

Supported by the
**SAN MATEO COUNTY TASK FORCE
ON HOARDING**

Hoarding and Cluttering:

Excessive acquiring

Difficulty discarding useless items

Living in excessively cluttered spaces

Having significant distress over items

**Do Not Let This Happen To You.
Try the suggestions in this pamphlet.**



Brochure is funded by the Older Americans Act and prepared by Peninsula Community Services, Inc. for the San Mateo County Hoarding Task Force
Web Site www.hoarders.org

2011

**San Mateo County Resource Guide
for Hoarding and Cluttering**

INFORMATION GUIDE

About

HOARDING & CLUTTERING



**Helpful Suggestions for
Residents Facing an
Overwhelming Problem**

Hoarding Definition

The acquisition and retention of a large number of things or animals until they cause interference with day-to-day functions. One's home, health, family, work and social life may be affected. Severe hoarding causes safety and health hazards. Failure to discard clutter is one aspect of hoarding.

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Common characteristics of people with problems related to hoarding:

Indecisive, Difficulty organizing, Procrastinating,
Perfectionism and Avoidance Behavior

MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

The **Obsessive Compulsive Foundation** lists therapists in this area with a specialty in Hoarding. Call 1-617-973-5801 or see their web Site.

Mental Health Specialists need to see photographs of the problem. Always bring pictures or have therapist make a home visit. Current research suggests a specialist in Cognitive Behavior Therapy may be the most helpful.

There may be many coexisting mental health problems associated with hoarding such as Obsessive Compulsive Disorders, AD/ADHD, Depression, Dementia and Schizophrenia. These should be treated.



Cognitive Behavioral Group Therapy
for Hoarding Disorders is now being held at
Mills Health Center in San Mateo 16 weeks Sessions
FEE \$20 /wk To register: Call Alan
at Peninsula Community Services 650-343-4380

SAFETY AND HEALTH CONCERNS OF AN OVER- FULL HOUSE

SAFETY CONCERNS

- **LIMITED ACCESS and NARROW PATHS**
 - Stairs, banisters, windows and/or doors not clear
 - Entry and exits blocked
- **LARGE QUANTITY OF FLAMABLE CONTENTS**
 - Rooms overfilled with huge amounts of stuff
 - Hazardous stove, heater, gas and/or electrical wiring
- **UNSANITARY CONDITIONS**
 - Toilet, shower or sinks unusable
 - Food and refrigeration contents out of date
 - Rotting garbage, cans, bottles and paper litter
 - Human or Animal waste accumulation
 - Rodent and mite infestation

HEALTH CONCERNS

- Increased possibility of falls
- Possible allergies and breathing problems
- Social Isolation from friends and family
- Untreated medical or psychological conditions
- Strained finances due to habitual shopping

HOUSING, HOARDING AND THE LAW

WORST CASE SCENARIO

Excessive Hoarding Conditions and Housing

There may be complaints to the landlord or the authorities if living conditions exist that pose severe and significant health and safety risks. An order of eviction from the landlord or the city/county can be given out. The residence may be posted “**Unsafe to Occupy**”. If this happens, the courts may even appoint a conservator.

That is why it is so important to begin working on cleaning up early so there is no reason to evict for real health or safety risks.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

What does the law say about disability?

If you are a tenant and your hoarding is related to a physical or mental disability, you may be able to stop an eviction and get extra time to clean up your home or apartment. This is called “**Reasonable Accommodation**”.

Most Code Enforcement Officials

will work with you to find help. They can be on your side and on your team.

Contact them through information at 211 for your local area.

They may have access to funds for debris collection.

