



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

Winter 2016
Quarterly Newsletter

The District Prepares for El Niño



The generator at the District Yard is raised to keep it up and away from flood waters, allowing it to provide emergency power during all weather conditions.

covers and triggering public health concerns. To prevent inflow, the District will be plugging and sealing nearly 2,000 manhole covers. The District currently has 4,650 manholes district-wide. Manhole covers located near wastewater lift stations, street curbs, and streets that

As cities across California prepare for El Niño, so does the District.

The biggest threat CMSD faces from El Niño is inflow, which is stormwater coming into the sewer system. Too much rainwater entering the sewer system could inundate wastewater treatment facilities at the Orange County Sanitation District in Fountain Valley. When treatment facilities go over capacity, wastewater can back up in the collection system, causing it to spill out of manhole

are susceptible to flooding will be targeted for plugging and sealing.

Another threat the District could face from El Niño is power outages. The District has 20 lift stations that use electricity. In addition, the District has two facilities: District Headquarters at 628 W. 19th Street, which serves as the organization's emergency operations center (EOC), and the District Yard at 174 W. Wilson Street, which serves as the wastewater operations and the alternative EOC. The good news is that for the past several years, the District has been acquiring emergency backup equipment and generators for the buildings and lift stations.

The District has stockpiled sandbags at the District Yard and has acquired additional lengths of hoses and cables for pumping equipment and generators.

The District is a member of the Water Emergency Response Organization of Orange County (WEROC) and the California Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (CalWARN), which provide mutual aid coordination and assistance to agencies in need.



To keep stormwater out of the sewer system, the District will plug and seal nearly 2,000 manhole covers located near wastewater lift stations, street curbs, and streets that are prone to flooding.

Time to tree-cycle!

The Costa Mesa Sanitary District collects Christmas trees for the three weeks following Christmas and recycles them into mulch. This year, trees will be picked up from Monday, December 28, 2015 through January 15, 2016.

Please remove all ornaments, lights, tinsel, and garlands, as well as the stand, before setting the tree at the curb. All trees taller than 6 feet must be cut in half to be eligible for this special collection. Place the bare Christmas tree on the ground next to your collection containers for pickup on your regular trash day. Trees will be picked up by a separate truck.

The tree mulch is used locally and distributed throughout California to help return nutrients to the soil and improve the soil's ability to hold and use water.



Why compostable bags?

In your organics cart, we ask you to put leaves and yard trimmings, food waste, and soiled paper, such as paper towels and napkins. You can put the materials directly into your cart, use kraft paper bags or wrap food scraps in newspaper, or purchase and use compostable bags.

The term "compostable" here is important. Many items, including some plastic bags, will degrade, which means they will fragment or break into smaller pieces. However, normal plastic bags stop there. The pieces may be tiny, but they are still the same plastic resin. Compostable bags are different. Only these bags are designed to break down and then move to the next level to become food and energy sources for the organisms in a compost operation. Compostable bags don't just become tiny pieces of plastic; instead, they become food that microbes will turn into water, nitrogen-rich humus, carbon dioxide, and methane.

Compostable bags must meet several requirements:

- Disintegrate rapidly during the composting process
- Biodegrade quickly under controlled composting conditions, like those at the new CR&R Anaerobic Digestion Facility where District organics are processed
- Supply only useful constituents for the finished compost so that the resulting compost will support plant life
- Not contain non-compostable plastics or heavy metals

Compostable bags can help eliminate odor in your

kitchen pail and curbside organics cart. You will find compostable bags at these locations:

- Mother's Market: 1890 Newport Blvd., Costa Mesa
- Sprouts: 225 E. 17th Street, Costa Mesa, and 3030 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa
- Target: 3030 Harbor Blvd., Costa Mesa
- Ralphs: 6300 Irvine Blvd., Newport Beach, and 380 E. 17th Street, Costa Mesa
- Amazon: www.amazon.com
- Jet: www.jet.com
- Office Depot: www.officedepot.com

When looking for compostable bags, be sure to look for the term "compostable" or the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) compostable logo.



