



Cleaning Up?

Getting rid of old
paint, batteries,
mattresses and
carpet is easy — and
good for California.
Find out how INSIDE.



Cleaning up? Do it the Right Way

California is leading the way in recycling unwanted items and keeping them out of landfills

by Matt Jocks

You have decided to embark on that springtime cleaning or renovation project, and you know what the first step must be: confronting all that stuff you no longer need.

Whether it's the old mattress up against the wall of the garage, the half-empty paint cans under the workbench, the batteries you have bagged up or the carpeting you replaced, it has got to go.

But it has got to go the right way.

While you may not have a use for these old items, they contain materials that can be reused in valuable and surprising ways. Dumping them in the trash or elsewhere may seem like the easiest option, but there are costs and potential health risks in doing so.

That's why the California State Legislature has passed laws aimed at keeping these types of items out of landfills. These laws — some of which were the first in the nation — have necessitated several industry-led product stewardship groups that manage four products that, in many cases, can be spared from the landfill: paint, batteries, mattresses and carpeting.

Improper disposal of each of these products carries its own negative impacts.

"California considers leftover latex and oil-based paints hazardous wastes that are prohibited from disposal in landfills," said Jeremy Jones, PaintCare's West Coast program manager. "PaintCare relieves the burden for those who find themselves with leftover paint by setting up convenient sites to get rid of it — usually at nearby paint and hardware stores."

In the case of batteries, improper disposal carries the risk of fires from batteries that may appear dead but still pack plenty of energy. In fact, 65 percent of fires reported by 26 waste facilities in California were said to have been caused by batteries.

For bulky carpets and mattresses, the cost is mostly landfill space and the waste of valuable components that could be

turned into new, sometimes unexpected products.

"One of the main products to come from recycling carpets is plastic parts for cars and trucks," said Robert Peoples, executive director of Carpet America Recovery Effort. "You look under the hood of a Ford F-150 and you're looking at about two square yards of carpeting."

Reusing resources also limits the costs, both economic and environmental, of manufacturing products from virgin materials. Those materials, in some cases, are in limited supply.

For all of these products, the fight to reduce the waste of resources and the potential dangers of improper disposal has been an uphill climb. But there has been progress.

Although the Mattress Recycling Council estimates more than 50,000 mattresses hit the landfills each day in the U.S., efforts in California, one of only three states with a mattress recycling program, are paying off.

"We've recycled 3.5 million since the program began," said Mike O'Donnell, managing director for the Mattress Recycling Council. "That's a big achievement and we continue to expand every month."

Although each recycled battery or can of paint is a victory, those involved are also hoping consumers take a bigger view.

"After all these years, you know with an aluminum can, that's something that should go in a different place than the garbage," said Carl Smith, CEO and president of Call2Recycle, Inc. "That's not necessarily the case with batteries. It's a matter of raising awareness and recognition that these items should also be responsibly recycled."



RECYCLING PROGRAMS HAVE HELPED CALIFORNIANS RECYCLE & MANAGE*



16 million gallons of paint



15 million pounds of batteries



3.5 million mattresses



500 million pounds of carpet

*Since the inception of each program

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So, What Do I Do With This Stuff?

by Matt Jocks



PAINT

What's accepted

- Interior/exterior paints (including latex, acrylic, oil- and water-based and enamel)
- Deck coatings and floor paints
- Primers, sealers and undercoaters
- Stains
- Shellacs, lacquers, varnishes, single-component urethanes
- and more (find a full list at paintcare.org)

How to prepare

- Make sure lids are secure and not leaking
- Make sure paints are in original containers with original labels
- Make sure different paints are not combined

Where to take it

- Drop-off locations include paint retailers, transfer stations and household hazardous waste programs

For recycling locations visit
paintcare.org



BATTERIES

What's accepted

- Single-use batteries like AAA, AA, 9v, etc. (accepted at select locations)
- Rechargeable batteries (often found in cordless power tools, cellphones and small electronics) are widely accepted

