

Televisions, Computer Monitors, and E-Waste – Recycling and Disposal

Did you know that disposing of televisions and computer monitors in the garbage *is prohibited*? Computer monitors, televisions, some camcorders and other electronic devices contain Cathode Ray Tubes (CRTs), also known as “picture tubes.” These CRTs can contain between two to eight pounds of lead. Most CRTs exceed the regulatory threshold for lead and are identified as hazardous waste when disposed. The environmental health concern is the potential for contamination of soil and our water supplies. In August 2001, emergency regulations were approved which now classify CRTs as *Universal Wastes* thereby promoting the safe collection and recycling of waste CRTs.

Accomplishing the monumental task of ensuring that CRTs are recycled properly has been one of California’s biggest challenges over the last couple of years. The Contra Costa County Environmental Health Division’s Local Enforcement Agency (LEA) for Solid Waste is working closely with State and Local agencies to track legislation and ensure that appropriate information and services are provided to the residents of Contra Costa County, while at the same time, ensuring that these materials are properly recycled and/or discarded. At this time, our primary focus is televisions and computer monitors, but electronic waste overall is also being addressed throughout California, nationally, and internationally.

Another difficult aspect of this issue is the financial burden that comes along with managing these materials. Currently, the LEA and the Community Development Department are partnering with the City of Antioch and several other city agencies to seek grant monies from the California Integrated Waste Management Board to hold collection events for our residents. Once CRTs are collected, it may cost the recycling facility about \$15.00 to \$80.00 to process just one CRT. There are several recycling options for our residents throughout the County but due to the cost of processing, some require a collection or drop-off fee of up to \$25.00 for standard-size televisions and monitors and \$40.00 for big screens. We encourage reuse and recycling whenever possible.

If the televisions or monitors are functional, they can be donated to a worthy cause, otherwise they can be recycled through one of the facilities listed on this website.