COMPOSTABLE
IN INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES

Check locally, as these do not exist in many communities. Not suitable for backyard composting. CERT # SAMPLE



PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
GREENFIELD, IN
PERMIT NO. 220

Costa Mesa Sanitary District
628 W. 19th Street
Costa Mesa, CA 92627-2716

Lean, green, minimizing machine

“Decluttering.” “Living with less.” “Downsizing.” No matter what you call it, minimalism is a growing trend, causing people to step back and think about what “stuff” they really need in their lives to be happy. It also gives us a chance to think about the first “R,” which is “reduce,” and how reducing can lessen our impact on the earth.

Although minimalism largely focuses on simplifying life, it also considers where all of our stuff comes from and the larger implications of buying the latest thing. Francine Jay, minimalist and author of *The Joy of Less: A Minimalist Living Guide*, asks those considering a minimalist lifestyle to think about their impact on the world. “Every item we buy, from food to books to televisions to cars, uses up some of the earth’s bounty,” she writes.

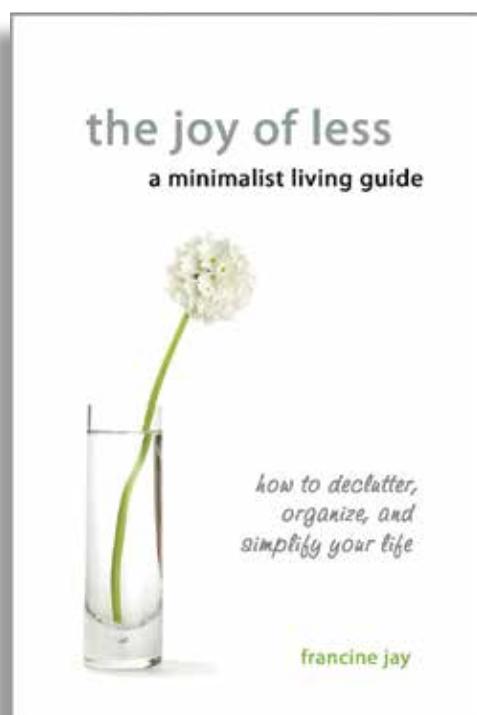
While minimalism looks different to every person, it offers a simple way to take responsibility for your footprint. By reducing your material possessions, you can also reduce the impact you have on Earth’s resources.

One easy first step is to spend money and time on experiences instead of stuff. When choosing to invest in an experience instead of the latest material good, you are often happier and more satisfied with your purchase. Experiences offer memories without the added memento to throw onto your coffee table. They also mean less waste, since we typically come away with very few tangible objects.

Shifting to less shopping in general is a natural second step as you begin to put more money toward experiences and memories. Think about that first “R” again. Reduce what you purchase along with what you own. Keep a donation box in a frequently used room in your house. Every time you come across an item you haven’t used for a while, put it in the donation box. When it’s full, drop off the items at a local charity or donation center.

Educating yourself on the items you do buy also helps curb shopping habits. Before making a purchase, consider the lifespan of that item. How long will it last? Will it be useful or in style in five years? Can it be recycled or reused down the road? If an item doesn’t meet these criteria, move on to a different brand or don’t purchase the item at all.

When you set out to shop, make sure you start with a list of what you need and



stick to it. Try using only cash so you can see the money you’re spending instead of letting it disappear with the swipe of a card. Also consider the one-in/one-out rule, and don’t allow any new purchases into your home without removing something older.

Once you decrease how much you buy, begin to purge material possessions from your home. Set a long-term goal first, then take several small steps that will accomplish your goal. Set aside designated time each week or month to purge one space. Remove everything from that space and only put back what you really need and truly enjoy. Donate, sell, reuse, or recycle the rest. Continue to do this throughout your home. It can take up to a year or two to completely declutter, but as long as you continue working toward your goal, visible progress occurs every month.

