

For Immediate Release

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Mary-Michal Rawling
Public Affairs Manager
(209)723-3153 x 119
Mary-Michal.Rawling@mcagov.org

HOLIDAY REMINDER: BATTERIES ARE HAZARDOUS WASTE

MERCED – All types of batteries are considered hazardous waste and are prohibited from being thrown out in the garbage or placed in curbside recycling bins at home. Rather, the Merced County Association of Governments and the Regional Waste Authority for Merced County are reminding residents that they should keep their batteries separate for alternate disposal.

“The holidays are the time of year when lots of batteries are being used, replaced and disposed of improperly. This can cause serious fire safety issues for our recycler, waste collection drivers and the staff at our landfills,” says Brooks Stayer, Director of Waste Management. Stayer notes that fires attributed to lithium ion batteries have been on the rise statewide in collection trucks, at recycling centers, and at landfills. Lithium ion batteries are more prevalent than ever and found in cell phones, e-readers and other commonly recharged items in the home. “Unfortunately, the problem is very real for us. These items can easily catch fire when they are being compacted, and our number one concern is for people’s safety,” he said.

When properly separated from other waste, batteries can be disposed of for free at both Lowe’s and Home Depot stores in Merced and Los Banos, at the landfills, or at local “Community Clean-ups” beginning in January.

More information about Community Clean Ups can be found at: www.mcrwma.org, and details about lithium ion, and other batteries, at: <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/reducewaste/batteries>.

The Merced County Association of Governments is the umbrella organization responsible for administering the Regional Waste Authority which operates two regional landfills, one in Merced on North Highway 59 and the Billy Wright landfill in Los Banos. For more information, visit www.mcagov.org.

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