

A Greener El Cerrito

COMMERCIAL EDITION

News from the City of El Cerrito Operations + Environmental Services Division

November 2018 | Volume 5

www.ecenvironment.org | 510-215-4350

Happy Holidays

from the El Cerrito Recycling + Environmental Resource Center! Here are some friendly reminders about our upcoming holiday hours: The Recycling Center will be closed on December 24, 25, 31 (beginning at noon), and January 1. Curbside collection will not occur on December 25 and January 1. It will instead occur one day later that week.



Recycling Center Winter Drop-off

Hours November 1 through February 1

Monday - Friday:
8:00am to 4:45pm

Saturday - Sunday:
9:00am to 4:45pm

El Cerrito Recycling + Environmental Resource Center

7501 Schmidt Lane
El Cerrito, CA 94530
green@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

State Mandated Organics Recycling

Thank you to those businesses and apartment buildings that are participating in our curbside organics program. By January 1, 2019, commercial accounts that generate 4 cubic yards or more of solid waste per week need to have an organic waste recycling program to comply with state legislation AB1826. Apartment complexes can comply by ensuring all landscape waste is composted. Other businesses can comply by arranging to have an organics recycling program either through East Bay Sanitary, the City's solid and organics waste hauler, or another provider.

Organics Recycling Made Easy

In short, organics and food waste are compostable and should be thrown in the green waste

cart. Organics can be collected indoors then transferred to the curbside cart for pick-up by East Bay Sanitary Company.

Organics include:

- All food
- All food soiled paper (e.g. napkins, paper plates, pizza boxes, etc.)
- All plant debris

To avoid contaminating compost with plastics, don't put plastic bags in the green waste bin. Instead, you can use a BPI approved ASTM 6400 compostable bag (EcoSafe) as a liner for your organic waste bin.



If your business provides takeout containers and utensils:

- Biodegradable and compostable plastic cups, plates, bowls, and utensils are not allowed in the organics program.
- Paper and fiber-based products for takeout can be composted.
- Consider also providing a discount to customers that bring their own container from home for takeout.

To set up your curbside organics program, please contact East Bay Sanitary at (510) 237-4321. If you would like a sample BPI approved bag, have questions or need assistance, please contact the City's Waste Prevention Specialist, Laureteen Brazil, at (510) 559-7686 or by email at lbrazil@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

Get EV Chargers with MCE

MCE Clean Energy is offering generous rebates to help customers install electric car charging stations at workplaces or multi-family properties. MCE's rebates cover both large and small charging stations (from 2 to 20+ charging ports). Find out more to see if this program is right for your multi-family property, retail parking lot, or workplace. Cars can also be charged



with 100% renewable energy through MCE's Deep Green option. For more information or to sign up, visit: mcecleanenergy.org/ev-charging or contact City staff at (510) 525-7622.

Proper Thermostat Disposal

Are you ready to upgrade the thermostat in your business or home? When upgrading your thermostat, it is important to consider how to properly dispose of the old one. Many old thermostats contain mercury, an element that has been commonly used in the last century. Mercury, however, is very toxic and harmful to



our health and the environment. Some thermostats even contain more than 1,000 times the amount of Mercury that is found in a single Compact

Fluorescent Lamp (CFL) bulb. Because of this, thermostats are considered a Household Hazardous Waste and must be properly collected and disposed—it is illegal to just throw them away.

Businesses can drop off thermostats at the household hazardous waste site in Richmond, open Wednesday-Saturday. The facility is open between 9am and 4pm, and closed for lunch 12pm-12:30pm. To learn more about the proper disposal of thermostats, visit thermostat-recycle.org or call the El Cerrito Recycling Center at (510) 215-4350.

Living Lightly: Getting 100% Renewable Energy with MCE

The City of El Cerrito created a Living Lightly team to encourage our residents and businesses to opt-up to Deep Green 100% renewable energy through our local electricity provider, MCE Clean Energy.



MCE's Deep Green costs about 1 cent more per kilowatt hour than their standard rates and it's easy to sign up using their online form.

For more information or to sign up, visit mcecleanenergy.org/livinglightly, or contact City staff at (510) 525-7622.

Problems with Bio-Plastics

Increasingly, restaurants and businesses are offering bio-based cups, cutlery, containers, and other food ware items as an environmentally friendly alternative to petroleum-based plastic. This polylactide (PLA) plastic is often made from corn, potato, and other food starches, and may be advertised as compostable and biodegradable. However, many of these products are unable to break down fully or fast enough in industrial composting facilities. In addition, it can be difficult to distinguish bio-based plastics from other plastics contaminating the organics waste stream. As a result, Republic Services (which processes El Cerrito's organic waste) has asked customers to not place these PLA plastics in the green organic waste container. Similarly, if the PLA plastics are placed in the grey recycling container, they will also contaminate the recycling stream, since they are not plastics that are commonly recycled.



Please continue to look for alternatives to single-use plastic food ware, by choosing paper-based or reusable products where possible. Stay tuned on how to properly dispose of innovative, more ecologically friendly, products. For more information, contact the City's Waste Prevention Specialist at (510) 559-7686.

Tips to Improve Stormwater

- 1. Only rain down the storm drain.** Make sure only rain enters the gutter and storm drain system.
- 2. Properly dispose of pesticides.** Check with the West County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facility to see what your business's options are for properly disposing of HHW by calling (888) 412-9277.
- 3. Use environmentally friendly pest management products.** Use traps and products that minimize their possible harm to people and the environment.
- 4. Make sure to avoid putting Fats, Oils, and Grease down any sink or drain, inside or outside.**
- 5. Clean gutters of leaves and debris during rainy season.**

For more information, contact City staff at wprovost@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or (510) 525-7622.