

ENVIROTalk

Fall 2009

EcoFind

Think inside the box

Looking for a fun way to pack your lunch for work or school? Try a bento-style lunchbox. These fun lunch boxes come in all shapes, colors and environmentally friendly materials with a variety of compartments to keep your lunch items separated but compact.

Some even have room for reusable silverware and a cloth napkin. Bento-style lunchboxes are available through many retailers.



On the go?

Pack waste-free meals/snacks for these outings

- Air travel
- Road trips
- The park
- Family outings
- Field trips
- Picnics
- Day hikes

Make a Waste-Free LUNCH for SCHOOL & WORK

On average, a child using disposable products at lunch generates 67 pounds of waste per school year. So just imagine the waste that adult lunches can create.

Take a few moments to consider ways to reduce, reuse and recycle when packing lunches for school, work, travel or family outings, and you'll soon be saving dollars as well as benefitting the environment.

Reduce

- ✿ **Cut down on packaging** by purchasing fresh produce and items in bulk.
- ✿ **Avoid purchasing single-serve items** like prepackaged veggies, chips, crackers, cookies, applesauce, cheese and yogurt.
- ✿ **Reduce food waste** by bringing unwanted leftovers or food scraps home to compost.

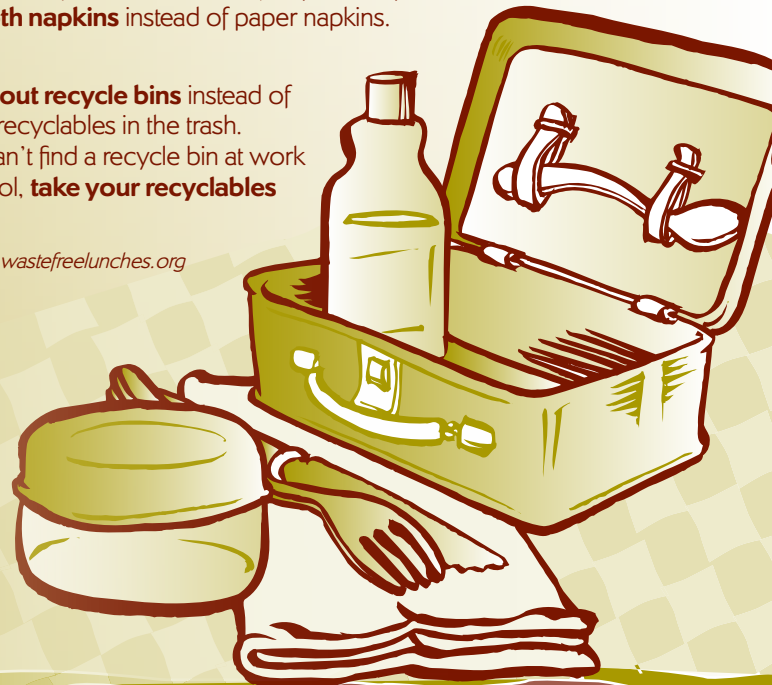
Reuse

- ✿ **Use a lunch box** or insulated lunch bag instead of paper or plastic bags.
- ✿ **Use reusable containers** instead of disposable plastic bags, plastic wrap, foil or wax paper.
- ✿ **Use refillable drink bottles** instead of juice boxes/pouches or aluminum cans.
- ✿ **Use durable flatware** instead of disposable plastic utensils.
- ✿ **Use cloth napkins** instead of paper napkins.

Recycle

- ✿ **Search out recycle bins** instead of tossing recyclables in the trash.
- ✿ If you can't find a recycle bin at work or school, **take your recyclables home**.

Source: www.wastefreelunches.org



NEED TO FIX YOUR SIDE SEWER?

Sewer backups or drainage problems in your home could be linked to blockages in the private side sewer line that connects your home to a City wastewater main.

If your side sewer needs repair or replacement, you could be eligible for a low-interest loan through the City of Tacoma's Sewer Conservation Loan Program.

