

February 2023



The Castle Hills Reporter

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A bi-monthly newsletter for the residents of the City of Castle Hills published by Neighborhood News, Inc.

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Happy Spring, Neighbors:

Things have been busy with the City of Castle Hills. There is a lot of information and good news to share. First up is my favorite.

Streets and Drainage

You may remember that last spring the council had intended to borrow another round of debt to fund additional street work. Unfortunately, our plans were delayed when we were presented with a petition. As the law prescribes, the petition was put to a vote in November 2022. The voters spoke with overwhelming clarity and direction, with 74.92% of the voters authorizing the City Council to proceed to borrow money to fund street and drainage improvements. You will be happy to know that we wasted no time in getting started with the street and drainage improvements you want, need, and deserve. Last month we authorized engineers to start designing plans so that we can go out for bids for the projects.

The engineers expect the plans to be completed right before summer. We will then proceed to advertise for bids, and by the end of summer we should receive several proposals from which to select a contractor. The tentative plan is to start construction around fall 2023. This next round of street and drainage improvements should allow us to address all streets identified in the capital improvement plan as being in "poor condition". We are also working on a plan to team up with our partners at Bexar County and the City of San Antonio for some of the roadwork at Lockhill and Glentower.

Economic Development

Many of you have been asking about SoHo Martini Bar. While we were excited to welcome SoHo, they have had some business changes and will not be opening in Castle Hills after all. This is unfortunate news, but there are two other businesses that are planning to offer upscale options for adult beverages in our city. The great news is that both have received preliminary approval from the city to move forward. The first, Thirsty Pups Brewery and Tap Room, is moving forward to open at 2211 Northwest Military Highway, in the same shopping center as Sushishima and Ballet San Antonio. The next one is Clear Light Coffee in the same shopping center as Clementine. This is of great excitement to me personally as we need early morning sit down coffee options in Castle Hills. The folks at Clear Light Coffee already have one location further down West Avenue and they are eager to start their business in Castle Hills. They will also serve wine and small food plates!

Important Times in Castle Hills

With the warm weather right around the corner, please stay tuned for events that we have coming out soon. The first and very exciting event is Castle Hills Fiesta on April 22nd, 2023,

(Continued on page 3)

CITY COUNCIL

JR Trevino
Mayor

Joe Izbrand
Mayor Pro-Tem, Place 1

Frank Paul
Place 2

Kurt May
Place 3

Jack Joyce
Place 4

Beth Daines
Place 5

CITY STAFF

Ryan Rapelye
City Manager, (210) 293-9673

Brenda Craig
Interim City Secretary
(210) 293-9681

Nora Davis
Finance, (210) 293-9674

James "Jim" Ladewig
Fire Chief
(210) 342-2341, ext. 217

Steven Zuniga
Police Chief
(210) 342-2341

Rick Harada
Public Works & Animal Control
Department Director
(210) 293-9676

ALL EMERGENCIES, EMT, FIRE & POLICE CALL 911

Non-emergency (210) 342-2341

Monthly Meetings

All meetings are held at
City Hall unless otherwise posted.

City Council
2nd Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.

**Architectural Review
Committee**
1st Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.
Upon Request

Board of Adjustment
4th Monday, 5:30 p.m.
Upon Request

Zoning Commission
1st Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
Upon Request

**Crime Control & Prevention
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3rd Monday, 5:30 p.m.
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(Continued from page 2)

but rest assured that the Castle Hills Community Organization has lots planned for the Spring and Summer!

Congratulations to our City Manager Ryan Rapelye for celebrating 5 years with the City of Castle Hills! Interesting fact, he is the longest serving City Manager in almost 20 years! Thank you, Mr. Rapelye, for everything that you do for the City of Castle Hills!

