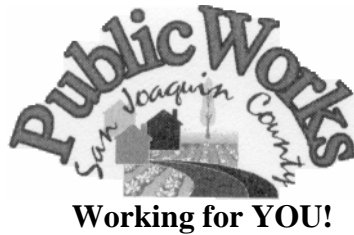




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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 7, 2006

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NO MORE BATTERIES, ELECTRONICS IN TRASH

On February 9 2006, California households and small businesses will be prohibited from disposing most consumer electronic products (computers, cell phones, all household batteries, fluorescent lamps, mercury thermostats, printers, VCRs, telephones, answering machines, radios, and microwaves) known as *universal waste* in their trash.

Universal wastes contain harmful chemicals, which, if put in the trash may harm people or the environment. The term *universal waste* is used to describe these products because they are found in nearly every home and business.

The following universal waste items may no longer be legally disposed of in the trash:

- All household batteries (including rechargeable) such as silver button batteries, AA, AAA, C and D cells.
- Mercury thermometers and mercury gauges which are often found in barometers, manometers and blood-pressure monitors.
- Thermostats, electrical switches and relays found in appliances.
- Aerosol cans that are not empty.
- Fluorescent light tubes and bulbs, high intensity discharge lamps, sodium vapor lamps;
- Electronics such as televisions, computer monitors, computers, printers, VCRs, cell phones, telephones, radios and microwave ovens.
- Novelty items such as greeting cards that play music when opened and most sneakers with flashing lights in their soles.

San Joaquin County-owned landfills and Transfer facilities will **continue to accept small quantities of the listed universal waste at no additional charge beyond established minimum fees to residents or conditionally exempt small businesses.** However, these items must: 1) be declared at the scale house, 2) be separated from the regular refuse, and 3) may not exceed ten (10) in number. Televisions and computer monitors (CRTs) will continue to be accepted with a \$15.50 special handling fee.

Appliance Recycling - A new law controlling the recycling of discarded major appliances became effective January 1, 2006. Major appliances are machines in homes or businesses – a washer, dryer; air conditioner* or dehumidifier; refrigerator* or freezer*; oven stove or microwave; water and space heaters; trash compactor and furnace or boiler. These appliances contain materials that require special handling once they are removed from the appliance.

The County has elected to **accept most of the appliances listed above at our Solid Waste facilities, at no additional charge beyond established minimum fees to residents or conditionally exempt small businesses.** However, no more than three of each type of appliance will be accepted per load. There will continue to be a \$12.50 fee for appliances containing Freon, items noted with an asterisk in the above list of appliances.

In San Joaquin County there are a number of recycling resources available for residents and small businesses. The Lovelace Transfer Station, North County Materials Recovery Facility, and Foothill Landfill will accept small quantities of banned Universal Waste and Appliances if declared and separated from the regular trash. Residents may bring Universal Waste with the exception of televisions and computers, to the Household Hazardous Waste Facility on R.A. Bridgeford Street located at the Stockton Metropolitan Airport. The County's Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator (CESQG) program features a unique low cost service for San Joaquin County businesses that generate less than 27 gallons or 220 pounds of hazardous waste per month. To make an appointment for this service, call 1-877-747-9699.

Disposal of Appliances and Universal Waste at any unauthorized disposal site such as roadsides or ditches is illegal and a serious crime, punishable by fines up to \$5,000 in San Joaquin County, as well as presenting a serious environmental threat.

For specific information on managing household or small business universal waste, please go to www.dtsc.ca.gov . For information on stormwater regulations/practices, call your local Stormwater Management Program. To manage large quantities of appliances and universal waste contact the Environmental Health Department at (209) 468-3420.