**SAN MATEO COUNTY
HEALTH SERVICES**

San Mateo County Aging and Adult Services

225 37th Ave. in San Mateo

Provides programs for adults.
Responds to reports of adults in unsafe situations.
24 hour response

TIES line 1-800-675-8437

Behavioral Health and Recovery Services

1950 Alameda De Las Pulgas in San Mateo

Provides information, assessment and consultation

1-800-686-0101 24hr Access Line

Crisis and Suicide Prevention - Hot Line

650-579-0350

Dependency and Recovery Services 650-573-3950

Child Protective Services

1-800-632-4615 or 650-595-7522

A 24-hour line for reports of abuse or abandonment

San Mateo County Mosquito & Vector Control District

Rodent Control Inspection Services

650-344-8592

San Mateo County Non Medical

Emergency Line 211

Peninsula Humane Society

650-340-7022

www.peninsulahumanesociety.org

**TAKE THIS 10 POINT QUIZ
DO YOU HAVE SERIOUS HOARDING ISSUES?**

1. Are any household exits (doors & windows) and/or stairs, or driveways blocked by storage?
2. Are any interior doors unable to open completely due to storage and clutter?
3. Are the bathtubs, toilets and sinks in poor working order or unable to be used?
4. Are the kitchen areas such as sink, stove and refrigerator not working or inaccessible?
5. Are you unable to enter and use all rooms due to accumulation of possessions?
6. Are you unable to sleep in your bed because of accumulations?
7. Are there any situations that could cause safety concerns such as dangerous electrical cord connections, storage of large quantities of newspapers, books, and paper, clothing or purchases filling up your dwelling?
8. Are you accumulating a large number of pets with waste disposal problems?
9. Are you unable to deal with infestations of rats, mice, roaches and home repairs adequately because of fears or embarrassment?
10. Are there narrow paths leading through your house or yard lined with storage or clutter?

Answering Yes to many of these questions may mean you have a serious issue. Seek professional assistance to make your household safe and useable again.

CLEAN-UP TIPS from Professional Organizers

1. **Categorize** This means to separate like with like and create boundaries between them.
2. **Label** A critical piece to keep things organized.
3. **Find charities** FOR DONATIONS
4. **Seek organizer services when** you are stuck, need help sorting, categorizing and/or organizing.

*Contact local Professional Organizers with a specialty
in hoarding and cluttering at*

The Institute for Challenging Disorganization

See Section: Find an organizer at their web site

<http://www.challengingdisorganization.org/node/102>

GARBAGE/DEBRIS COLLECTION

There may be free pick up days for major items.

<http://www.recycleworks.org/resident/map.html>

Allied Waste of S.M. Co.	650-592-2411
SSF/Millbrae/Brisbane Scavenger	650-589-4020
Recology of San Mateo Co.	650 872-2310
Recology of the Coast	650-355-9000
Recology San Bruno	650-583-8536
Greenwaste Recovery	650-568-9900

For question contact Recycle Works 1-888-442-2666

Household Hazardous Waste Program - Call 650-363-4718

Reduce Junk Mail: www.recycleworks.org/junkmail

*If financial assistance is needed, check with local government office
or Code Enforcement officer.*

INTERNET INFORMATION

O C Foundation Web Site

<http://www.ocfoundation.org/hoarding>

What is your level of clutter? 1-9

Clutter Rating Scales & Photos

http://www.boston.com/yourlife/health/diseases/articles/2007/04/02/bedroom_clutter/

Harmless Pack Rat or Compulsive Hoarder? 3 questions to decide if you are a compulsive hoarder:

http://www.webmd.com/mental-health/features/harmless-pack-rat-or-compulsive-hoarder?ecd=wnl_emw_031908&print=true

Hoarding Newsletter Boston Univ. 2007 Research

http://www.science.smith.edu/departments/PSYCH/rfrost/NEHC_Newsletter_April_2007.pdf

Mass Housing Community Services Hoarding Links

<https://www.masshousing.com/portal/server.pt?mode=2&uulID={F6E398E9-46E7-4D28-A1A8-9566981ADA20}>

Excellent Safety Check list

http://www.environmentalgeriatrics.com/home_safety/safety_checklist.html

Practical Tools for Community—NYC

http://www.environmentalgeriatrics.com/home_safety/clutter.htm

San Francisco Bay Area Resources for Extreme Hoarding <http://www.hoarders.org>

What is Compulsive Hoarding? *Treatment for it, When a*

Loved One Hoards. Please see Dr. Tolin's Institute at

<http://www.harthosp.org/instituteofliving/anxietydisorderscenter/compulsivehoarding/default.aspx>

Is Your House Messy?