Sergeant Ronald Singleton aka "Officer Friendly"

Thank you so much to the Castle Hills community for being the tight knit family that you are and we have come to love. Unfortunately, we lost our friend and colleague **Ronald Singleton** on January 8, 2023. While the tragic loss of such a good person is never easy, it was met with the warm embrace of people across the City of Castle Hills, and the State and Nation. While that may seem slightly exaggerated, I assure you it is not. I was at a loss of words at Sergeant Singleton's memorial. He had brothers and sisters that he served with who traveled from all over to pay their final respects. One of our own former officers, Corporal Garrett Earlywine, came all the way from Florida in his Florida Highway Patrol uniform. Such an emotionally charged moment was a gentle reminder that Ron is still amongst us, for in death he was still able to bring everyone together like no one else.



It would be a disservice to not thank the countless community partners who supported us as our Castle Hills family grieved. A special thank you to the folks at Wayside who helped to coordinate the service, and to Balcones Heights Fire Department who manned our station so that our Firefighters could attend the memorial service uninterrupted. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. Rest easy Sergeant Singleton.

Yours in service,


JR Treviño

Mayor

JTrevino@CastleHills-TX.gov

210-559-5940





MESSAGE FROM

THE CITY MANAGER

By Ryan D. Rapelye, City Manager

As a City, we look forward to 2023, we continue to progress and build upon our major accomplishments in 2022. In 2022, we took further steps in completing major road and drainage projects, following the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and have taken the steps to fund necessary infrastructure needs throughout the community. As City Manager, I am excited about what has been achieved over the last few years, what we have planned, and yet to come in 2023 for the City of Castle Hills. Last year, we were able to complete Phase II Banyan and Carolwood to address flood mitigation, this now ties in into the Banyan Phase I completed in 2020. In addition to the drainage projects completed, we have finished Phase I and II Street Improvements which involved the reconstruction of fourteen streets. In 2022, we also completed additional street maintenance (microsurface) of six streets. Over the last three years, we have been able to do this maintenance on nearly thirty streets as part of the City's Street maintenance plan.

In 2022, we took steps to launch a new City website and boost our social media presence and have mailed out informational items related to City services and events, all of these things implemented for better transparency and ensuring the community is better informed on events, projects, and City related services. We will continue to enhance our communications platform and are in the process of implementing a new notification system to include emergency alerts. Last year, we were also able to make upgrades to our IT infrastructure and procure generators for the Fire department and City Hall, these projects being funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Also In 2022, City Council adopted a robust FY 23 Budget which included projected revenues, allocation of operational funds necessary to continue to provide the highest quality services for our residents, and recommended capital projects necessary to maintain the current and future needs of the City. City Council also raised the starting salary for our patrol officers to compete with surrounding cities to recruit officers for the Castle Hills Police Department. City Council also adopted a lower tax rate to assist residents with the increase in valuations as a result of higher appraisals last year.

(Continued on page 4)

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KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY

(Continued from page 3)

When the fiscal year 2022 ended in December, the City revenues in the General Fund were very strong and the City saw an increase in various revenue streams. The strongest increases were in sales taxes, permit fees, interest and court revenues, but several other revenue classes were up over the original budget projections. Our local economy, especially related to revenue in the areas of sales tax and permitting have seen an uptick post pandemic restrictions. The City had some salary savings in the police department due to vacancies throughout the 2022 fiscal year. When the audit is done later this year in May, the auditors will determine if a surplus exists for the City's FY 22 Fiscal Year. The City's fiscal health is very healthy. Standard & Poor's provided a rating of "AA" in 2020 and since then have reaffirmed the City "AA" rating twice in two years. One of the items S&P indicated strength in the City's fiscal position was our fiscal policies in place and the City's reserve fund with over six month operations.

As we began, 2023, the City has already taken the steps to request our engineers to develop the design to reconstruct twelve more streets and undertake four drainage projects which include long term flooding issues on streets including North Manton and Glentower. We are targeting this summer to go out for bids to reconstruct the next series of streets. We are working on developing the scope for an eventual agreement for funding with the City of San Antonio to address drainage problems at Lockhill-Selma and Glentower. Also, this year, we will further take the appropriate steps to improve quality of life amenities in Castle Hills, specifically the Commons, such as a playground and shade structures. These amenities will also be done through donations and other fundraising opportunities in combination with funds from the American Rescue Plan Act. We are also looking to improve the City's phone system and working to do permitting online as part of our effort to enhance customer service when doing business at City hall.

