

Helpful Information I; Recycling

If In Doubt, Throw It Out (12/17/2017)

A wide variety of items can be recycled in Chesapeake but there are limitations. While recycling as much as possible is great, tossing an item you're unsure about into the ~~blue~~ **recyclable** bin could actually do more harm than good.

What we'd rather you do from now on is "if in doubt, throw it out".

What you put in your ~~blue~~ bin is sorted, baled and sold to companies that can reuse it for something new. When you put a greasy pizza box or a non-recyclable item like plastic flower containers into the ~~blue~~ **recyclable** bin, these items contaminate the haul making it less desirable to those companies.

We appreciate everyone's desire to do right by their environment but when it comes to recycling, stick to the list. You can find that list at www.CityofChesapeake.net/Recycle. And remember: If in doubt, throw it out.

Blue Bin Recycling: Wrapping paper, gift boxes, cardboard boxes (break down all boxes first) and holiday cards are all recyclable in your ~~blue~~ recyclable bin.

Other Recycling: Recycle plastic bags (grocery bags, dry cleaning bags, packaging air pillows, clean food storage bags, product wrap, even clean bread bags) at your local grocery store, usually in a bin near the entrance. Bring your old and/or broken electronics to Goodwill for responsible recycling.

Reuse: Save gift ribbon, bows and gift bags to reuse next year as these generally cannot be recycled and would otherwise have to go to the landfill.

Keep fats, oils and grease out of the sink to avoid sewer backups

Always pick up after your dog – scoop the poop! Bag to the trash bin.

Why Plastic Bags are the Recyclable Bin Enemy (1/21/2018)

Plastic bags may be convenient but if they're not disposed of properly they can cause all sorts of issues. You should avoid putting them in your blue bin at all costs. Here's why:

Reason 1 - Initial sorting of recyclables is done by hand, meaning real live human workers have to rip open the bags, costing time and also creating potential hazards. They don't know what could be in that bag! Could be non-recyclables or broken glass.

Reason 2 - Plastic bags get stuck in the machinery and can cause the entire process to shut down for repairs.

If you want to line your indoor recycling bin with a plastic garbage bag, you can definitely still do that. However, when you go to transfer the recyclables to the blue bin, dump them out of the garbage bag and either reuse the bag or throw it away in your brown bin. Do not just throw the entire recyclables-filled garbage bag into the blue bin.

Plastic bags are recyclable, just not in the big blue bin. Check your local grocery store for a bin just inside the entrance that accepts all sorts of plastic bags (not just grocery bags) for recycling.

Chesapeake Recycles Day 2018 (2/4/2018)

Chesapeake Recycles Day events are back for another year of proper waste disposal! Bring your household hazardous waste, electronics and sensitive documents to any of five events happening throughout Chesapeake.

April 28 at Southgate Shopping Plaza, 2307 Bainbridge Blvd

September 8 at Sam's Club Western Branch, 2444 Chesapeake Sq Ring Rd

October 13 at **Greenbrier Mall**, 1401 Greenbrier Pkwy

November 17 at Tidewater Community College, 1428 Cedar Rd

Can't make one of these events? Most of these items can be disposed of year round! Bring your electronics to any Goodwill store during their normal operating hours. SPSA accepts household hazardous waste at their transfer station, 901 Hollowell Lane, on the first Wednesday and third Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to noon. Plastic bags are easily **recycled at your local grocery store, usually in a bin right inside the main entrance.**

For more on Chesapeake Recycles Day and the limitations and restrictions that apply, visit www.CityofChesapeake.net/RecyclesDay.

Helpful Information II; Garbage +

Garbage: Unfortunately we can't save everything from the brown bin. Styrofoam, packing peanuts and all of that excessive hard plastic packaging has to be thrown away.

The Un-Flushables (3/4/2018)

We need to talk about an unsavory topic: toilets. More specifically, what you put into them. These days you can't walk down the toilet paper aisle without seeing several different brands of "flushable" wipes. These wipes are wreaking havoc on wastewater systems throughout the country, including our own. Do not let the marketing fool you! **They are not, in fact, "flushable"** at all because they do not disintegrate. The wipes end up causing clogs and damaging sewer treatment plant equipment. Our wastewater system is designed to handle three things: water, waste and toilet paper. That's it!

It's easy to brush this off as "**not my problem**" because when we're lucky, we flush and everything disappears. However, it can very quickly become your problem, and an expensive one at that. You own the portion of your wastewater system that goes from your house to the street so if a clog forms in that section, it's on you. Also, major clogs can happen throughout the system and repairs can be costly. Ultimately, that cost will get passed down to the consumer.

So don't use your toilet as a trash can!

Helpful Information III; Other Stuff

It's Fix a Leak Week!

Now is a great time to check on your household's water consumption. The average household's water leaks can account for more than 10,000 gallons of water wasted every year. Plus, that wastes your money! Fixing leaks could save you about 10 percent on your water bill. Here are a few ways you can check for leaks:

Check your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter changes, you might have a leak.

Put a few drops of food coloring in the tank of your toilet and do not flush. After about 15 minutes check the toilet bowl for color in the water. If you see color, you have a leak.

Check all your faucets for drips and look underneath the sink at the pipes to check for any water on the outside of the pipe.

For more information on leak detection in your home, contact Public Utilities Customer Service at 382-6352 or water@cityofchesapeake.net.

Bridge Lift Schedules (2/18/2018)

All six drawbridges in Chesapeake have different lift schedules and restricted periods. Even though it may seem easier to just have one schedule for all bridges, there are several reasons for the unique schedules.

- Roadway Traffic – Roadway traffic helps the U.S. Coast Guard determine when the restricted periods for each bridge will be. Generally, restricted periods are during the morning and evening rush hours but that's not the same at every bridge because it's not the same in every section of the City.

- Marine Traffic – Marine traffic also looks different depending on where you are in the City. At the Gilmerton Bridge there's a larger amount of commercial traffic like tugs and barges. Further south at the Centerville Bridge there's more pleasure craft traffic like those big beautiful sailboats coming to and from Florida. Commercial vessels require more on-demand lifts.
- Nearby Structures – Several bridges have other nearby structures that affect when they can open. Both the Deep Creek and the Great Bridge Bridges have nearby locks to coordinate with. The Gilmerton Bridge has an adjacent railroad bridge to coordinate with. All of these factors affect the flow of roadway and marine traffic.
Keep in mind that bridge lifts are federal regulations and are enforced by the U.S. Coast Guard. You can view each bridge's lift schedule at www.CityofChesapeake.net/Bridges.

The information provided above are In the Know columns published between 12-2017 to 3-2018 in the Virginian-Pilot Chesapeake Clipper. Some were edited for appropriateness to the Retreat community and all were obtained, with permission, by Margie Simpkins.