Program requirements:

- ✿ Your home must be in the Tacoma city limits and served by Tacoma Wastewater Management
- ✿ Repair must be for an existing residential structure
- ✿ A good credit history
- ✿ A current credit report with score

For more information:
(253) 502-2246

www.cityoftacoma.org/sewerloan



EnviroKIDS Fancy frame

What you need:

- ✿ Old wood or cardboard picture frame
- ✿ Bottle caps you have removed from your recyclables (any shape or size)
- ✿ Craft glue

How to make it:

Use craft glue to attach the bottle caps to the frame. Let the glue dry, insert your picture and display your work of art for all to see or give it to a special someone as a gift.



For more project ideas:
www.cityoftacoma.org/envirokids

Learn your lesson with us

This fall Tacoma middle school students will see a new stormwater lesson being offered by the City's EnviroChallenger program. Students will use a fun interactive game to investigate what goes into the City's stormwater system. (Hint: It's not just water!) With the help of the EnviroChallenger educator, students will make predictions based on investigative questions, learn how to test the quality of the stormwater, how to locate sources of pollution and how to prevent pollution from entering the stormwater system.

This lesson is a great opportunity for students to learn about the environment, science and potential career opportunities. Encourage your child's teacher to book this lesson soon!

For more information:
(253) 591-5066

www.envirochallenger.com

Want perky plants come spring?

Everyone sleeps better on a full stomach – your plants included. Before your trees, lawn, shrubs and other perennial plants settle in for their long winter's nap, be sure to give them their fix of TAGRO Mix.

Need a little? Come on down and shovel your own TAGRO Mix – it's free.

Need a lot? We can fill your open-bed pickup with TAGRO Mix for \$8 per cubic yard (\$30 per yard for TAGRO Potting Soil), or we'll bring it to you for the same price plus \$15 per 10 miles for delivery.

Where to find us: Central Wastewater Treatment Plant, 2201 Portland Ave., Gate 5/6 (follow the TAGRO signs)

For more information:
(253) 502-2150

www.tagro.com

TAGRO is
now on Twitter!
www.twitter.com/tacomagrow



GIVING TACOMA A Clean Sweep

Street sweepers help keep Tacoma clean and prevent debris and contamination from entering local waterways through storm drains.

When the sweepers are in your area, please:

- ☼ Keep your vehicles off the street between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- ☼ If you can't move your vehicle, sweep debris out into the street.
- ☼ Remove garbage, recycling and yard waste containers from the street.
- ☼ Provide sweepers better access by cutting bushes back and trimming branches 12-14 feet from the ground.

How will you know the sweepers are coming?

- ☼ Check the online schedule at www.cityoftacoma.org/streetsweeping.
- ☼ A postcard will be sent to your home in advance of the sweepers.
- ☼ Yellow signs will be posted just before the sweepers come to your neighborhood.

For more information:
(253) 591-5588

www.cityoftacoma.org/streetsweeping



Wondering what to do with that pile of leaves?

Hint: Don't rake them into the street.

City of Tacoma residents are responsible for collecting and disposing of leaves and other debris from their property, including the right-of-way between their sidewalk and the street.

Leaves and debris left in streets or walkways can clog storm drains and cause streets and homes to flood. City street sweeper crews do their best to target areas with the most leaves during the fall and winter, but they can't be

everywhere at once, so it's up to everyone to dispose of leaves and yard waste properly and promptly.

- ☼ Use leaves as compost in your garden.
- ☼ Place leaves in your brown yard waste container for pickup.
- ☼ Take leaves and yard waste to the Tacoma Landfill (no additional fee for City of Tacoma residential customers). Keep those loads covered!

For more information:

