

Base recycling experts help Travis residents, employees make informed decisions

By Tech. Sgt. Mark Diamond
60th AMW Public Affairs Office

The Travis Environmental Office doesn't want to force base residents and employees to recycle. They would rather educate people on the positive impact of recycling and let residents and employees make environmentally correct decisions on their own. But, if education doesn't work, they have a backup plan. For instance, since February — when base housing residents were given a single recycling tote in place of the two orange recycling crates — Travis residents have produced about seven more tons in recyclable products per month. That's about 14,000 additional pounds of aluminum, plastic and paper that won't litter local landfills. Base Recycling experts hope to achieve similar results within other areas of the base recycling program, including the base industrial areas (working facilities).

According to Travis Recycling Program Manager Dolores Tiburcio, on-base recycling is a continuous educational process.

Sporadic effort
Tiburcio, who has worked the Travis recycling program for the past six years, said while recycling in the base residential areas continues to improve, recycling in the base industrial areas is sporadic at best. She attributes this erratic behavior to the military person's penchant for PCSing.

"Once you teach someone the importance of recycling — what they can recycle, how they can recycle and where they can recycle — they PCS and the cycle begins again with the next person."

"To combat this PCS predicament, base recycling experts will be developing computer-based recycling training programs that will be administered to all Travis personnel. They also plan to assign recycling monitors to each unit, and augment the unit monitors with staff assistance visits to ensure every one is complying with Air Mobility

Command and Department of Defense recycling directives.

But CBTs, staff assistance visits and unit monitors are only half of the equation. Tiburcio said making recycling easy, or convenient, is another hurdle. But it's a hurdle base officials think they can make.

"People are naturally resistant to change," Tiburcio said. "It's human nature. You have to make it easy, because most folks won't go out of their way if a task is too difficult or too time consuming. Some folks are just getting a little complacent, and others just need to be reenergized."

"What we're telling these folks is that sometimes change is a good thing. We're trying to provide the education and we're trying to make on-base recycling more convenient. The rest is up to them. Travis people are being given the personal responsibility to recycle. It's good for the base, it's good for the community and it's good for their children and their children's children."

Saving Mother Earth
When educating base residents and

employees, Tiburcio said she tries to emphasize two facets of recycling: cost savings and the importance of diverting material from our landfills.

"Almost 70 percent of America's landfills have been closed," explained Tiburcio. "We're running out of space." Through recycling, she said people can help slow down the damage that's being done to our environment.

Many people, including senior Defense leaders, realized this long ago. That's why recycling is mandatory on DOD installations.

According to Tiburcio, whether it's mandatory or not, Travis people should make recycling part of their everyday life. And thanks to base recycling experts and the Solano Garbage Company, recycling on base is a rather simple task.

Tiburcio said green recycling totes are placed in various Travis facilities and brown recycling bins are strategically placed throughout the base industrial areas.

Travis employees can use these containers to recycle everything from paper and aluminum cans, to cardboard, glass and plastic. Tiburcio explained that although some of the totes are currently marked as "newspaper," "white paper" and "mixed paper," recycled paper products no longer need to be separated. She said removing the requirement to separate paper products is one more change they've made to help make on-base recycling more convenient.

To request green totes for on-base facilities, call 424-1388.

Color coordinated
The recycling process has also been simplified in base housing areas.

In the past, environmentally conscious housing residents were forced to separate their aluminum from their plastic, their newspaper from their cardboard, and so on and so forth. Now, all recyclable material can be placed into one handy container (Hint: it's the one with the blue lid).

Tiburcio added that the Solano Garbage Company offers many other programs to help base people dispose of their waste appropriately and safely. She said the Solano Garbage Company offers free hazardous waste disposal on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month (by appointment only).

To set up a hazardous waste disposal appointment, call Solano Garbage Company at 439-2817.

For more information or questions on the recycling program, contact the Travis recycling manager at 424-5127.

All Travis recycling programs are provided free of charge to all Travis residents and, Tiburcio said, while it does take a few extra seconds to separate your recyclables from your garbage, the benefits will be reaped for years to come.



Using old pallets (left) and green waste (right), the recycling center creates safe, useable compost.

Recycling center grinds garbage into 'gold'

By Tech. Sgt. Mark Diamond
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Some folks are calling the Travis Recycling Center the "best kept secret" on Travis Air Force Base.

Each week, family housing residents, base beautification teams, squadron work details and contractors dig up, rake up and otherwise collect a large amount of green waste. Green waste includes everything from grass, weeds and flowers, to shrubs, small branches and leaves.

According to the base recycling experts, hundreds of yards of green waste is produced on base every month.

In years past, this green waste would fill base garbage bins to the brim and tack on additional charges to base sanitation fees. Not any more.

In housing, the green waste is placed into green-lidded carts, or totes, and placed on the curb. The carts are emptied by the Solano Garbage Company and the green waste is delivered to the base recycling center.

Once at the recycling center, the green waste begins a process that eventually yields hundreds of

yards of useable compost and landscaping material.

According to Theresa Travers, Solano Garbage Company employee and manager of the base recycling center, the pallets are ground up and mixed with the green waste. The resulting material is placed in large mounds where it can "cook." Travers said the cooking process destroys any harmful bacteria. As part of the cooking process, Solano Garbage Company employees occasionally water and rotate the mixture.

When the cooking process is complete, the mixture is lab-tested to ensure the absence of metals, harmful bacteria or other contaminants.