How to prepare

- Separate batteries from other waste and by type
- Tape positive terminals with non-conductive tape (avoid covering label that indicates battery type) or individually bag batteries before dropping off at a participating collection location

Where to take it

- Drop-off sites include participating retailers and household hazardous waste locations
- Mail-back kits available through Call2Recycle

For recycling locations visit
call2recycle.org/locator



MATTRESSES

What's accepted

- All mattresses that are relatively clean and have not been significantly exposed to the elements or contain bedbugs

How to prepare

- If transporting with other items, try to minimize damage or contamination of the mattress

Where to take it

- Drop-off locations include participating transfer stations, recycling facilities, landfills, nonprofit organizations or local businesses
- When a purchased mattress is delivered, the retailer is required to offer their customer the option to have an old one picked up (some exceptions apply)

For recycling locations visit
byebyemattress.com/CA



CARPET

What's accepted

- Wall-to-wall carpet and carpet tile (no area rugs)

How to prepare

- Keep carpet dry and free of debris (tack strips, nails, etc.)
- Roll carpet, separate from pad

Where to take it

- Drop-off locations include participating landfills, transfer stations, and recycling centers throughout the state
- Find locations and requirements online
- Many retailers include takeback/recycling as a part of their installation service — be sure to ask

For recycling locations visit
carpetrecovery.org/CA

Batteries

How are they recycled?

- Alkaline batteries are mechanically separated at room temperature.
- Nickel-cadmium batteries are recycled through a high-temperature process that creates a molten metal bath and solidifies the material, which can then be used in the manufacturing of new products.
- Lithium-ion batteries are discharged and then crushed or shredded with a high-speed hammer before materials like cobalt and nickel are extracted.

What does it become?

End products vary. Alkaline battery material can be used in sunscreen and road asphalt aggregate. Nickel recovered from batteries appears in silverware and golf clubs. Materials from lithium-ion batteries can be used in new stainless steel products and batteries.



Mattresses

How are they recycled?

- Mattresses are cut open and the layers are separated.
- Interior materials are sorted. Soft materials are compressed and baled.
- Steel from box springs are extracted and wood is chipped.

What does it become?

About 80 percent of a mattress can be recycled. The foam padding can be used in carpeting or for sound acoustic material. Cotton and other fibers are used in insulation. Steel springs are baled and sent to scrap dealers, who melt them down for hundreds of products, such as construction rebar. The chipped wood can become biomass fuel or mulch.



A Second Life for Your Stuff

by Matt Jocks

How unwanted items get turned into something new

Carpet

How is it recycled?

- Machines grind the carpeting to separate the carpet fibers from the backing.
- Materials are purified.
- Plastics are extracted from the carpet fibers; rubbers, oils and other material are extracted from the backing.

What does it become?

A variety of products. Plastic from recycled carpet is sold to auto manufacturers, where it is used for plastic casings under the hood. Old carpet materials can also find their way into things like tiles, decking and shingles.



Paint

How is it recycled?

- Paints are separated by color and filtered for any solid materials.
- The tint is tweaked by adding pigments.
- Amines and ammonia may be added to obtain proper pH level.

What does it become?

Recycled-content paint is a high-quality commercial product that is sold domestically and internationally. In California, public agencies such as Caltrans use recycled paint on large infrastructure projects.



ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Whether it's a small button battery or a big roll of carpeting, you know your old stuff has value when it is recycled. Four product stewardship groups — PaintCare, Bye Bye Mattress, Carpet America Recovery Effort and Call2Recycle — have joined forces to create this publication and spread the word. These groups are working with retailers and local agencies to let consumers know where and how to recycle. Now you can do it, too — spread the word and let others know what to do with their unwanted items. **Thanks for reading — now get cleaning!**



California Carpet Stewardship Program

An initiative of CARE: Carpet America Recovery Effort



bye bye mattress

A Program of the Mattress Recycling Council®

call2recycle
Leading the charge for recycling.