With a clean and green home, you’ll have more time to spend with friends and family and on hobbies. Being a minimalist doesn’t mean getting rid of everything you own; it means thinking about where your stuff comes from and just how much of it you really need. When we take the time to reduce our possessions, we reduce the impact we have on our planet and give everyone more room to breathe.

Reminder: Keep Trash Containers Out of Public View

Empty trash containers can create problems. When they are left at the curb, they can block traffic, creating hazards for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. When empty containers are left out, thieves may assume that no one is home. To minimize these risks and create a tidy community, trash containers need to be stowed away out of public view when not in use.

The Costa Mesa Sanitary District ordinance reads as follows:

Section 7.01.080. Removal of Trash Containers.

(a) Residential trash containers placed in the street shall be removed from the curb by midnight the day of trash collection and shall be stored in the rear or side yard of the property so as to be out of view from the street. Trash containers placed in the alley for collection shall be removed from the alley by midnight the day of trash collection and shall be stored so as to be out of the public alley, completely on private property, and out of view from the public street.

(b) A hardship exception or variance may be obtained by any person whose property is uniquely situated to not allow container removal from the public alley or who has a personal hardship not allowing such storage. A hardship waiver form must be completed explaining the reason(s) for a hardship. Such a hardship exception or variance shall be approved in a letter or other memorialization from the General Manager or designee. Such memorialization shall list the reasons and may be limited in time. (Ord. 27, 1997) (Ord. 93, 2012)

If you have questions or require assistance finding an appropriate location to store your trash containers out of public view, please contact the CMSD at (949) 645-8400. If you would like to report trash containers stored in public view, please download the District’s smartphone app by typing in “GoCMSD” at the Google Play Store. GoCMSD is free to download on your smartphone.

Sewer Lateral Assistance Program

Helping homeowners with sewer maintenance costs

The Costa Mesa Sanitary District (CMSD) encourages residents to participate in the District’s Sewer Lateral Assistance Program (SLAP). The SLAP is a financial incentive program that provides monetary compensation to residents for maintaining or repairing their sewer lateral lines. The lateral sewer line runs from the outside of your home to the point of connection with the CMSD sewer line (most commonly in the center of the street). Without regular maintenance, your sewer lateral can become blocked and cause raw sewage to back up into your house and/or the street. The most common cause of

damage to the lateral line is roots.

To encourage homeowners to check their sewer laterals for potential blockages before they become a problem, CMSD will reimburse the homeowner 50% of eligible expenses up to a maximum of \$1,100 per residential parcel.

In order to qualify for reimbursement, homeowners must follow the program guidelines: www.cmsdca.gov/index.php/departments/sewer/sewer-lateral-assistance-program. If you have questions or do not have internet access, please call (949) 645-8400.

Boost workplace recycling

Setting up a recycle-friendly home is easy. Recycling at work can be just as simple if you know what to do!

Offering each employee a desk-side recycling bin with a smaller trash bin can increase office recycling by 20% according to the 2015 “Recycling at Work” study commissioned by Keep America Beautiful. The study, which compared several different methods of workplace recycling, including equal-sized trash and recycling bins and recycling bins only, set out to discover the best practices to increase workplace recycling.

The little trash bins not only helped employees recycle more, but also improved the quality of the recycling by reducing contamination from non-recyclables by 20%. Keeping recyclables out of the trash and trash out of the recycling are key to reducing landfill waste and improving the efficiency of commercial recycling programs.



Improve your workplace recycling program by adopting these habits:

1. Set up recycling bins next to trash cans and in paper-heavy areas. Make sure recycling bins are marked and, if possible, color-coded. Blue is the color most strongly linked to recycling.
2. Purchase recycled-content paper products for the office, such as printer and copier paper, Post-it notes, and file folders.
3. Recycle office paper (make sure you’ve used both sides first!) in the appropriate container. 50% of the offices in the study had paper in their trash cans.
4. Keep paper towels and other soiled paper products out of the recycling bins.
5. Communicate by email. Use electronic organizational systems already built

into most email platforms to keep track of important messages and documents. For tips, search online for “organize email.”

