Living Green

Protecting our community's health and the environment by providing solid waste and sewer collection services

Costa Mesa Sanitary District
(949) 645-8400
www.cmsdca.gov

Summer 2016
Quarterly Newsletter

Where are your organics going?

Last year, the District kicked off a new curbside program. Instead of having one or two carts for all mixed waste, including organics, recyclables, and trash, residents received an additional cart for organics only. The organics cart with the bright green lid is for lawn and garden trimmings, food scraps, FOG (fats, oils, and grease), and pet waste. Recyclables and trash continue to be accepted in the mixed waste carts.

Contaminants are removed from the organics at a transfer station in Stanton. While the new Anaerobic Digestion (AD) facility was under construction in Perris, the District's organics went to a composting facility in Victorville. CR&R's AD facility opened in June of 2016 and began accepting its first organic material. Once the facility wraps up preliminary testing, it will become fully operational and accept all of the District's organic waste for conversion into fertilizer and renewable natural gas to fuel CR&R's collection vehicle fleet.

Recyclables and trash from the mixed waste cart are sorted at CR&R's Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Stanton. The recyclables are separated from trash using a combination of manual and mechanical sorting. The trash goes to a landfill, and recyclables, including aluminum, steel, glass, plastic, paper, and cardboard, are shipped to end users to become new products.

Before the organics recycling program began, the District was recycling 57% of all materials collected. By separating and processing organics, CMSD plans to achieve the state-mandated solid waste diversion rate of 75% by the year 2020.

Learn more about the District's organics recycling program at www.cmsdca.gov/organics.

CMSD residents now have organics carts for yard and food scraps and mixed waste carts for trash and recyclables.

(Top Right) Food scraps and yard trimmings will be turned into fertilizer and renewable natural gas inside this facility, allowing nutrients, energy, and emissions to be recovered.

CR&R's new Anaerobic Digestion facility in Perris is highly automated.

Keep odor in check!

During the hot summer months, it can be a challenge to keep trash and organics carts from giving off unpleasant odors. You can take steps to eliminate and control these odors. Here are some helpful tips:

1. Store your carts in a cool, shaded area to avoid the sun's heat. Place carts at the curb early in the morning on your trash collection day so that waste does not sit in the hot sun for long periods of time.
2. Use compostable bags to contain food and yard waste in your organics cart. Compostable bags can be purchased at the following local and online stores:
   - Mother's Market: 1890 Newport Blvd., Costa Mesa
   - Sprouts: 225 E. 17th St., Costa Mesa
   - Target: 3030 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa
   - Ralphs: 6300 Irvine Blvd., Newport Beach, and 380 E. 17th St., Costa Mesa
   - Amazon: www.amazon.com
   - Jet: www.jet.com
   - Office Depot: www.officedepot.com

3. Odors often come from bacteria that thrive in damp environments. To avoid excess moisture, drain off any liquids from food waste before placing it into your organics cart. Use a paper towel or piece of newspaper to absorb fats, oils, and grease (FOG), and then place the saturated paper in your organics cart. You can also recycle FOG at the OCC Recycling Center (see page 2 for details).
4. Sprinkle baking soda into your carts (or even into individual trash and compostable bags) to help absorb odors.

A History of Solid Waste Rates

The District's revenues come partially from Solid Waste fees that are placed on the property tax rolls. These fees are charged for residential refuse collection services for single-family residences and small multi-family units. Currently, the District's Solid Waste rate is $216 per year (or $18 per month). As seen on the chart at left, the annual rate was reduced from $239.41 to $228 in Fiscal Year 2012-2013, and then further reduced to its current rate in Fiscal Year 2013-2014. The rate reductions were approved by the District's Board of Directors in order to decrease the reserve balance in the District's Solid Waste Fund.

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Recycle used cooking oil at OCC

Did you know that fats, oils, and grease (FOG) can cause backups and overflows in the sewer system? CMSD's Residential FOG Recycling Program encourages residents to keep FOG out of their drains in order to keep the sewer system healthy and free from clogs.

Residents can place FOG materials in a plastic container (such as a milk jug) and take the container to the Orange Coast College (OCC) Recycling Center. At the Center, you simply pour your FOG into the container provided. The FOG is then transported to a state-approved disposal facility where it is recycled into products, such as soap, candles, and biodiesel. The OCC Recycling Center is located on Adams Avenue between Harbor Boulevard and Fairview Road. For more information about the OCC Recycling Center, visit www.orangecoastcollege.edu/about_occ/Facilities/recycling_center or call (714) 432-5131.

FOG can also be placed in the organics cart (along with yard and food waste) for recycling. In order to avoid messy disposal, use a paper towel or a piece of newspaper to soak up the FOG material from pots, pans, and plates before placing it into the organics cart.