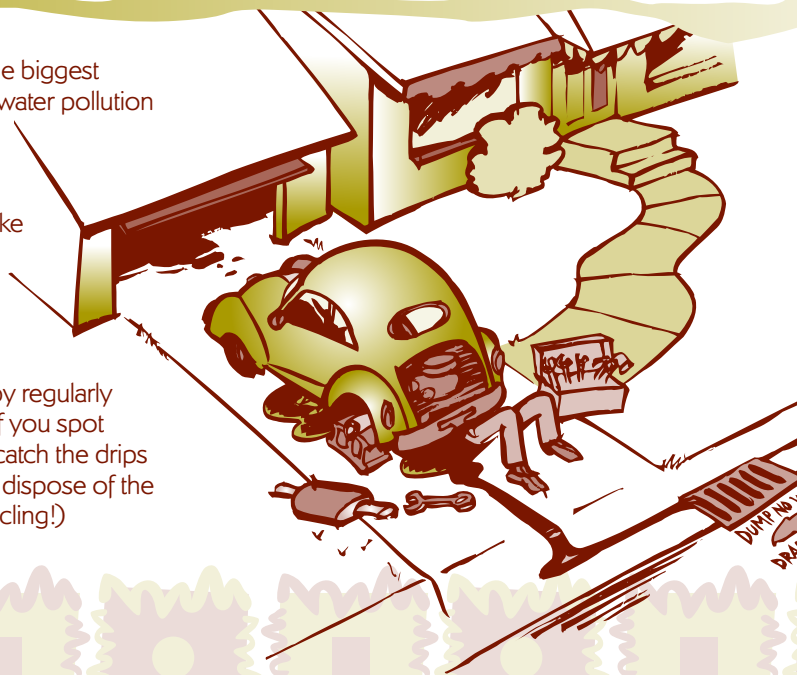
www.cityoftacoma.org/leaves

Don't be a DRIP!

dust, tire wear, tailpipe emissions and car wash residue – it might not seem like much, but it adds up to a big problem for water quality.

You can help keep motor oil out of our local waterways by regularly maintaining your car and being on the lookout for leaks. If you spot drips coming from your car, use a piece of cardboard to catch the drips until you can get them fixed. (Make sure to dispose of the stained cardboard in the trash, not the recycling!)

Vehicles are one of the biggest contributors to stormwater pollution that ends up in our local lakes, streams, creeks and Puget Sound. Motor oil, brake



ENViRO

Q&A

BAG GARBAGE

Q: Are we supposed to bag garbage and recyclables before putting them in the containers?

A: Garbage: Yes, bag all your garbage. This will help prevent stray garbage on the street and help protect human health.

Recycling: No, most of your recyclables should not be bagged except for plastic bags, shredded paper and batteries.

Steam away odors and stuck on food

Does the inside of your microwave make you turn up your nose? Here is an easy way to wipe away the gunk and goo without harsh chemicals.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup water
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 microwave-safe glass bowl or large glass measuring cup

Directions:

Pour 1 cup of water and 2 tablespoons of lemon juice into a microwave-safe glass bowl or measuring cup. Place the bowl or cup in the microwave and set on high for 3-4 minutes (until the water is bubbling and steam is rolling off). Then carefully remove the glass bowl or cup using potholders and place it in the sink. Moisten a wash rag or sponge and simply wipe out the inside of the microwave.

For more recipes:
www.cityoftacoma.org/greenercleaners



RESOURCE LIST FALL 2009

RESOURCE	PHONE	WEB SITE
Solid Waste Management (Garbage, recycling, yard waste)		
General questions	591-5543	
Information line	565-5955	www.cityoftacoma.org/solidwaste
Call-2-Haul	573-2468	www.cityoftacoma.org/call2haul
Hazardous waste	591-5418	www.cityoftacoma.org/hazwaste
Landfill scalehouse	593-7724	
Wastewater/Surface water		
General questions	591-5588	www.cityoftacoma.org/wastewater
Billing questions	502-2100	www.cityoftacoma.org/surfacewater
Sewer backups		www.cityoftacoma.org/flood
Street flooding		www.cityoftacoma.org/streetsweeping
Street sweeping	591-5585	www.cityoftacoma.org/streetsweeping
Leaves		www.cityoftacoma.org/leaves

When calling any of the utilities, please have your account number available. Your account number is located at the top of your utility bill.

Fluorescent light bulbs

Don't throw fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) or tubes in the garbage where they can break and release mercury into the air and on the ground. Recycle them!