In February, I reached my five-year anniversary with the City of Castle Hills. In February 2018, I accepted this position based on a council-manager form of government. I knew Castle Hills was an excellent place to live, and for me personally, it was an opportunity for growth in my career as a City Manager and allowed me to be closer to my daughter. Early in my tenure, there were some unnecessary roadblocks, obstacles and unprecedented challenges created at times which did not afford me the latitude, judgment and flexibility to do my job as City Manager.

However, over the last three years, this has definitely changed

because the City Council, City staff and I have worked collectively together to get projects done which has transformed the City's infrastructure, enhance city services and put forth plans and ideas to assist Castle Hills for years to come. This collective effort has been on display especially with the transformation of our City's infrastructure. We also have consistently worked to evaluate areas of the organization and city services based on my experience from other cities and the feedback from our City staff because, again, "we" have to do this together. The City of Castle Hills has wonderful employees who do their jobs on a daily basis and work to assist our residents, with customer service being paramount.

In 2023, as City Manager, I will continue to work with City Council on short and long-term goals address infrastructure needs, promote quality of life projects, economic development and ensure that we retain and attract good employees for our City. We have continued to elevate and move the City in a positive direction, established a culture, and overall have improved the stability of the organization for City staff and the residents we serve. This starts at the top, and I would like to recognize and thank the Mayor and City Council for their leadership.

In closing, I would like to extend a **THANK YOU** to all our employees who make up our **"Team Castle Hills"** for their commitment to the City. I appreciate all they do for the City of Castle Hills on a daily basis.

Please contact me at rrapelye@castlehills-tx.gov or at the office at 210.293.9673 if you have any questions on projects or need assistance with services from the City of Castle Hills.



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COUNCIL COMMENTS



JOE IZBRAND

PLACE 1

Mayor Pro-Tem

Dear Neighbor,

We've started 2023 with a great deal of momentum in Castle Hills. After receiving overwhelming voter support in a referendum late last year, the City Council in February authorized the issuance of \$6 million in certificates of obligation to complete the major street and drainage infrastructure projects throughout the city.

In the process, the city received some very good news. Nine lending firms bid for our business and we were offered a 3.58 percent interest rate on the certificates. This is nearly a full percentage point lower than what our financial advisor had predicted. And, it means that we will pay tens of thousands less in interest on the certificates.

Our ability to earn this low interest rate is the result of several factors: our consistently balanced city budgets, the health of our reserve fund for city operations, implementing an investment policy, shifting our fiscal year to align with other government and taxing agencies, and our outstanding "AA" credit rating. Your City Council has worked very hard to ensure there is a sound and stable financial management system in place in Castle Hills.

This summer, our city engineers will bring forward detailed plans for the street and drainage projects.

The stability of our city is reflected in other ways, too. One of the most important is an ability to attract and retain highly qualified individuals on our city staff. In February, we marked the five-year anniversary of Ryan Rapelye as our city manager. Mr. Rapelye is now one of the longest serving city managers in Castle Hills history.

Mr. Rapelye is an instrumental leader, goal oriented and constantly pursuing ways to improve productivity. One of his

many accomplishments as city manager has been to implement a comprehensive Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) which prioritizes and maps out major initiatives for the city so we can anticipate, well in advance, the funding needed for foundational projects.

He has also worked diligently to strengthen our organizational structure and create a culture for city employees that has resulted in a strong and responsive team, ready to assist our residents on a daily basis. We should all feel very proud of the caliber and dedication of our city staff.

This year also brings numerous community activities to the city. This includes 10 events hosted by the Castle Hills Community Organization, and a number of other activities hosted by the Castle Hills Garden Club and the Castle Hills Woman's Club.

Information about many of these events is available in listings throughout this edition of the Castle Hills Reporter. I also share updates on Castle Hills news and activities at www.facebook.com/izbrandplace1 and invite you to follow my page.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your voice on City Council. Let's keep in touch and, if you have questions, need assistance with an issue, or have ideas to share, please connect with me at www.facebook.com/izbrandplace1, via email at izbrandplace1@gmail.com and by phone at 210-880-5740.