Concerts in the Park

Who doesn't like live music, great food, and beautiful summer nights in Costa Mesa? Join CMSD at this year's Concerts in the Park every Tuesday in July at Fairview Park! These fun and free summer events feature community booths, food trucks, a beer and wine garden, activities for kids, raffles and prizes, and of course, live music! The proceeds from this concert series are reinvested in the Costa Mesa Foundation's Community Grants Program, which funds local youth education and recreation projects, park development and maintenance, public safety projects, and community pride initiatives.

Make sure you stop by CMSD's booth to say hello to our friendly staff and ask questions about the District!

Concerts will take place on July 5, 12, 19, and 26 at 6 p.m. Parking is available in the Goathill Junction Train lot. For more information, visit www.costamesafoundation.org.

Cash for cans (and bottles)

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Three decades ago, our state legislators were debating whether California should become the 10th state to enact a beverage container deposit system. They voted to do so and, in September 1986, the California Beverage Container Recycling & Litter Reduction Act became law. The original deposit was 1¢ for all containers, most of which were soft drink and beer cans. Consumers began paying that fee on September 1, 1987, after which they could collect 1¢ for empty containers. This deposit system came to be known as CRV, or California Redemption Value. During the first full year of the program, 1988, Californians bought over 12.5 billion CRV containers and recycled fewer than half of those.

Today, CRV containers include almost all beverage containers, except milk, infant formula and medical food (like Ensure), wine, spirits (hard liquor), and 100% fruit and vegetable juices in large bottles. The deposit you pay – and the refund you receive – is 5¢ for beverage containers less than 24 ounces and 10¢ for containers 24 ounces and larger. In 2014, the last year for which complete information is available, Californians bought 22.15 billion CRV beverage containers and recycled 17.78 billion of those, a recycling rate of 80.2%. According to the Container Recycling Institute, two of every 11 beverage containers recycled in the U.S. each year are recycled in California.

Bottle and can recycling has a positive – and large – environmental impact. The California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) estimates that our 80.2% bottle and can recycling rate results in reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 458,000 metric tons of carbon equivalents and saves the amount of energy in 5.1 million barrels of oil, enough to power 263,000 households for a year.

The 1986 California Beverage Container Recycling & Litter Reduction Act was an important building block in creating a culture of recycling in California. Today, we recycle more than 65% of all "waste" statewide. Recycling is big business, and our state boasts over 140,000 green jobs. A little deposit on cans and bottles has made a big difference!

Orange Coast College Recycling Center

Location: On Adams Avenue, between Harbor Boulevard and Fairview Road, Costa Mesa

Buy-Back Hours:
Monday–Saturday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Donation-Only Hours:
Sunday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Buy-Back Materials:
California Redemption Value (CRV) beverage containers only – Remove caps from plastic bottles before arriving at the Recycling Center.

Accepted Recyclables for Donation:

- Aluminum cans and tin cans
- Plastic bottles with codes # 1, 2 or 4 on the bottom
- Glass food and beverage containers
- Scrap metal, old appliances
- All kinds of paper, such as office paper, computer printer paper, newspaper, magazines, phone books, books, junk mail, cardboard, shopping bags, etc.
- Reusable clothing
- Electronic waste
- Household batteries
- Fluorescent light tubes (limit of 10 per resident)
- Used cooking oil

For more info:
(714) 432-5131

www.orangecoastcollege.edu/about_occ/Facilities/recycling_center

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Living more with less

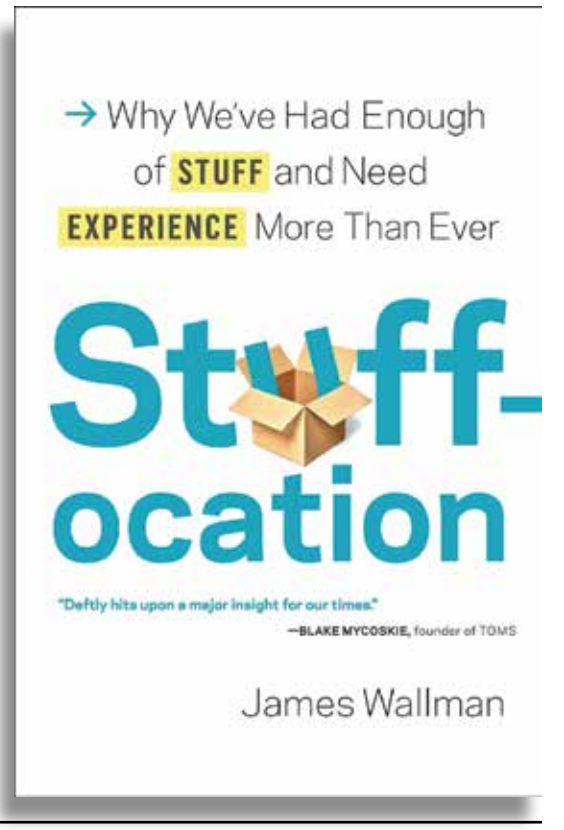
Have you ever looked for something you need, and know you have, but been unable to find it amongst the clutter of all the other things that you own? Are you stressed-out paying down debt incurred to pay for all those things? Did you buy any of those things with the idea that owning them would make you happy? Did you buy them to impress other people? Are you too busy to use those things because you're working long hours at a job so you can pay for them? You may be suffering from a condition author and futurist James Wallman calls "Stuffocation" in his book by that name.