<http://www.squalorsurvivors.com/index.shtml>

LEGAL ASSISTANCE
In San Mateo County

Legal Rights of Hoarders and Clutterers

<http://www.mha-sf.org/library/rights.cfm>

Landlord Tenant Information and Referral

http://www.housing.org/sanmateotenants/Download/LT_IRC_brochure.pdf

Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center

1660 South Amphlett Blvd., No. 219
San Mateo, CA 94402
650-513-0330

<http://www.pcrcweb.org/mediation/mediation.jsp>

Bay Area Legal Aid

San Mateo Regional Office
2287 El Camino Real
San Mateo, CA 94403
650-358-0745, 1-800-551-5554

<http://www.baylegal.org/>

Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County

521 East 5th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94402
650-558-0915, 1-800-381-8898
TTD 650-558-0786

http://www.legalaidsmc.org/our_services.htm

San Mateo County Bar Association

333 Bradford St. in Redwood City
650-369-4149
Lawyer referral service

La Raza Centro Legal

1-415-575-3500 <http://techforpeople.net/~lrcl/>

Housing Assistance

Human Investment Project

650-348-6660 <http://www.hiphousing.org/>

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS

1. **DEVELOP A PLAN TO MAKE YOUR HOME SAFE AND HEALTHY- Harm reduction**
2. **WORK ON ORGANIZING ONE AREA AT A TIME**
Start with the easiest, promoting safety. Declutter 15 minutes a day at least.
3. **REDUCE THE ACQUISITION OF NEW POSSESSIONS** - Avoid garage sales, internet, thrift stores
4. **SEEK ASSISTANCE BECAUSE THE PROBLEM WON'T GO AWAY BY ITSELF** - Find informed professionals to help you make changes.
5. **SEEK TREATMENT FOR ALL MEDICAL OR PSYCHIATRIC CONDITIONS**
6. **LOOK FOR A SUPPORT GROUP** - Family, friends and/or professionals
7. **KEEP DAILY ROUTINES** - Finish tidying up the dishes, sink, bed and clothes. Make this a habit.

DON'T LOSE HOPE!

DONATION & PICK UP SERVICES

Many organizations will pick up items left outside.

ECUMENICAL HUNGER PROGRAM

To schedule a pick-up, call 650-323-7781.

GOODWILL - No pick ups but seven donation sites in San Mateo County call 1-888-446-6394.

<http://www.sfgoodwill.org/LocationsDonate.aspx>

THE SALVATION ARMY For pick-ups and drop off locations, call 1-800-958-7825.

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

For pick-up, call 650-871-6844

Five donations locations - Call 650-343- 4405 x03

<http://www.svdp-sanmateoco.org/donategoods.html>

PARCA (for People with Developmental Disabilities)

To Schedule pick-ups, call 650-312-0725

Drop off at Saver's Stores in Daly City & Redwood City. <http://www.parca.org/pickups.htm>

SHELTER NETWORK Donations can be dropped off at any of their locations. Call 650-685-5880 x114

<http://www.shelternetwork.org/donate/index.php>

HUMANE SOCIETY- Pick of the Litter- Resale shop

1127 Chula Vista Ave., Burlingame.

Call first before dropping off donations Call 650-344-1662

<http://www.peninsulahumanesociety.org/services/store.html>

SAINT FRANCIS CTR. Redwood City 650-365-7829

<http://www.stfrancisrwc.org/page6/page6.html>

For a comprehensive list of organizations accepting donations, see the **Reuse Guide** at **Recycle Works** at 1-888-442-2666

http://www.recycleworks.org/pdf/reuse_guide.pdf

SUPPORT GROUPS

Peninsula Community Services, Inc

Professionally led Support Groups held at Mills Health Center in San Mateo for persons trying to cope with their problems related to hoarding.