With positive lab results in hand, the mixture is sifted into several grades of compost and landscaping filler. Travers said the compost and landscaping material is available free of charge to all on-base residents.

According to Solano Garbage Company employee Harry Peavey, the compost has been used by various base activities, including the horse stables, a Fitness Center landscaping project, and at the Golf Course.

The recycling center, located on Dixon Avenue, is open Tuesday — Saturday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Travis employees mandated to purchase environmentally-friendly products

By Tech. Sgt. Mark Diamond
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If you spend the government's money, be prepared to purchase products that comply with the Travis Affirmative Procurement Program.

According to the Travis APP manager, government employees are required by legislation, executive order and Air Force directives to purchase and use products that are better for the environment.

Dolores Tiburcio said the Affirmative Procurement Program directs government purchases to

the Comprehensive Procurement Guideline items. CPG items are products that the Environmental Protection Agency has identified as having specific levels of recovered materials. APP also requires government employees to consider the EPA's environmentally preferable products and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's bio-based products.

Tiburcio said one of the easiest ways to comply with the Travis APP is to order products online through the GSA Advantage program at www.gsaadvantage.gov. Additionally, she said the Base Service Store carries an extensive

list of CPG items. These items are indicated by a bright green sticker. According to Tiburcio, only under certain circumstances are government employees justified for not purchasing CPG designated items. These include: 1.) The item is not available competitively within a reasonable time frame; 2.) The item does not meet appropriate performance standards; or 3.) The item is only available at an unreasonable price.

For a list of the CPG items, visit www.epa.gov/cpg or at <http://fss.gsa.gov/eniro>.

Do the Blue

In February, Travis family housing residents were provided three totes to replace a single garbage bin and two recycling crates. The new, color-coordinated totes allow base residents to place trash in one bin (the one with the gray lid), green waste and food waste in another (the one with the green lid), and recyclable material in a third (the one with the blue lid).



Lid Color

Garbage Tote

▶▶ Garbage only.



Lid Color

Green Waste Tote

▶▶ Acceptable green waste includes: yard trimmings, grass cuttings, leaves, flowers, weeds or small tree and brush trimmings.

▶▶ Acceptable food waste includes: grain product and baked goods, coffee grounds, meat, bones, fish, and other decomposable matter.

▶▶ DO NOT place plastic bags, dirt, rocks, wood, sand, pet waste or dead animals in the green tote.



Lid Color

Recycling Tote

▶▶ Paper products — newspaper, corrugated cardboard, envelopes, magazines, white or mixed office paper, computer paper, paper bags, grocery bags, cereal boxes, phone books.

▶▶ Glass — Beverage of food containers that are clear, brown or green.

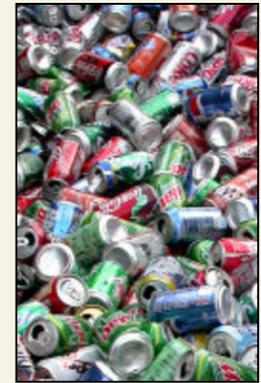
▶▶ Plastic — Containers used for soda, milk, water, juice, detergent or bleach or shampoo bottles. Look for the PET or HDPE symbol on the bottom of the container.

▶▶ Aluminum — soda cans, aluminum foil or disposable pans.

▶▶ DO NOT place plastic grocery bags, diapers, window glass, pots and pans, packing paper or ceramic goods inside the blue recycle tote.

Additional information:

Although garbage, green waste and recycling totes are picked up weekly in base housing, Solano Garbage Company officials said residents should not feel obligated to place their carts on the curb if they are not full. Also, they said to ensure a clean and safe pickup, make sure the carts are not overflowing and that the lids are closed.



Recycling, an easy way to turn trash into cash

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If saving Mother Earth isn't enough, the Travis Recycling Program manager hopes earning some extra money will entice base residents to recycle.

Dolores Tiburcio said instead of filling their blue-lidded recycling tote each week, Travis housing residents can take their aluminum cans, plastic and glass to the base recycling center and have it redeemed for cold, hard cash. She said military units can do the same, using the money to bolster their booster club accounts.

The recycling center — located on Dixon Avenue just around the corner from the Outdoor Recreation office — will pay base residents money for certain recyclables.

The center will accept any recyclable aluminum, glass or plastic. An easy way to tell if the item is redeemable is to look for the words "CA-CASH REFUND."

Although the prices fluctuate, the base recycling center is currently paying about 85 cents per pound for aluminum cans. Plastic pays a little less at 41 cents per pound, and glass will bring in about 5 cents per pound.

The recycling center is open for business Tuesday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

RECYCLING TIPS

▶▶ With their commander's permission, squadrons can appoint recycling monitors for each building they are responsible for.

▶▶ Place a recycling container close enough to your desk that you can easily reach it when discarding paper products.

▶▶ When desk-side or office recycling containers are full, empty them into the green, 100-gallon totes in your unit staging area. To request green totes, call Fred Brown at 424-2706.

▶▶ In addition to the green totes, brown recycling bins/Dumpsters are strategically placed throughout the base industrial area.

▶▶ Newspaper, white paper and mixed paper no longer need to be separated. Mix it together in the same bin.

▶▶ Solano Garbage Company is paid a "tipping fee" based on how many times base garbage containers are emptied. When people recycle, the garbage bins are emptied less often, which, in turn, saves Travis money.

▶▶ A recent EPA study showed the recycling in the average home takes less than 73 minutes per month.