6. Share documents as PDFs or with Dropbox or Google docs. Make comments electronically with “track changes” features.

For free workplace recycling tools and resources, visit <http://recyclingatwork.org>.

Recycling is mandatory for commercial businesses that produce 4 or more cubic yards of waste per week and multi-family complexes of five or more units. To learn more about California’s commercial and multi-family recycling requirements, visit www.calrecycle.ca.gov/recycle/commercial or call your hauler.

Picking Up

So much has been written about the daily lives of police officers and firefighters that many of us feel we have a decent grasp of what those lives entail. There are many devoted fans of television and movie dramas revolving around these two professions. Some of those fans may imagine that, after years of faithful viewing, they possess the requisite skills to solve mysterious crimes or save innocents from peril. It is safe to say that few people toiling away in their office cubicle spend a moment of their time day-dreaming about life as a skilled and courageous garbage collector. With her book, *Picking Up: On the Streets and Behind the Trucks With the Sanitation Workers of New York City*, Robin Nagle hopes to make a dent in the wall of indifference most people feel about sanitation workers and their lives.

Nagle would have us believe that sanitation workers are invisible to most of us. Like offensive linemen in football, you only notice them when they make a mistake or their job is not getting done. Unlike football players, sanitation workers perform their duties among us every day. And, as long as the unwanted trash and recyclables disappear as planned, we only notice them if we are stuck behind a collection vehicle in traffic. Reading this book will reveal a profession peopled with rich characters who work, struggle, and face daily danger with a mix of humor, resolve, and pride.

As a cultural anthropologist, Nagle spent many years studying the history, processes, and individuals of New York City's Department of Sanitation. DSNY employs 9,216 workers to collect waste, sweep streets, and plow snow across the five boroughs of the city. The majority work out of 57 districts, or garages, that are littered evenly across the city to serve a population of 8.2 million residents. Nagle takes a few chapters to summarize nearly 400 years of the city's history as it struggled to handle its waste. The first 40 years (1624-1664), the Dutch employed haphazard efforts to keep livestock penned, dead animals buried, and "tubbs of odour and nastiness" (chamber pots) from being emptied into the streets and canals. Later came the British, who fared little better in dealing with the waste. Sixty years after the first settlers arrived, a tax was levied to pay the salary of a street cleaning supervisor, and 10 years later, in 1694, scavengers were on the city payroll. Despite a professional labor force, it would be another 200 years before



the city experienced streets and alleys regularly cleared of waste, snow, and garbage. Colonel George E. Waring, Jr., a Civil War veteran, took command of the Department of Street Cleaning in 1885 and began to build the systems, procedures, and pride that evolved into today's DSNY.

History is not the best part of the book, however. Through countless hours of interviews, riding along, and pitching in, Nagle discovered many characters that animate the stories in the book. Collecting waste and recycling is hard work and it is quite dangerous. As of 2011, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics calculated it to be the fourth most dangerous profession after fishermen, loggers, and aircraft pilots. In 2008, the fatality rate per 100,000 police officers, firefighters, and trash collectors were 15.7, 6.9, and 35.5, respectively. Nagle tells the tragic story of a 23-year veteran who was killed when a jug of acid illegally hidden in the trash exploded as the blade came down to push trash out of the hopper. Two thousand sanitation workers attended his funeral. Then there is the story of a beloved father of two young children who knew the names of many people along his route. He suffered a far more common fate when he was run over by a driver blinded in the late afternoon sun. In 1986, DSNY hired its first two women into the uniformed workforce. By 2004, it experienced its first female fatality: a 9-year veteran who was cleaning debris from the top of the truck, unknown to her partner, who activated the mechanical arm.

In one chapter, we learn what it means to "mongo," the forbidden practice of searching for treasures in the trash as it is

collected. There are stories of perfectly useful electronics, home furnishings, and clothing being found by the workers. The author herself was present as a worker found a pair of women's Armani pants in unused condition, price tag for \$1,325 still attached. Much of the richness of the narrative comes from time the author spent with DSNY employees. But, even better than observing, she spent a period of time on the payroll.