The groups meet twice a month on Thursday evenings. Sessions are free. To register for a support group call:

Phone 650-343-4380

Obsessive Compulsive Foundation of the S.F. Bay Area

OCD hoarding is included - <http://ocd-bayarea.com/>

- **Kaiser in Santa Clara**, First Saturday of the month 10:00 a.m. to Noon
900 Kaiser Blvd., Bldg. B Conf. Rm., Santa Clara
- **Seton Medical Center**, 3rd Saturday of the Month 1:30 - 3:00
1900 Sullivan Ave., Daly City - 2nd Floor next to Cafeteria

Clutterers Anonymous – 12 Step Group

This is an organization for people who struggle with the clutter in their lives. <http://www.clutterersanonymous.net/>

- **Phone meetings** 1-800-871-9012 access code 6705172#.
- **Face to Face Meeting:**
 - **Los Altos** Monday, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Once a month, 3rd Monday unless a holiday. Town Crier (2nd floor), 138 Main Street, 2nd Floor (rear entrance on State St).
 - **San Francisco** 45 Castro, B level Room B1/B2 at CPMC Davies Medical Center campus Sunday 2:00 - 3:00

On line Support Groups

For local listings: <http://www.hoarders.org/sq.html>

Self Help

<http://takeonestepatime.proboards.com/index.cgi>

<http://www.Fly lady.net>

<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/H-C/>

EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

BOOKS

Buried in Treasures Self Help for Compulsive Acquiring, Saving, and Hoarding by David F. Tolin, Randy O. Frost and Gail Steketee

Compulsive Hoarding and Inquiring Workbook
by Gail Steketee and R. Frost

Why You Save and How You Can Stop
by F. Neziroglu, J. Bubrick and Jose Yaryura-Tobias

Digging Out by Michael Tompkins and Tamara Hartl
Helping your loved one manage clutter, hoarding and compulsive acquiring.

FAMILY AND CHILDREN

See more at: <http://www.hoarders.org/f-c.html>

HELPING THE PERSON WHO SUFFERS FROM CONSEQUENCES OF HOARDING

Non Threatening Approach:

- Focus on Safety
- Use encouraging language
- Emphasize strengths
- Persuading or arguing generally has the opposite affect. Focus on what they want.
- What is important to you in your life? Hopes and Goals?
- How would you like your life to be in 5 years?
- Is acquiring and difficulty organizing or getting rid of things affecting your goals?
- Given what is important to you, how can you pursue your goals?

ANIMAL HOARDING

<http://www.tufts.edu/vet/hoarding/intervention.htm>

THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Tips About Discarding *

1. Keep your Goals foremost in mind. Consider safety first.
2. Start with an area not too emotional to you.
3. Limit your time. Focus on 15 minute manageable task/blocks of time. Increase as you are able. Build successes.
4. Sort but don't over think and create too many categories.
5. Make four piles, Discard, Donate, Recycle and Keep.
6. Try to use the OHIO rule- Only Handle it Once.
7. A digital photo can replace an object as a reminder.
8. Keep valuable papers together and safe. Know where they are.
9. More of something is not necessarily better.
10. Just because you can think of a use for an object does not mean you should keep it.
11. Be brave; Take a risk; Break your old rule; Discard.
12. When fears overwhelm, try to understand what you are afraid of and what is irrational.
13. Be patient and forgiving of yourself and others.
14. Keep the ball rolling. Devote time to tasks each day.
15. Ask for help as needed from those you trust.
16. Avoid shopping, garage sales and thrift stores.

Three questions to ask yourself when sorting:

1. What is the worst that could happen to me without this item?
2. What are other sources for this information or item?
3. What do others do with similar items?

**Some of these tips came from Dr. Tolin at the Anxiety Disorders Clinic, The Institute for Living at Hartford Hospital*