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GOT PLASTIC? NEW RIGID PLASTIC RECYCLING DROP-OFF AT DAVIS WASTE REMOVAL

Davis Waste Removal has 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 on 2727 2nd Street.

“This is the biggest development in recycling here in Davis since empty paint and aerosol cans were first accepted for recycling back in 1998,” said Richard Tsai, Senior Utility Resource Specialist for the city of Davis, “this is very exciting.”

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. All plastic containers with a #3, #5, #6 or #7 recycling symbol, as well as items such as plastic outdoor furniture, buckets, and flower pots (even those with a #1 or #2 symbol) will be accepted for free drop-off.

A RIGID PLASTIC is any plastic that is stiff, as opposed to FILM PLASTICS, such as plastic bags, film and wrap.



Longtime Davis resident Nancy Mckee recycles rigid plastics at the new bin at Davis Waste Removal 2727 2nd Street.

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. “The reason that DWR is now able to accept these new plastics for recycling is that the recycling buyers have created a new category of plastics—‘rigid plastic containers’ that they will accept,” said Jennifer Franceschine, the city of Davis’ Conservation Coordinator. “The specification of this new category of plastic does not include plastic #4.

How can you tell what type of plastic container you have? “Just take a look at the bottom of the container,” says Franceschine. “On the bottom of most plastic products you will see a recycling symbol—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.”

While these rigid plastics can be recycled at DWR, they cannot be placed in the recycling cart.

“The plastics that can go into DWR’s recycling carts,” explains Franceschine, “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.”

What types of items are accepted for free drop-off?

- any plastic container with a #3, #5, #6 or #7 recycling symbol
- plastic toys
- laundry baskets
- plastic crates
- plastic buckets
- plastic flower pots
- plastic nursery trays
- plastic garbage cans
- children’s outdoor plastic toys (sandboxes, slides, play kitchens)
- CD cases
- plastic medicine bottles
- some disposable plastic utensils
- large reusable water bottles
- clean PVC pipe (no dirt)
- plastic ice chests
- plastic furniture
- and other household items

Another reason for not opening up this program to allow these rigid plastics in the 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 into the recycling carts—there is just no way that a plastic lawn chair will fit into a recycling cart.

Small plastic #3, #5, #6 and #7 containers *could* fit into the recycling carts, but 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,” said Franceschine. “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 may hike disposal rates.

The material in the rigid plastic drop-box does not require hand sorting—they are baled as is and taken for recycling. This will not require any major overhaul of the current recycling/ sorting system that is in place.

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 more information about recycling and waste reduction in Davis, see www.davisrecycling.org or email your questions to pweb@cityofdavis.org.