

CHaRM's Newest Recyclable Material: Porcelain Toilets, Sinks and Urinals

Time to dust off those porcelain beauties you've been saving. I don't mean your collectible porcelain figurines, but rather that old sink or toilet from your last remodeling project. Starting on November 15th, the Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (we affectionately call it the CHaRM) in Boulder will accept yet another "non-traditional" material for recycling: porcelain toilets, sinks and even urinals. Yes, it's dirty work, but someone had to do it since there are currently no reuse or recycling options for these items for Boulder and Broomfield County residents.

Porcelain fixtures will only be accepted at the CHaRM at 5030 "old" Pearl St. in Boulder, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Saturday. For a complete list of materials accepted, pick up the latest Fall/Winter edition of the *Eco-Cycle Times* newsletter at the Broomfield Recycling Center, visit www.ecocycle.org/charm or call 303-444-6634. Do not leave your porcelain bathroom fixtures (or any other hard-to-recycle items) at any of Eco-Cycle's recycling centers.

There is a small fee to offset the handling and transportation costs Eco-Cycle will incur with this new material, but you can save yourself some money (and save Eco-Cycle some labor) by removing all non-porcelain pieces in advance.

The removal of supply lines, toilet seats and lids, toilet valves and faucets is relatively easy and can be accomplished in a few minutes with a decent pair of pliers. Most toilets have a large brass ring and nut sticking out of the bottom of the tank which may prove to be a bit more challenging, unless you happen to have a large adjustable wrench or pliers that can open up to fit a 3" nut. But don't worry; if hugging and wrestling with the toilet isn't your thing, we'll be happy to do the work for you.

Prices are as follows:

Toilet, porcelain only (all other materials removed)	\$4
Toilet, whole (other materials still attached)	\$10
Sink or urinal, porcelain only	\$2
Sink or urinal, plumbing attached	\$5

CHaRM will send the collected porcelain fixtures to a company that grinds up old concrete into a material that can be used in place of gravel road base in road construction projects. Ground porcelain is similar enough in compaction qualities to ground concrete that area road material contractors have agreed to allow us to bring them your porcelain bathroom fixtures to be added to the mountains of old concrete that they process for road projects. Recycling your porcelain not only saves landfill space, but it also reduces the need for virgin gravel from area rock quarries.

The CHaRM will not accept cast iron sinks, bathtubs, sink cabinets or countertops, dishes, cups, or other ceramics, concrete, or biohazards. Fortunately, enamel-coated cast iron tubs can be recycled as scrap metal, and our online Hard-to-Recycle guide (www.ecocycle.org) has alternative locations to reuse or recycle some of these materials.

If this is your impetus for upgrading your throne to a high-efficient, low flush model, you could save 4,000 gallons of water per year and upwards of \$90 off your water bill without changing your habits, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Check out www.epa.gov/WaterSense to find certified high-efficiency toilets, or swing by the plumbing store and ask for their advice on the best options out there.

As for your old commode, as long as you recycle it properly, it will enjoy a happy, new life, where the sun shines!

Genevieve George is Eco-Cycle's Broomfield Outreach Coordinator. To learn more about recycling or the Eco-Cycle/Broomfield Recycling Center, call (303)404-2839 or e-mail genevieve@ecocycle.org