycle (recorded messages)

**Curbside Refuse, Recycling and Yard Waste Collection . . . . . 800-665-2209**

(Operated by GreenWaste Recovery)

- Begin new service
- Report missed recycling or trash service
- Request delivery or removal of carts
- Obtain oil recycling jugs

[www.greenwaste.com](http://www.greenwaste.com)

**County Public Works Dept. . . . . 831-454-2160**

[www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org](http://www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org)

- Apartments and business recycling inquiries
- Complaints, compliments or suggestions

**Household Hazardous Waste . . . . . 831-454-2606**

(recorded messages)

- Schedule for free disposal
- Non-hazardous alternatives
- Free surplus paint

**Composting Resources**

[www.compostsantacruzcounty.org](http://www.compostsantacruzcounty.org)

**Buena Vista Landfill & Recycling Center . . . . . 831-454-5153**

- Recorded information . . . . . 831-454-2430

**Ben Lomond Transfer Station & Recycling Center . . . . . 831-336-3951**

- Recorded information . . . . . 831-454-2430

**City of Santa Cruz Resource Recovery Facility & Recycling Center . . . . . 831-420-6270**

- Open to unincorporated county residents in Davenport and Bonny Doon only

**California Grey Bears Recycling Centers. 831-479-1055**

- Chanticleer Avenue
- Buena Vista Landfill

**SLV Redemption/Recycling Centers. . . . . 831-335-1728**

(Operated by the Valley Women's Club)

- Felton
- Boulder Creek
- Ben Lomond Transfer Station