After years of studying the department, Nagle completed an application. Three months later, she was called to take a written exam, and seven months after that she took the physical test. More than a year after applying, she began training to wear the uniform of DSNY. We then follow the author through the process of acquiring a Commercial Driver's License. There are bureaucratic curmudgeons to slow her progress, iconic instructors to inspire her, and surly partners attempting to get her into trouble. The struggles, pettiness, and politics common to working in any large organization are illuminated with stories from an insider's perspective. The stories are interesting, entertaining, and humorous.

Over 12,000 tons of household trash and recyclables are collected each day in New York City. The streets are cleaned regularly. Under most circumstances, snow is plowed and removed in an unremarkable and routine way. This is due to the efforts of several thousand workers who must work mandatory overtime for as long as necessary to get the city up and running after each storm. This book will provide you with a renewed appreciation for the people who make that happen, both in New York City and in our community.



Are you using our app?

The CMSD is the first Independent Special District to provide a customized mobile app for our residents! In developing the app, our goal was to provide residents with convenient access to District information on their smartphones. The app features easy-to-use widgets. Using the app, residents can find information on District programs and events. In addition, residents can report issues directly to the District through the GOResponse system 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."



Tips for paper recycling

In the Costa Mesa Sanitary District, mixed trash and recyclables are picked up by CR&R and sorted at a processing facility. Improve the recovery rate for paper by following these simple guidelines:

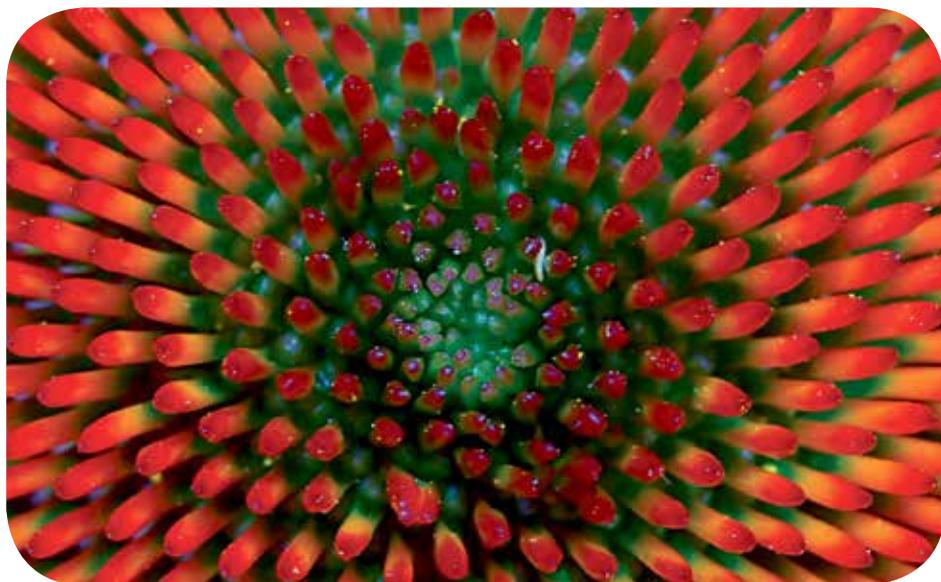
- Place mail, newspapers, magazines, catalogs, old homework papers, printer paper, and similar items into a plastic bag before putting them into your cart. This helps keep paper clean and dry.
- Break down your boxes: cracker, cereal, and other food boxes (remove plastic liners); tissue and other product boxes; gift boxes; and corrugated shipping boxes.

QUOTES REQUESTED

Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you.

Frank Lloyd Wright,
1867-1959

American architect and designer



After you've enjoyed the feast, recycle the grease!

