



"Reduce – Reuse – Recycle"

Jenny Mitchell
Recycling Coordinator
Salinas Valley Recycles

Special Wastes Need Special Care for Disposal

Most of us have some kind of hazardous products around our home. If the package has words like *caution, warning, flammable, danger, toxic, poison* or *hazard* printed on it, then it's probably household hazardous waste (HHW). Things like paint, solvents, cleaning products, pesticides, pool chemicals and fertilizers are HHW, and so are medical sharps and syringes. If they could harm you on contact, they could harm the people who collect your garbage, and harm our water and land. It's important that they are handled with care, used according to the labels, and disposed of at a special facility.

Some products are less obvious, like household batteries, fluorescent light bulbs, and electronics, which have chemicals and metals in their components that are hazardous to the environment. Fluorescent bulbs are excellent energy savers, but they contain mercury, so extra care should be used so bulbs don't break. Household batteries are even a potential fire hazard. While common household electronics are safe to use (except maybe the Samsung Galaxy Note7!), they have heavy metals in their components that pose serious environmental health risks. Never put HHW into the trash or recycling bins; not only is it dangerous, it's against the law to throw away HHW in the trash with fines starting at \$5,000.

The good news is it's free to recycle all of these items through Salinas Valley Recycles programs. The full service Household Hazardous Waste collection facility at Sun Street in Salinas takes all kinds of HHW from residents for free disposal. And all three of the Salinas Valley Recycles facilities offer free drop off for electronics, batteries, antifreeze, motor oil and filters, and latex paint.

For certain items like medical sharps, pharmaceuticals, motor oil/filters, paint, fluorescent bulbs and batteries, there are free take-back programs with retailers who sell these products new, so safe disposal can be as easy as taking in the old when you get the new. Some curbside collection programs allow you to recycle household batteries and used motor oil curbside, and even offer pick up of bulky electronics like TVs, so check with your garbage collector for information.

Now, Salinas Valley Recycles also offers mobile collection service for a limited list of special wastes. This service is offered free to homebound residents with disabilities and seniors (65+). For electronics, fluorescent bulbs, batteries, antifreeze, motor oil & filters, latex paint, and medical sharps in approved containers, we come to you! Coming soon, Salinas Valley Recycles will also offer mobile collection points where residents can drop off those items at more convenient locations in Salinas Valley areas where we do not have facilities.

For more information about safe disposal of special wastes visit www.SalinasValleyRecycles.org.

