



## City of Davis Public Works Department

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Environmental Column

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By Jennifer Gilbert, Conservation Coordinator

### DISPOSE OF YOUR EXPIRED MEDICINES AND SHARPS AT A HHW FACILITY

Have you checked your bathroom cabinet, found several expired medicines and had no clue how to get rid of them properly?

We are very fortunate that here in Yolo County, we have a free and convenient way to dispose of expired medicines—at the monthly household hazardous waste (HHW) drop-off events at the Yolo County Central Landfill. This month's drop-off dates are today and tomorrow, from 9 am-2pm. If you can't make it to this month's event, be sure to mark your calendar for the HHW drop-off dates next month, June 13 and 14.

Please note that controlled pharmaceuticals, such as morphine, cannot be accepted at these events. These substances can only be handled by law enforcement.

While you are gathering up expired medicines to take to the HHW event, you might want to take inventory of all the other hazardous waste in your home.

If you have replaced your incandescent light bulbs with energy efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs (aka CFLs), please be aware that both CFLs and fluorescent tubes are hazardous waste and cannot be thrown away in the trash. They contain mercury gas that is released in the air if they break. Yolo County residents can bring burned out CFLs and fluorescent tubes to a HHW event for free and safe disposal.

Other common household items that are accepted at the monthly HHW events include household cleaners, mercury thermometers, mercury thermostats, pesticides, fertilizers, pool



These items above are all hazardous waste and can be brought to the Yolo County Central Landfill during a HHW Drop-Off Day.

chemicals, automotive fluids, cooking oils, fire extinguishers, kerosene and other flammables and poisons.

Since the weather is warming up, many people have been camping and barbequing. Empty propane cylinders, even those small camping propane cylinders, should NOT be thrown in the trash. Please bring all empty propane cylinders to the HHW drop-off events.

Starting September 1, a new state law will come into effect, making it illegal to throw any home-generated sharps in the trash. The new law requires syringes, needles and lancets (collectively known as sharps) to be placed in a certified sharps collection container and be disposed of at a hazardous waste facility. If you have any sharps that you need to dispose of, there are several options for you. First, contact your doctor or pharmacist and ask if they will accept your used sharps for proper disposal. You can also purchase mail-back sharps containers at some pharmacies, so you can collect your used sharps and ship them to a hazardous waste facility once filled. One easy way to do this is by removing the needle using a needle clipping & storage device, which removes syringe and pen needles safely and easily by clipping off the needle and retaining within the clipper. After the needle has been removed with the clip device, it is OK to throw the rest of the syringe into the trash. When the clip device is full (it can hold up to 1,500 needles, so it will last a long time) it must be placed in a certified sharps container for proper disposal. Caution—Do NOT attempt to clip off needle tips without a clip device—the needle may snap and fall out of sight where it can be a hazard.

The third option for disposal is to bring your sharps to the monthly HHW events at the landfill. Up until September, sharps will be accepted at the HHW events in any puncture proof container. However, after the new law goes into effect, only sharps in certified sharps collection containers will be accepted at the HHW events.

There are many places in Davis where you can bring your stuff for reuse. Check out the City of Davis **Recyclopedia** online at [www.davisrecycling.org](http://www.davisrecycling.org) for places to reuse and recycle everything from refrigerators, clothing, home décor and furniture. Please help keep our city clean and NEVER place your unwanted furniture on the sidewalk or in the street.

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