

Environmental Protection Settlement with Goodwill Industries



Sacramento County District Attorney's Office

Semper Justitia

Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert and the District Attorneys of Butte, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Shasta, Sutter, and Yolo counties announced the settlement of a civil case against Goodwill Industries of Sacramento Valley and Northern Nevada, Inc. for mishandling hazardous materials and hazardous waste. The settlement requires Goodwill to pay \$200,000 in costs and penalties, implement an enhanced compliance program, and hire a compliance manager.

Goodwill has 60 facilities in Sacramento County including donation, sorting, and retail centers. Goodwill has 30 similar facilities in the other counties. Hazardous materials handled by Goodwill include propane, gasoline, cleaners, and solvents. The hazardous wastes that were the subject of this enforcement action included Goodwill's own used maintenance materials and donated items such as light bulbs, pesticides, lighters, old medications, cleaning products, and cosmetics that were no longer useable. The complaint alleged that Goodwill failed to adequately train Goodwill employees and improperly transported and disposed of hazardous waste.

Prior to filing the complaint, the District Attorney's Office contacted Goodwill about the violations. Goodwill acted to correct the violations and fully cooperated in the investigation. Goodwill has implemented a compliance program, revised its policies and procedures, and improved its employee training materials. Goodwill has also implemented new protocols for screening donations prior to accepting and rejecting items that

may potentially be classified as hazardous waste. The terms of the settlement incorporate these procedures.

District Attorney Schubert states, “When people donate items to organizations like Goodwill, it is important they follow the guidelines regarding what can be accepted. Goodwill does not accept cosmetics, household pesticides or chemicals, spray cans, or paint. In addition to the settlement of this matter, the public should be aware that due to COVID 19, most Goodwill stores are closed and are not accepting donations. Leaving items at a closed Goodwill donation site is considered dumping and is illegal.”

Sacramento County’s Department of Waste Management and Recycling operates Household Hazardous Waste Facilities providing essential disposal services to county residents. See the website <https://wmr.saccounty.net/Pages/HHW-Dropoff-Centers.aspx> for information on disposal of household items such as antifreeze, batteries, oils, and paints. The website has information about facilities operated by the County of Sacramento and cities within the county. In other areas, check with the local county and city waste management agencies.