Recycle fluorescent bulbs/tubes at these locations:

- ✿ **City of Tacoma Household Hazardous Waste Facility** at the Tacoma Landfill (no charge)
- ✿ **Bartell Drugs** (bulbs only, fee applies)
- ✿ **Seattle Lighting*** (fee applies)

For more information:
 (253) 591-5418
www.cityoftacoma.org/hazwaste

** Retail participants in the Take it Back Network, a consortium of businesses that collect and recycle fluorescent light bulbs in a safe, efficient and cost-effective manner.*

Follow EnviroTalk on Twitter for news, events and reminders pertaining to City of Tacoma Environmental Services.
www.twitter.com/EnviroTalk

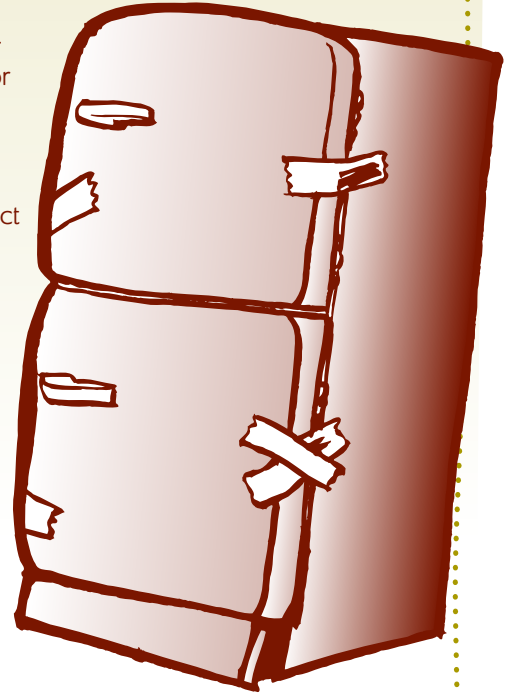
PROPERLY DISPOSE of air conditioners & refrigeration units

They did their job keeping things cool, but if it's time to dispose of your air conditioner or refrigerator, do it the right way to protect you and the environment.

Prepare refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners and water coolers for disposal by:

- ✿ Removing all food items
- ✿ Duct taping doors shut
- ✿ Leaving all tubes and lines intact
- ✿ Leaving compressors on the item(s)

Dispose of your air conditioning or refrigeration unit through Call-2-Haul,* a curbside and self-haul bulk disposal service that will accept your unwanted air conditioners, water coolers, refrigerators and freezers. Simply schedule an appointment to arrange for disposal: (253) 573-2468 (8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., weekdays) or www.tacomaservices.org.



Why is proper disposal important?

When lines containing Freon gas are cut or dismantled from air conditioners and refrigeration units, the gas can escape and pose a health hazard to you and the environment. The lines can also be under pressure and, if cut, can harm you or others nearby. In addition, it is an EPA violation to emit Freon into the atmosphere so let the City's trained technicians do the dismantling, recycling and disposal for you.

**Solid Waste Management customers living in single-family homes are allowed two Call-2-Haul visits per year at no additional charge (by appointment only).*

Get money and get organized: It's all about your fridge or freezer

Your old freezer holds treats other than ice cream. When you arrange between now and Nov. 6 to have your old, working fridge or freezer recycled, Tacoma Power will pick it up for free, give you \$30 and enter you in a contest to **win a garage, basement or kitchen reorganization from DECOTACOMA**. But wait – there's more: Unplugging that second fridge or freezer can save you up to \$140 in annual energy costs. **Call 1-877-577-0510 or visit jacoinc.net to schedule your pickup.**

For contest rules and eligibility:
 (253) 502-8377
KnowYourPower.com

EnviroTalk

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We want your feedback and story suggestions. Please leave us a message at (253) 591-5051 or e-mail envirotalk@cityoftacoma.org.



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Public Works
Environmental Services
747 Market Street, Room 408
Tacoma, Washington 98402-3769

PRSR STD
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Garbage & recycling Holiday collection schedule



If your regular garbage, recycling or yard waste collection day falls on these holidays or the days following the holiday, your collection will be one day late during that week only.

Holiday	If your regular pickup day is...	Your pickup day will be...
Labor Day	On regular schedule	
Veterans Day	On regular schedule	
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, Nov. 26 Friday, Nov. 27	Friday, Nov. 27 Saturday, Nov. 28
Christmas Day	Friday, Dec. 25	Saturday, Dec. 26
New Year's Day 2010	Friday, Jan. 1	Saturday, Jan. 2

Questions about the holiday collection schedule?

Hear a recorded message specific to the upcoming holiday at (253) 565-5955, press 2.
For further assistance, call (253) 591-5543.