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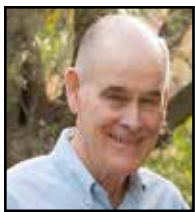
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FRANK PAUL
PLACE 2

The following article is provided by Judy Crawford, President of the Castle Hills Woman's Club:

The Castle Hills Woman's Club ("the Woman's Club") is celebrating its 70th Anniversary as an organization dedicated to promoting interest in beautification, safety, friendship, health, and good citizenship within the City of Castle Hills

The Woman's Club has a rich history of civic and charitable projects through the years and presents varied programs of interest to our members. Our theme this year has been ***Moving Forward ... 70 Years of Success!*** One of the highlights this year is a City-wide special event on Saturday morning, April 29th, as we encourage everyone in our community – residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations – to take part in Beautify Castle Hills Day.

Beautify Castle Hills Day is dedicated to our taking a fresh look at our curb appeal and having a renewed focus on beautifying our city, one entryway, front yard and storefront at a time. Wiping down your front door, cleaning light fixtures, sweeping your porch, adding new plantings and color to your flower beds or flower pots, raking leaves or other yard work are only a handful of ways you might choose to spruce up your space. The City of Castle Hills will have a leaf/clipping dumpster available at the rear of City Hall.

All of our community organizations are encouraging their members to join in this effort. The Castle Hills Garden Club, also celebrating its 70th Anniversary this year, is sprucing up several street monument entrances to launch a citizen-led spruce-up of other street entrances around our city.

Promoting interest in friendship and good citizenship adds to Beautify Castle Hills Day as we spend a Saturday morning outside with other neighbors and become better acquainted. We might also lend a hand to neighbors who need a little extra help with their beautifying projects.

A Community-Wide Garage Sale is also part of Beautify Castle Hills Day. Woman's Club members will be at The Commons

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from 8:00-10:00am with maps to the homes for which permits were issued for this one-day sale by Thursday, April 27th.

Make plans now to be part of this special day in the life of our city. Use your imagination and vision to help make our city more beautiful as we cultivate friendships and celebrate ***Moving Forward ... 70 Years of Success!*** and the Good Works, Good Times, and Good Friends that help make our city the place we love to call home. Membership in the Woman's Club is for all women who reside or are in business in Castle Hills. For more information, contact us at castlehillswomansclub@gmail.com. We'd love to have you join us!



KURT MAY
PLACE 3

A Campaign to Consider Priorities of Castle Hills' Residents

Representing the residents of Castle Hills, as Alderman on the City Council is an honor and privilege that I do not take for granted. I am humbled and again honored to be a candidate on the upcoming city elections ballot. While I do not have a challenger in this contest, my campaign is not over. The campaign is about hearing from residents, collecting fresh ideas for serving Castle Hills better, and designing new projects for the good of our community.

In the next months I will be actively collecting the suggestions of our residents for the priorities deemed most pressing for Castle Hills. While the current City Council continues to move forward in completing our streets and drainage projects, there are other ideas to consider for new projects. Those include local community park development, sustainable energy solutions to reduce municipal expenses, safer traffic patterns, and collaborative efforts with both the County, and the City of San Antonio to share public project costs. I would like to hear from the residents of Castle Hills about the priorities you deem most pressing, or new ideas for improving our city, and city government. Please use the phone number or email below to share our thoughts about our city.

Finally, I want to publicly commend the efforts of the Master Plan Committee, as they near completion of this much anticipated project. This committee spent hundreds of hours over many years to outline the vision of the best Castle Hills, through purposeful planning and development. All residents are encouraged to spend a few minutes reviewing the final product, which will be posted on the city website. I also look forward to seeing all of Castle Hills turn out for our next city-wide event in April for Fiesta Castle Hills, on the Commons.