"Instead of thinking of *more* in positive terms, as we once did, we now think *more* means more hassle, more to manage, and more to think about. In our busy, cluttered lives *more* is no longer better. It is worse," writes Wallman. "Overwhelmed, and suffocating from stuff, we are suffering from an anxiety that I call Stuffocation."

In addition to the responsibility of storing, maintaining, organizing, and paying for our possessions, they weigh on us through their simple existence within our space. While tolerance for clutter varies, research cited by Wallman shows that people dissatisfied with the level of clutter in their home exhibited cortisol patterns indicating their bodies were not managing stress very well. Their patterns were consistent with people who have chronic fatigue, post-traumatic stress disorder, and a higher risk of mortality. When elevated to the level of hoarding, too much clutter becomes even more of a health hazard. According to Wallman, hoarding affects between 2% and 6% of the population in developed countries. The homes of hoarders are piled high with objects, making their rescue more difficult and dangerous in the event of fire. Those objects also increase the available fuel, making the fire more intense, longer lasting, and more difficult to extinguish. Over a period of 10 years in Melbourne, Australia, hoarding was a factor in one out of 400 fires. However, it was a factor in one out of four fire-related deaths!

Is there a better alternative? Wallman believes so. He outlines the next big thing in our economy and culture: Experientialism. Instead of focusing on acquiring things, people will focus on enjoying experiences and investing their time and money in them. He points out that experiences are more subject to "positive re-interpretation." Even bad experiences can acquire a positive spin over time as we "look back with rose-colored glasses." He also notes that experiences are more likely to make us happy because they bring us closer to people. By doing something rather than buying something, you are more likely to be engaged with other people. While material purchases can keep people apart, doing something makes people part of a group. Experiences, shared or not, make for better conversation than simply telling people what you've purchased.

The book ranges over a broad territory of disciplines but stays on route to the destination. Its findings are not only entertaining, but they are also useful to those of us who are looking for a way out of the malaise of Stuffocation. Plus, they point the way to individuals who may want to earn a living in the new experiential economy.



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A Roadmap to Reduce Food Waste

In the United States, $218 billion (1.3% of GDP) is spent each year growing, processing, and transporting food that is never eaten. While that 52.4 million tons of food is sent to landfills, another 10.1 million tons is left unharvested on farms or discarded in packinghouses. That is not just 63 million tons of wasted resources; it is also 63 million tons of wasted calories. This occurs each year in a country where one in seven people is food insecure.

If all of our country's wasted food was grown on one farm, it would cover 80 million acres, an area three-quarters the size of California. Growing food on this wasteful farm would consume as much water as is used in California, Texas, and Ohio combined. The farm's output would fill a semi-trailer every 20 seconds. Many of those trailers would travel thousands of miles, distributing food to be kept cold in grocery stores and refrigerators for weeks. Instead of being eaten, however, this food would be loaded onto garbage trucks and hauled to landfills, where it would emit harmful greenhouse gases as it decomposes.

ReFED was formed in 2015 to create a Roadmap to Reduce U.S. Food Waste. It is a collaboration of business, nonprofit, foundation, and government leaders. "A multi-stakeholder approach was needed, so we invited leading food businesses, environmental and hunger organizations, investors, policymakers, and innovators to join the effort," wrote Betsy and Jesse Fink, whose family foundation launched the process. "The economic analysis and research we undertook revealed exciting news: Food waste is a solvable problem."

The Roadmap provides a path toward a 20% reduction of food waste through 27 cost-effective, feasible, and scalable solutions. Within 10 years, these actions could divert 13 million tons from landfills and on-farm losses. Implementation is projected to generate 15,000 new jobs, double recovered food donations to nonprofits (1.8 billion meals per year), reduce fresh water use by up to 1.5% (1.6 trillion gallons per year), and avoid nearly 18 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually. The economic return of these 27 solutions is compelling, as well. An $18 billion investment will yield an expected $100 billion in economic benefits over a decade.

