

Eco-Tip of the Week for 4/16/17

Where's My Recycling Center?

By David Goldstein, VCPWA, IWMD

Local recycling coordinators often field complaints about recycling buyback centers' hours or payments. Since the redemption system is administered by the state, those concerns are generally referred to the California Department of Resources Recovery and Recycling (CalRecycle), at 1-800-RECYCLE.

The most common question about rules is whether centers can pay by the pound rather than by the bottle or can. The answer is "the rule of 50." Upon customer request, recycling center operators must pay by count rather than by weight for up to 50 containers of each material type. Over that amount, centers can choose to pay by weight or count, regardless of customer preference.

Concerns about messes or odors are best handled your city's code compliance division. Issues of scavenging and vagrancy are best reported to the police.

Regulation enforcement and economic pressures have forced some centers to close, and the lack of convenient recycling centers is drawing even more complaints.

When there is no recycling center within half a mile of a supermarket, state law requires retailers to choose between redeeming containers or paying a \$100-per-day "opt-out" fee to the state's Beverage Container Recycling Fund. In Ventura County, no stores pay this fee because 39 have told CalRecycle they redeem in-store, and others are near enough to recycling centers. Last year, CalRecycle sent letters to five additional Ventura County stores that have not stated whether they will redeem in-store or pay the fee; CalRecycle will assess the fee if they continue to not respond, according to Mark Oldfield, communications director with CalRecycle.