Kurt May, Alderman Place 3
Kurtmay1961@gmail.com
210-273-8134

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PUBLIC WORKS



Happy Spring 2023! As the weather gets better, everybody will want to spruce up their properties. While completely understandable, please keep in mind that we have an oak tree cutting moratorium as per our local code. Please refer to Sec. 48-78, which states, *"Oak trimming prohibited February through June. Oak trees of any type growing within the corporate limits of the city may not be trimmed during the months of February, March, April, May, and June due to the increased activity of the nitidulid beetles and the potential for the spread of oak wilt. Any branches posing an immediate threat of danger to persons or property may be trimmed during the prohibited months with the issuance of a special permit and the approval of the city manager."* If you or your landscape professionals feel that any branch poses a threat to persons or property, please present contextual photos and/or arborist reports for the City Manager or his designee to review and evaluate. We want to be sure to not facilitate any case of oak wilt during this moratorium period. Thanks for your cooperation!

Castle Hills Fire Department

By Chief Jim Ladewig



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT UPDATE 2023

Shortly after the Winter Storm Uri in February 2021, an Emergency Management Committee was established to review the city's Emergency Action Plan. During this review the committee recognized hazards the city possessed and identified the needs to better prepare for incidents in the future. These needs were prioritized and a process was put in place by city staff and the city council to acquire these resources.

Over the past two years many of these items have been put into place and in service. New generators for both the fire department and city hall/ police department buildings have been installed. The fire department did not have a generator and the city hall generator

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was outdated and only supplied electricity to a small section of the building. The fire department generator is up and running, allowing the building to remain fully operational during power outages. The city hall generator is in place and will be online later this month. Once it is operational, it will supply electricity to both city hall and the police station during power outages and allow the building to be used by residents as a warming/ cooling station during inclement weather. Additional supplies have been procured to assist in the use of the building for this purpose. A storage building was also installed at the fire station to assist in storage of additional supplies to assist in mitigation efforts during emergency incidents.

This year a new Emergency Notification System will be implemented to assist the city in notifying residents of emergency incidents occurring in the city or area, as well as city events/ notices. The new system is called RAVE and will be available for sign-up in the upcoming months. A Public Works trailer and additional barricades will also be purchased later this year. This trailer will enable crews to deploy barricades to needed areas of the city for hazardous road conditions and flooding. These new barricades also will be heavier so as not to be effected by wind and heavy rain.

The city will continue to evaluate the hazards that effect our city and residents, taking action to acquire these resources needed when responding to emergencies. A generator and additional resources for housing pets at the Public Works building during city emergencies has been identified as a possible need in the near future. If you as a resident or business owner has a concern of a hazard that effects the city please contact city hall with your thoughts, 210-342-2341, www.cityofcastlehills.com.

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Castle Hills Police Department 2022 POLICE ACTIVITY REPORT

Message from Police Chief Steve Zuniga:

The City of Castle Hills proudly provides its residents and businesses 24-hour police services. The Castle Hills Police Department tracks police related activity on a monthly basis on various items such as emergency and non-emergency calls, burglaries, thefts, DWT's, etc. The activity reports help to compare the differences or fluctuations that are occurring month to month and help in illustrating the trends of certain crimes. The graph illustrated here is a total number for all twelve months in the year 2022.

These monthly activity reports are available on the city's website for review, <https://www.cityofcastlehills.com/2160/Police-Department>. If you see activity in your neighborhood that seems out of place, you can notify the Police Department by filing a Suspicious Circumstances report online or contact dispatch at 210.342.2341. If the circumstances are an emergency, call 911.

	2022	YTD Total
1 Total 911 Calls		7691
2 Castle Hills Calls		6091
3 Non Castle Hills 911		1600
4 Alarm Calls		713
5 Traffic Stops		6195
6 Accident Reports		384
7 Calls for Service		17290
8 Patrol By		7656
9 City Ordinances Enforced		323
10 Disorderly Conduct		0
11 Burglary Habitation		11
12 Burglary Building		32
13 Burglary Vehicle		43
14 Burglary Coin Operated Machine		0
15 Thefts		117
16 Auto Thefts		24
17 Robberies		5
18 Fraud Cases/Forgery		32
19 Death Investigation		12
20 Disturbances		213
21 Driving While Intoxicated		43
22 Public Intoxication		20
23 Narcotics Cases		150
24 Juvenile Cases		2
25 Curfew Violation		0
26 Assault		48
27 Sexual Assaults		3
28 Other Felony Offenses		70
29 Other Misdemeanor Offenses		125
30 Total Offenses Filed		409
31 Felony Warrant Arrests		81
32 Misdemeanor Warrant Arrests		154
33 Persons Arrested		481
34 Emergency Detentions		42
35 Total Police Calls		24946
36 Total Recovered Stolen Property (Value)		\$302,924.70

