



HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER 2017

We do not operate on Christmas or New Year's Day. Since both holidays fall on Mondays this year, our service will begin on Tuesday and operate one day later through Saturday those weeks. Please put your cans out one day later than usual. Normal service will resume the following week.

CHRISTMAS TREE PICK UP

Yes, we will pick up your Christmas trees (5ft or smaller) along with your yard and food waste. Please put your trees on the curb on any regular green can day, beginning January 8, 2018, the week after New Year's.

- Remove all ornaments, tinsel and metal stands
- Wooden stands are okay to leave attached
- Trees over five feet must be cut for easier handling (each section less than five feet)
- Plastic trees can not be recycled, they must go in the trash
- Flocked trees are NOT accepted for composting

REUSE FIRST, THEN RECYCLE

We encourage you to reuse as much gift wrap and packaging as possible. If you can't reuse it, recycle it. Please note that the following items are not accepted and should be put in your trash:

- Metallic or plastic-coated wrapping paper
- Bows and ribbons
- Plastic "blister" packaging
- Styrofoam blocks or peanuts

DON'T TRASH YOUR FOOD WASTE

Every holiday season we see a big increase in food waste from all those holiday parties and family dinners. It's important to remember that much of that food waste can go into your green compost cart to be diverted from the landfill and turned into valuable compost.

Learn more about our [Food Waste Composting Service here](#).

TIPPING YOUR COLLECTOR

If you would like to tip your garbage, recycling and compost can collectors during the holidays please do not leave a gift out on the street where it can be the target of thieves.

Instead, please hand your gift directly to the collectors; they'll appreciate meeting you! You may also send your check, cash, or package to our office. Please include your service address so we can make sure your collectors receive your thoughtful gift. If sending a check, do not make it out to us, instead, call us at 415-457-9760 ext. 25 and we'll provide you with the names of your collectors.

PLEASE SEND YOUR GIFTS TO:

Mill Valley Refuse Service
Attn: Holiday Gift
112 Front St.
San Rafael, CA 94901

BIG CHANGES IN THE RECYCLING INDUSTRY

For decades, much of the recyclable scraps and waste produced in the U.S. (paper, plastic, etc.) hasn't actually been recycled in the U.S., it has been sold to China for processing. China is currently the major market for waste paper and plastics. In fact, scrap paper and plastics are the 6th largest export from the U.S. to China. It's a \$5 billion business.

Why not keep this scrap here in the U.S. for recycling? This exchange boils down purely to economics.

The U.S. runs a massive trade deficit with China, so the container ships that regularly arrive in the U.S. from China are full, while the returning containers are not. Seizing on this opportunity, the scrap recycling industry in the U.S. has been able to cheaply load up these containers with recyclables (especially lower grade plastic Nos. 3-7) which they then sell to Chinese recycling facilities.

Bottom line: it's been significantly cheaper to ship scrap from the U.S. to China than to send it by rail across the U.S. Coupled with the fact that breaking down and re-using plastics has not yet become an economically feasible option for most U.S. manufacturers, and you've got a real environmental problem.

And unfortunately, things have gotten even more complicated.

China is beginning to take serious regulatory actions about "contamination" and what kind of scrap material they are willing to accept. This is creating huge market uncertainties and a crippling increase in the level of risk recycling processors face when shipping bales of materials to China.

In a nutshell, typical bales of processed recycled materials contain 5%-10% trash. This amount of trash slipped through the sorting equipment and pick lines used to remove trash and sort mixed recyclables in each load of single-stream material. Up until now, that 5%-10% residual trash has been accepted by Chinese processors.

But, residual trash has created an environmental nightmare in China, and in response, the Chinese government decreed that residual levels must now drop to less than 2%. The risk to American processors now is that if sample bales being inspected upon delivery to a Chinese port reveal too much residual waste, the entire shipment can be rejected, and the American processor must take back the loads.

In years past, MVRS has received payment for the tons of recycling we have picked up in our jurisdictions, and the income we received offset costs and helped to keep rates lower than they otherwise would have been.

With the changes in the market, and new restrictions in place, we are forced to re-examine how we collect recyclables. Currently, we are using a "single-stream" model, meaning you place all your recyclables in a single can which we pick up and deliver to Redwood Sanitary Landfill where it is loaded onto semi-trucks and transferred to a processing facility in Benicia. There the material is sorted and baled for shipment to China. Unfortunately, this single-stream model results in a relatively high degree of contaminant and we are concerned that this will cause problems in our ability to secure processing at a reasonable rate for our customers.

What does this mean for our customers?

We are exploring every option to determine what course of action we can take to meet both the recycling needs of our community, and the increased requirements of our processors. We are meeting with city governments to discuss and will have an update for our customers as soon as we have a solution.

Read more about China's Recycling Mandates online:

[China to U.S.: Please stop sending us your junk - cnn.com](#)

[Pushing Back on China's Recycling Mandates - waste360.com](#)

[China Bans Foreign Waste--but What Will Happen to the World's Recycling? - Scientific American](#)