

West Valley Recycles!

Winter 2008



AVOID OVERSTUFFING Your Cart

Keep our neighborhoods clean and green by keeping lids fully closed

On windy days, packing peanuts, loose paper and plastic grocery bags may fly out of overstuffed carts to tumble up and down our streets. Lightweight and flyaway materials like packing peanuts or plastic bags should be secured in a bag, tied at the top to prevent litter. During a rainstorm, trash is swept into storm drains—destination: the Bay. Even grass, leaves and yard clippings can clog drains, causing flooding and creating a breeding ground for rodents and insects.

Remember to close garbage, recycling and yard waste cart lids completely. If your trash is a tight squeeze, reduce by recycling more. Don't pile extra trash bags next to your cart. You can order extra garbage pickup stickers, a larger cart or a free recycling guide by calling customer service at (408)283-9250.

Our Plastic Plague

Plastic bags are prolific polluters

Environmental groups estimate that 500 billion to 1 trillion single-use plastic bags are used worldwide every year. Just think: A person's use of a plastic grocery bag can be counted in minutes—as long it takes to get from the store to their home. But a plastic bag can take between 15 and 1,000 years to break down in a landfill. Plastic grocery bags represent almost 60% of Bay Area litter and are a major threat to marine wildlife. In and around our wetlands, the plastic bag is lethal, choking fish, birds, and seals. After an animal is killed by a plastic bag, its body decomposes and the plastic is released back into the environment where it is free to kill again.

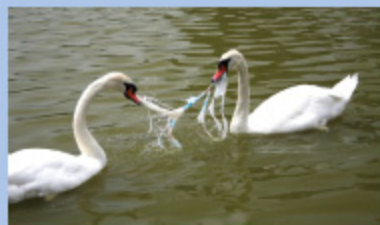
Plastic debris, including foam and bags, comprise 60 percent of litter in the San Francisco Bay area. Even with in-store recycling and curbside recycling programs, we have not been able to reduce litter generation and bag accumulation in local creeks and streams. The reason? Sheer quantity. Couple that with the fact that a bag can be carried away by the slightest breeze eventually making its way to the storm

drain. As a result, local cities may face millions of dollars in required physical improvements to storm water systems to reduce the amount of plastic that accumulates in our streams.

What can YOU do? Carry reusable bags with you when you shop; most stores offer them for a small fee at the checkout counter. If you must use plastic bags, recycle responsibly—be sure all lightweight materials like plastic bags and packing peanuts are contained in another bag and tied, so they don't end up in our streets or traveling the storm water system to our creeks, rivers, bay and ocean.

The latest buzz about bags

Cities in Santa Clara County are being asked to consider enacting a policy to reduce single use bags, both paper and plastic. This policy may include charging a fee for bags, or banning them altogether—whatever it takes to change consumer habits. Plastic bags are a serious detriment to the environment. San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles and Santa Monica have already banned plastic bags at their supermarkets and Palo Alto is currently considering its policy on bags.



Did You Know?

- On average we use each plastic bag for approximately 12 minutes before disposing.
- Plastic bags and foam comprise 60 percent of litter in the San Francisco Bay area.
- About 100,000 marine animals are killed by plastic bags each year worldwide.
- In China, plastic bags blowing around the streets are called "white pollution."
- In South Africa, plastic bags are so prominent that they have been dubbed the "national flower."
- Recently, a plastic bag was found floating in space by NASA!

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BILL PAY THE EASY WAY

West Valley Collection & Recycling has made it easier than ever to pay your bill. Choose the method that works best for you.

Mail it. Make your check payable to West Valley Collection & Recycling. Be sure to include the payment stub to get credit for your payment right away. Use the pre-addressed envelope included with your bill.

Drop it off. We accept payments at our office Monday through Friday from 8 AM – 4:30 PM

Deliver checks to:
West Valley
Collection & Recycling
1333 Oakland Road,
San Jose, CA 95112

Pay / View Your Bill Online. Visit our new online payment system at www.wastecoconnections.com; click on "Online Bill-Pay" and follow a few simple instructions. You must have your current invoice and credit card or debit card information available.

Home banking customers continue to use the remit address:

West Valley
Collection & Recycling
PO BOX 60248
Los Angeles CA 90060-0248

You must have your current invoice available.

Have questions about your recycling service?



Ask Randy

Q: Do I really need to bag light loose items before placing them in my cart?

A: I can't stress how important it is to bag those loose items to prevent them from littering the streets, clogging the storm drains and harming wildlife. Always bag your loose, lightweight material before placing it in the cart—especially items that easily scatter on their way from cart to truck—plastic bags, papers and packing peanuts.

Kick the Littering Habit

Each year 5 trillion cigarettes are manufactured, inhaled and quite often tossed underfoot without a thought. Cigarette butts easily slip through the storm drains and end up in our creeks, rivers and oceans. Cigarette butts contain carcinogens and other chemicals that contaminate the water and are dangerous and deadly to fish and animals living in the area. The introduction of the filter cigarette has made the problem even worse. Filters are made of cellulose acetate, a plastic that can take a decade to decompose. And although they reduce the harmful tars and nicotine that humans inhale, when littered, they are served straight to our wildlife, especially those that live in and around water. What's the answer? Nicotine gum? The patch? Sometimes that's easier said than done.

If you can't kick the habit, at least get into this one: always use an ashtray or trashcan for your butts. Carry a portable ashtray—an empty metal mint container works great. If you are caught without an ashtray, slip the cigarette between the cellophane and your cigarette box.



THE LITTER PROJECT

What would happen if 100,000 people picked up one piece of litter everyday?

This question, posed by The Litter Project is a simple experiment in participation and environmentalism.

The litter project challenges YOU to get involved. Check it out at: www.litterproject.com

IMPORTANT TO NOTE:



1333 Oakland Road
San Jose CA 95112-9894
(408) 283-9250

www.westvalleyrecycles.com
customerservice@westvalleyrecycles.com

How To Eliminate Litter

Remember to place all loose light items such as shredded paper, plastic grocery bags, styrofoam packing peanuts and any other items in a tied plastic bag before placing in your cart.

Clean Yard Trimmings

Keep your yard trimmings "Green" and your recyclables clean by keeping all garbage out of your yard trimmings and recycling cart. Garbage contaminates recyclable materials.