



## City of Davis Public Works Department

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Environmental column

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### GOT PLASTIC?

#### NEW RIGID PLASTIC RECYCLING DROP-OFF AT DAVIS WASTE REMOVAL

Finally we have a way to recycle plastics #3, #5, #6, and #7 here in Davis!!!

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, Davis Waste Removal launched a new drop-off recycling program that will allow Davis residents to drop off rigid plastics #3, #5, #6, and #7 for free recycling at their location, 2727 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

Davis Waste Removal will continue to accept only plastics #1 and #2 in their curbside and commercial recycling carts, but the new drop-boxes at the DWR Recycling Center gives Davis residents a chance to recycle more material than ever before.

Rigid plastics that will be accepted for drop-off include any plastic container with #3, #5, #6, or #7 recycling symbol on them. This includes plastic toys, laundry baskets, buckets, flower pots, garbage cans, children's outdoor plastic toys (sandboxes, slides, play kitchens), PVC pipe, plastic outdoor furniture, and other household items. Plastic buckets and other large rigid plastics with a #1 or #2 symbol are also accepted. What are rigid plastics? A RIGID PLASTIC is any plastic that is stiff, as opposed to FILM PLASTICS, such as plastic bags, film and wrap.

While plastics #3, 5, 6, and 7 can be recycled in the drop-box at DWR, plastics #4 are not accepted because there are no local recyclers that will take the material for recycling. DWR is now able to accept plastics #3, 5, 6, 7 for recycling because the recycling buyers have recently created a new category of plastics—'rigid plastic containers' that they will accept. The specification of this new category of plastic does not include plastic #4.

How can you tell what type of plastic container you have? On the bottom of most plastic products you will see the chasing arrows with a number inside or just underneath it. This number is what tells you what kind of plastic the product is made from.

OK, so why is it that we still can't place plastics #3, 5, 6, and 7 in our recycling carts?

First of all, the plastics that can go into DWR's recycling cart, plastics #1 and #2 (water bottles, milk jugs, detergent bottles etc.) make up the majority of the recyclable plastic containers that you will come across. Therefore, Davis Waste Removal (DWR) is already collecting the majority of recyclable plastics that are commonly used.

Another reason for not opening up this program to include recycling carts is that most of the rigid plastics that are being accepted for drop-off in the new rigid plastics drop-box would not fit in the recycling carts. There is just no way that a plastic lawn chair will fit into a recycling cart. A super-enthusiastic recycler that breaks up a plastic lawn chair to fit into the DWR recycling cart will find that 1) after the chair is placed in the cart, there will be no more room for all other recyclables and 2) the broken plastic chair may clog the cart, so the cart will not empty when it's picked up. Neither scenario is ideal. The new drop-box is the best way to recycle rigid plastics.

The astute recycler will have one further question—why can't small plastic containers #3, #5, #6, and #7 go into recycling carts? Well, while small containers *could* fit into the recycling carts, one further problem remains: all recyclables (paper, glass, cans, bottles etc.) that are collected in the recycling carts are hand sorted by DWR. For the time being, DWR does not have the capacity to add any more sorting stations to their sorting line. Therefore, they cannot accept new materials for recycling because they have no room for them to be sorted at their recycling center. A retrofit to make collection of plastics #3-#7 may require a major renovation of the current system, which could hike disposal rates. The material in the rigid plastic drop-box does not require hand sorting—it's baled as is and taken for recycling.

If you have questions about what material you can place in the new rigid plastic drop-off bin, feel free to call Davis Waste Removal at 756-4646. For a detailed list of items accepted in the new recycling program, check out [www.davisrecycling.org](http://www.davisrecycling.org).

#### FREE HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DROP-OFF EVENT

Don't miss this month's free household hazardous waste drop-off events today and tomorrow, May 11 and 12 from 9:00am to 2:00pm at the Yolo County Central Landfill! Bring in your paints, pesticides, fluorescent light bulbs, poisons and more for FREE and safe disposal. Mark your calendar for the household hazardous waste drop-off dates next month, June 13 and 14 from 9:00am to 2:00pm.

A reminder about curbside pick-up of garbage and recycling:

- If you have a portable basketball hoop in the street, please DO NOT place your trash or recycling cart underneath it. It is difficult for DWR trucks to empty your carts when they are placed underneath.
- Help us keep Davis clean and please place all trash and recyclables into the appropriate receptacle instead of on the ground. Got Litter? Can it.

For more information, visit [www.davisrecycling.org](http://www.davisrecycling.org) or email me at [PWweb@cityofdavis.org](mailto:PWweb@cityofdavis.org)