



SF Environment

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State adds electronics, batteries, fluorescent bulbs and more to list of hazardous items banned from garbage

San Francisco—Several common, everyday toxic household products will be banned from the trash beginning February 8th. Under a statewide law, it will be illegal to toss in the garbage household batteries, fluorescent bulbs or tubes, thermostats, any items that contain mercury, electronic devices including VCRs, microwaves, cellular phones, cordless phones, printers, and radios. Residents and small businesses will need to take items to local drop-off facilities or have them collected from home or business by special haulers.

“Most of us aren’t even aware that these common household products can pollute our waterways, our air, and hurt our health,” explains Jared Blumenfeld, director of the Department of the Environment. “For the past number of years, we have worked with the community to create the infrastructure to collect some these toxic items and we are going to need the cooperation and participation from the public to help us get these materials into their rightful place for proper recycling.”

The City has made a concerted effort to partner with local businesses and non-profits to provide free drop-off sites for certain products. Items ranging from small household batteries to bulky electronic devices such as computers, stereos, and cellular phones can be taken various neighborhood facilities, retailers, and organizations throughout the City. All Walgreens in San Francisco as well as retailers including Waldeck’s Office Supply take household batteries. Several local hardware stores including Brownie’s, Cliff’s and Coles take fluorescent lights. Goodwill stores takes computers and their components. A variety of hazardous materials are accepted at the public Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility, operated by San Francisco Recycling and Disposal.

San Francisco pays an estimated \$5 million each year to manage the new stream of waste banned from garbage cans. Local governments will also have to pay to handle any products the state adds to the list in the future.

“Right now ratepayers and taxpayers are underwriting the cost of hazardous waste collection programs, which essentially subsidizes the manufacture of waste” observed Blumenfeld. “Manufacturers know that no matter what they produce—and no matter how toxic the ingredients—local governments will foot the bill for recycling or disposal. We need to hold these manufacturers responsible for the toxic products they produce, and embrace the simple notion that the people who create toxic products should pay for their disposal.”

For a list of drop-off sites by product, visit SF Environment’s [webpage](#) or call SF Environment at (415) 355-3700. To find out what items are accepted at the Household Hazardous Waste Facility, call (415) 330-1405. Most hazardous waste products that are collected are recycled. ■