Castle Hills Community Organization

- Sunday, April 2, 2023** Easter Egg Hunt in The Commons (2:00pm)
- Saturday, April 22, 2023** Fiesta Castle Hills Parade at 10:00am and Fair (10:00am – 5:00pm)
- Saturday, May 20, 2023** Concert in the Commons (7:00 – 9:00pm)
- Saturday, June 17, 2023** Splash Day (Time to be decided)
- Sunday, July 16, 2023** I Scream for Ice Cream Day
Come join us for an Ice Cream Social – The Community Room (2:00 – 4:00pm)
- Saturday, August 5, 2023** Drive-by School Supply Drive to benefit Castle Hills Elementary and Jackson-Keller Elementary (9:00 – 11:00am)
- Saturday, September 23, 2023** Concert in the Commons (7:00 – 9:00pm)
- Saturday, October 28, 2023** Trunk or Treat (5:30 – 6:30)
Concert in the Commons to follow (7:00 – 9:00pm)
- Wednesday, December 6, 2023** Wine and Cheese Night (members only) (6:30 – 8:00pm)

All activities are free and open to anyone except for the December event, as that is the Board's "thank you" to our current members.











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CITY SNAPSHOTS



APARA AUTISM CENTER

Apara Autism Center Expands to San Antonio, Texas in January 2023

On Tuesday, December 27, 2022, Apara Autism Center announced its expansion to San Antonio, Texas as they open the doors to their tenth ABA clinic next month. Founded in 2019 by CEO Tyler Moore, whose daughter is on the autism spectrum, Apara is privately owned and currently has a presence in Houston and Dallas. With a center-based program dedicated to the principles of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) Therapy, our clinicians help children ages 18 months up reach their fullest potential. The San Antonio clinic is set to open in January 2023 and is currently enrolling clients for their full and part time programs with no waitlist.

"We are honored to be part of the San Antonio community and to be able to widen access to the highest level of ABA therapy for many families who deserve the best possible care and compassion for their loved ones with our new clinic. With 1 in 44 children facing the challenge of being on the autism spectrum, Apara Autism Center's new San Antonio clinic will provide access to early intervention to many families. We look forward to being a proud member of the San Antonio community," says Apara Autism Centers Chief Operating Officer David Jordan.



To schedule a tour, complimentary consultation, or for questions regarding enrollment, contact us at **844-272-7223** or info@aparaautism.com.

Apara Autism Center
1922 Dry Creek Way Bldg. 2, Ste 101
San Antonio, TX 78259



Help Keep Your Neighborhood Beautiful!



WHAT: City of Castle Hills will provide two dumpsters behind City Hall for a bulk drop-off

WHEN: Saturday, May 13, 2023 from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Please provide proof of address (i.e., utility bill or driver's license)

WHERE: 209 Lemonwood Dr. (City team will be on-site to assist)



Accepted Materials:

Shrubs/Tree Branches/Woody Vines/Other
Herbaceous & Woody Plants
BBQ Grills (**without compressed gas tanks**)
Carpeting
Furniture
Mattresses
Toilets
Water Heaters
Appliances **** Refrigerators, Freezers and A/C Window Units will be collected only if the refrigerant has been removed and the appliance is tagged and certified, indicating removal of the refrigerant ****



Materials NOT Accepted:

Household Trash
Hazardous Materials (paints, household cleaners)
Compressed Gas Tanks
Tires/Batteries
Medical Waste
Appliances with refrigerant that has not been removed and certified





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