To learn more about the Roadmap, visit www.refed.com.

No toxics in the trash!

Toxic chemicals don't belong in your curbside carts. This includes lawn and garden chemicals, paints and paint thinners, used motor oil and antifreeze, and other cleaners and chemicals used around the house and yard. Remember—everything in your cart gets dumped out and sorted by people working along a conveyor line. Don't endanger the health and safety of trash truck or recycling workers by mixing flammable, caustic, corrosive, or poisonous materials with your trash! Please dispose of all household hazardous waste (HHW) safely!

In Orange County, there are four Household Hazardous Waste Collection Centers (HHWCCs). All Orange County residents can use these facilities at no charge. The nearest HHWCC is located in Huntington Beach at 17121 Nichols Street (use Gate 6). Hours are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday (closed on major holidays and rainy days). Please keep materials in their original, labeled containers. Do not mix chemicals together. There is a limit of 15 gallons or 125 pounds of material per vehicle per visit. This is a drive-thru service, so please remain in your vehicle at the HHWCC. After you are finished, you can stop by the Materials Exchange Program area, where you can pick up partially used containers of household, yard, and car-care products for FREE! For details, visit www.oclandfills.com/hazardous or call (714) 834-6752.

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CMSD sponsors a FREE Door-to-Door HHW Collection program for individuals who may not have the ability to dispose of their hazardous materials at Orange County's HHWCCs. To be eligible for the door-to-door service, residents must be 62 years of age or older or be a person with a certified disability. CR&R, under a contract with CMSD, provides the door-to-door HHW service. To arrange for service, eligible residents must call CR&R Customer Service at (949) 646-4617 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. During the call, CR&R will ask about the types and quantities of HHW, provide information on how to properly store and package the HHW, and set up a collection date. On the designated collection day, eligible residents must place bags or containers at the front of their house by 7 a.m. The resident does not need to be home when the HHW items are picked up.

The Sewer Slayer has a new look

You may have heard about the Sewer Slayer. He is CMSD's very own superhero, who fights the evil villains that lurk in our sewers. Well, he's back with a new and improved look! The District partnered with local business Mesa Art and Framing to update the Sewer Slayer's design and illustrate his mission to protect the environment by fighting Mr. Overflow, the Grease Goblin, and the Root Myzer.

The initial design and concept art for the Sewer Slayer was created by the District's own Steve Cano (Wastewater Maintenance Superintendent), Joel Ortiz (Maintenance Worker III), and Alex Arreola (Maintenance Worker II). The new artwork can be seen on CMSD's pump station on Wilson Street (near Harbor Boulevard), as well as on stickers and coloring sheets that are available at District Headquarters, located at 628 West 19th Street, Costa Mesa. Coloring sheets can also be downloaded on the District's website here: http://cmsdca.gov/index.php/media-news/brochures.

What do I do with plastic bags?

Plastic bags are accepted in the curbside mixed waste carts, but you can also recycle them at local stores. To recycle them at the store, simply remove all items and receipts and then drop empty plastic bags in the bins at one of these locations:

- Albertsons, 2300 C Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa
- Target, 3030 Harbor Blvd., Suite A, Costa Mesa

You can reduce the number of plastic bags you carry home by using your own reusable shopping bags. After you empty them, put them back in your car for your next shopping trip.

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Just a click away

CMSD was the first Independent Special District to provide a customized mobile app to residents. The app, which features easy-to-use widgets, provides residents with convenient access to District information on their smartphones. Using the app, residents can find information on District programs and events. In addition, residents can report issues directly to the District through the GoCMSD app and then track the status of those issues. Issues can be reported anonymously, if preferred.

The free app is available for download at the iTunes App Store or the Google Play Store. Simply search for "Costa Mesa Sanitary District."

Employee Spotlight

In this issue of Living Green*, CMSD is putting the employee spotlight on Dora Salud, Permit Technician. Dora joined our team on July 20, 2015, and has been an incredible asset to the everyday functions of the District ever since. Dora's main responsibilities include issuing and processing sewer permits, calculating and collecting permit fees, scheduling inspections, assisting with annual sewer and trash assessments for the county's tax roll, and communicating District requirements to building contractors, architects, engineers, and the general public.*

Not only does Dora do a great job of helping members of the public with their permitting needs, she also has a wonderful sense of humor and a positive energy that make her a joy to work with. She has eagerly learned the details of many District programs, such as the Sewer Lateral Assistance Program.

Thank you, Dora, and keep up the great work!

CMSD Board of Directors

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We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

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