During the holiday season, people do lots of cooking. Please make sure you are disposing of your cooking waste properly. Pouring warm grease and cold oil down your drain causes major clogging of the pipes in your home and in sewers that run under our streets. Please NEVER pour fats, oil, or grease (FOG) down the drain! Instead, follow these simple guidelines to properly dispose of FOG:

- Use a funnel to pour cooled oil into a covered, disposable container. You can drop off fats, oil, and grease for recycling at the Orange Coast College (OCC) Recycling Center, which is located on Adams Avenue between Harbor Boulevard and Fairview Road. The center is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday. FOG recycling is free! For video instructions on preparing your cooking oil for recycling, go to www.cmsdca.gov, select the "Media" tab and then "CMSD YouTube Channel" from the drop-down list, and watch "Used Cooking Oil Recycling."

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- Soak up FOG from pots, pans, and dishes with a paper towel and dispose of the greasy paper towel in your organics cart with your food and yard waste.
- Before you wash dishes, scrape food scraps from your plates and dispose of the plate scrapings in your kitchen pail or directly into your organics cart.
- Use sink strainers to catch any remaining food waste while washing dishes. Empty the strainer into your kitchen pail or organics cart.

To learn more about the effects of FOG or our FOG recycling program, please call the CMSD at (949) 645-8400 or visit our website, www.cmsdca.gov.



Employee Spotlight



Tony Gomez has been employed by the District since July 2014 as the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Technician/Industrial Electrician. Prior to his employment with the District, Tony worked as a Technician Supervisor with Jimni Systems for eight years and served as our first emergency responder for pump station issues. Tony has acquired an extensive knowledge of District pump stations and has become a great asset to the District.

Tony is primarily responsible for maintaining all of the District's pump stations, which includes routine and annual maintenance, exercising emergency equipment, and handling issues with residents.

Congratulations, Tony, and thank you for all of your hard work!

Your toilet and the three P's

Protect our sewers by knowing what should go down the drain!

The toilet is only meant to flush the three P's—pee, poop, and paper. Human waste and toilet paper should be the only things going into the toilet bowl. Unfortunately, some people use the toilet as a trash can. From medications and sanitary products to deceased pet fish and cigarette butts, people flush anything that fits, even when the items do not belong. Plus, people flush products marked as "flushable," such as personal hygiene or baby wipes, which do not dissolve and disperse like toilet paper.

Flushing the wrong types of items down the toilet causes several issues that are not easily fixed or are wasteful:

- You can clog the pipes in your home, creating messy overflows and requiring a plumber's assistance.
- As much as 5 gallons of water are wasted every time you flush non-toilet friendly items.
- Items other than human waste and toilet paper create problems in the Costa Mesa Sanitary District sewer system. For instance, baby wipes and adult moist wipes wrap themselves around pumps,



leading to equipment damage and costly repairs which can affect our ratepayers.

- You put our ocean at risk. Water from our sanitary sewers is treated before being recycled back into our rivers, groundwater basins, and the ocean. The fewer chemicals from medicines and

cleaners you flush, the better our water systems are.

Keep our communities and oceans clean by flushing only the three P's! For more information, please visit www.what2flush.com.

Out with the old

After the holidays, you might be one of the many people moving things around your house, trying to find space for your new stuff and figure out what to do with the old. Remember—if you have usable furniture and appliances that you no longer want or need, consider selling or donating them.

If you have broken items or things no one wants, dispose of them as bulky waste. The Costa Mesa Sanitary District (CMSD) provides residents with convenient curbside collection for large or bulky items. Residents with curbside trash and recycling service are eligible for three (3) free bulky-item pickups per year. Bulky items might include furniture, mattresses, rugs, appliances, and other items that do not fit into your trash containers. There is a limit of 10 items per pickup.

However, collections can be combined for a total of 30 items per calendar year. A list of items must be provided when scheduling the appointment with CR&R, the CMSD contracted hauler. Items that are not on the list will not be picked up. To schedule a pickup, please call CR&R Customer Service at (949) 646-4617.

This program is available to current CR&R customers only. Residents who live at properties which have dumpsters are not eligible for this program. Please ask your



property manager, landlord, or the dumpster company about how to dispose of your bulky trash.

CMSD Board of Directors

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We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

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