

SOLID WASTE NEWS

October 2014

Changes Coming for Recycling of Mercury-Containing Lights

Beginning Jan. 1, 2015 when the Washington State Mercury-Containing Lights Stewardship Law becomes reality, household and small business customers may drop off 10 or less lights containing toxic mercury for free at the two transfer stations in Lewis County.

New Mercury-Containing Light Recycling Program

The Central Transfer Station, Centralia, and the East Lewis County Transfer Station, Morton, have been collecting, and will continue collecting mercury-containing lights, once the law takes effect. A state stewardship program will assume the financial burden of packaging and shipping lights to the recycler on Jan. 1. As a result, the shipping cost and recycler's fee will no longer be the financial obligation of the Lewis County Solid Waste Utility or any collector. Government facilities, retail stores, charities, and other organizations will be allowed to act as collectors, but nobody is required to be a collector.

LEWIS COUNTY SOLID WASTE UTILITY

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Meanwhile, the state stewardship program will take on the job of financing the handling and recycling of mercury lights and educating consumers. Funds for the program will be generated by an environmental handling charge (EHC) added to the price of mercury lights sold at retail. The state has approved an EHC of 25¢ to each mercury-containing light sold in or into the state, as recommended by the program's operator, PCA Product Stewardship, Inc.

Current Mercury-Containing Light Recycling Program

The following current disposal costs for mercury-containing lights at county transfer stations will remain in effect now through Dec. 31, 2014:

- 15 lights or less from household customers are free
- The following fees are currently charged to household customers with more than 15 lights:
 - 4' straight lights: .40¢ each
 - 6' straight lights: .60¢ each
 - 8' straight lights: .80¢ each
 - Compact fluorescent lights: .50¢ each
 - Mercury vapor lights: \$1.00 each
 - Miscellaneous mercury lights: \$2.50 each
- Businesses must currently make an appointment to bring lights to the transfer stations. Please call 360-740-1221 to make an appointment.
- Bring the lights in boxes. Boxes must be taped closed.
- Remove all tape from loose lights before placing in the transfer stations' recycling crates.
- Broken lamps must be brought to the Hazo Hut for proper disposal.

Call 360-740-1221 for more information.

Did You Know?



Curlicue lights that look like this:  are compact fluorescent lights (CFL), containing mercury. Mercury and its compounds are highly poisonous. Mercury is readily absorbed across unbroken skin or through the respiratory or gastrointestinal tract.



Hands-On Class at Southwest Washington Fairgrounds on October 13 to Teach How to Build a Hugelkultur Bed

The Washington State University/Lewis County Master Recycler Composter volunteers will be creating a second hugelkultur bed at their demonstration site at the north end of the Southwest Washington Fairgrounds in Chehalis. This hands-on class will start at 9 a.m., Oct. 13, rain or shine, so dress appropriately for the weather.

Hugelkultur is a German word for "hill culture." It is a composting and raised bed technique that mirrors what happens in nature with "nurse logs" where trees or other plants start growing on downed trees in the woods. In the hugelkultur process, you used downed wood, yard debris, grass clippings, manure and other organic materials to create a rich growing bed that soaks up excess water like a sponge and releases this moisture and nutrients from the decaying process to plants during the dry summer months.

No pre-registration is required, but if you have questions, call 360-740-1212.



Recycle Wine or Champagne Corks at Lewis County Transfer Stations

Recycling natural corks from wine or champagne bottles is now offered at the Central Transfer Station, Centralia, and the East Lewis County Transfer Station, Morton.

Lewis County Solid Waste is offering cork recycling in partnership with the Cork Forest Conservation Alliance's Cork ReHarvest program. This non-profit group promotes the use of cork and helps educate the public on the Mediterranean cork forests' high level of biodiversity, environmental sustainability and economic resources. Collected corks will be ground up and made into new products, not bottle closures.

Cork is a natural, renewable, recyclable and biodegradable material obtained through an environmentally friendly harvesting process. Trees are not cut down to harvest cork. The bark is stripped by hand every 9-12 years. Cork oak trees can live up to 300 years.

No screw-top caps or plastic closures accepted. For more information, call 360-740-1452 or 1-800-749-5980.