

Mutual 53 Resident's Guide to Trash, Compost and Recycling

The goal of this "Resident's Guide to Trash" is to hopefully remind each of you about the intricacies of taking out the trash and avoiding the pitfalls associated with trash disposal in Deer Highlands and Rossmoor in general. Putting the wrong items in the wrong dumpster or bin can result in monetary penalties charged to Mutual 53, inconvenience to and complaints from other residents and invasions by the various critters that live around us.

First and foremost; Do not leave any item(s) outside of the trash enclosure or any of the dumpsters or bins. Such items will NOT be removed by Republic Services and the Mutual may be charged a penalty fee if the driver must move the item to access a dumpster.

There are seven trash enclosures in Deer Highlands, most of which serve at least two buildings in the complex. Each trash enclosure contains one two-wheeled, green plastic compost bin, and two large steel dumpsters, one blue and one grey:

- The green plastic bin or cart is ONLY for disposal of compostable organic material.
- The blue dumpster is ONLY for disposal of items that can be recycled.
- The grey dumpster is for landfill, in other words everything that is not compostable or cannot be recycled.

That may sound simple enough but there are rules set by two organizations, Republic Services and Rossmoor Walnut Creek. Those rules establish how and what materials are to be deposited in those containers. In an effort to help residents stay within those rules, this guide will present descriptions of the most frequent mistakes residents make when they don't follow the rules of either organization:

Using the Compost bins

No Plastic Bags of any kind are allowed in the compost bins.

Please **DO NOT** put loose and unbagged food scraps, spoiled or rotting fruit or vegetables of any kind, in the compost bin (see photo 1). As these items continue to

Compost Bin Use (continued from page 1)

decompose/rot, they create odors and attract flies that will lay eggs which hatch into maggots (see photo 2).

Please **DO** place all food scraps, napkins or paper towels with food residue, etc., in one of the green “compostable” bags. When the bag is full, seal or tie the bag closed and place in the bin. A paper bag is okay, as long as it is tied tightly closed.

Carboard pizza boxes, cardboard or hard paper food cartons (no plastic coating), plant clippings, leaves and dying flowers may also be placed in the compost bins.

Our compost bins are emptied by Republic Services, late morning every Tuesday. Once the compost bins are emptied, some residents place crumpled newspaper in the bottom of the bin they use. This helps soak up moisture that may leak as compostable bags begin to decompose while still in the bin, particularly in hot weather.

After placing compost in the bin, please ensure that the steel bar of the nearby blue recycle dumpster is placed across the top of the compost bin (see photo 3). This prevents raccoons and other critters from getting in and making a mess.

Compost bins are washed and disinfected on the last Wednesday of each month. From the time the compost bins are emptied on the last Tuesday morning of the month until it is washed on the last Wednesday afternoon, a sign is placed on the bin directing that no compost be placed in the bin until after it is cleaned (see photo 4).

Using the Blue Recycle Dumpsters

No Plastic Bags of any kind are allowed in the Recycling Dumpster – all plastic bags must go in the landfill dumpster. **That includes plastic bags that are labelled as being recyclable.**

No plastic packing materials such as air pillows, bubble wrap, packing peanuts are allowed in the Recycling Dumpster.

No loose bottle caps of any kind in the recycle dumpsters! They will clog the sorting conveyors at the recycling centers.

NO LOOSE SHREDDED PAPER! Shredded paper must be placed in a **paper** bag that is tied or stapled closed and marked “SHREDDED PAPER”.

Do not place bags or boxes containing items to be recycled in the dumpster. Empty any bags or boxes of recycled items into the dumpster. All items must be left loose when placed in the dumpster.

Using Recycle Dumpsters (continued from page 2)

Carboard boxes must be broken down, flattened when placed in the dumpster. Republic Service drivers will often remove large boxes that were not flattened and Mutual 53 will be billed for the driver’s additional labor (see photo 5). In

addition to flattening, any extremely large cardboard boxes must also be cut into smaller, more manageable pieces.

The Basic Rule of Recycling states that 5 materials can go in the recycling dumpsters:

- **Hard Plastic**
- Metal
- Glass
- Paper
- Flattened cardboard

NOTHING ELSE GOES IN RECYCLE DUMPSTERS

Grey Landfill Dumpster

Pretty much everything else that a residential homeowner would encounter during normal day to day living and consider as garbage can be placed in the landfill dumpster. Try to place all small items in plastic bags, including packing peanuts.

There are, however, exceptions to what may be placed in the landfill dumpsters and how to dispose of those exceptions.

The Exceptions

Large items such as furniture, metal and wood products (photo 6), as well as household batteries must be disposed of at the Rossmoor Recycling yard on Rockview Drive.

Appliances, electronics, garden chemicals, household cleaners, paint, propane cylinders and many more unusual items must be disposed of at specialized facilities. Refer to the Rossmoor Recycle Guide on the Deer Highlands website, www.deerhighlands.com for more information on facilities in our area.

Jim Jennings
Building Maintenance Committee Chair
Jmj103@comcast.net
925-250-6723