

CPSC’s Priority Products Survey Results – 2020

Who is CPSC?

California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC) educates both the public and private sectors about Product Stewardship and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), or end-of-life management. CPSC closely partners with local government, businesses, waste and recycling companies, manufacturers, and others to promote and encourage sustainable practices and to recognize those companies who are taking a leadership role in waste reduction. For more information, please go to: www.CalPSC.org

Every two years, CPSC releases a survey to our funders to ask what products we should prioritize for policy and program improvements. This year, the survey was launched on July 30, 2020 with 75 respondents. Participants voluntarily answered 10 closed and open-ended questions, generating the data for the following results. This analysis offers insight into the experiences and opinions of CPSC’s supporters, deriving meaningful strategies and opportunities for engaging producers in end-of-life management.

Difficult Products to Manage

Respondents were asked to rate each of the products categories from very difficult to manage to very easy to manage, based on their experience with currently available resources.

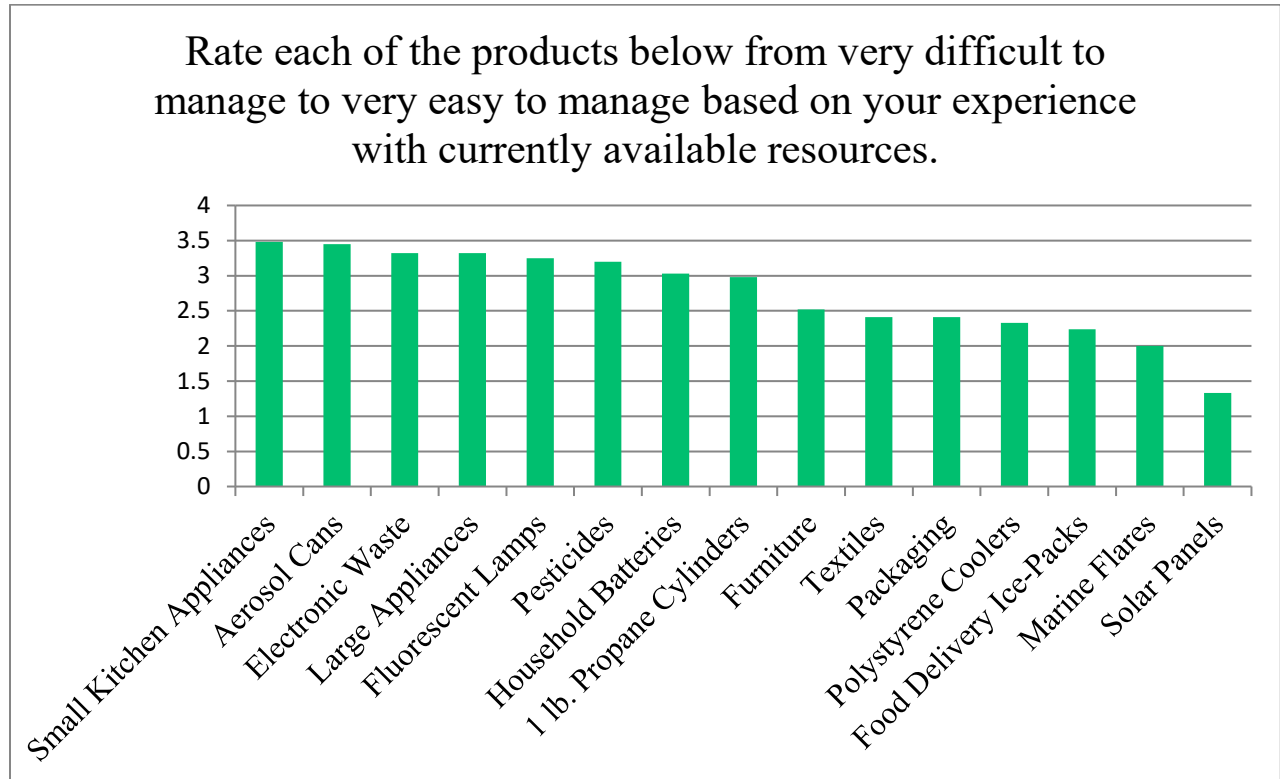


Fig. 1 CPSC Survey Results Rating Products on their Difficulty to Manage

Small kitchen appliances, aerosol cans, and electronic waste were the top three chosen responses. Although batteries ranked 7th highest, batteries are contained within at least 4 of the categories as “embedded batteries”. Open-ended responses included comments on tires, paint products, asphalt roofing shingles, polystyrene (Styrofoam™) packaging peanuts, and carpet. Five respondents mentioned vaping products and cannabis canisters, and one respondent mentioned unused ammunition in their open-ended responses. This valuable input will inform CPSC’s forthcoming strategies on product management, focusing on durability, reuse, repairability, and repurpose at end-of-life.

Products Posting Health Risks

Respondents were asked to explain an instance in which a product managed by their team posed a significant health risk, and to include a description of the product.

Products with Reported Health Risks

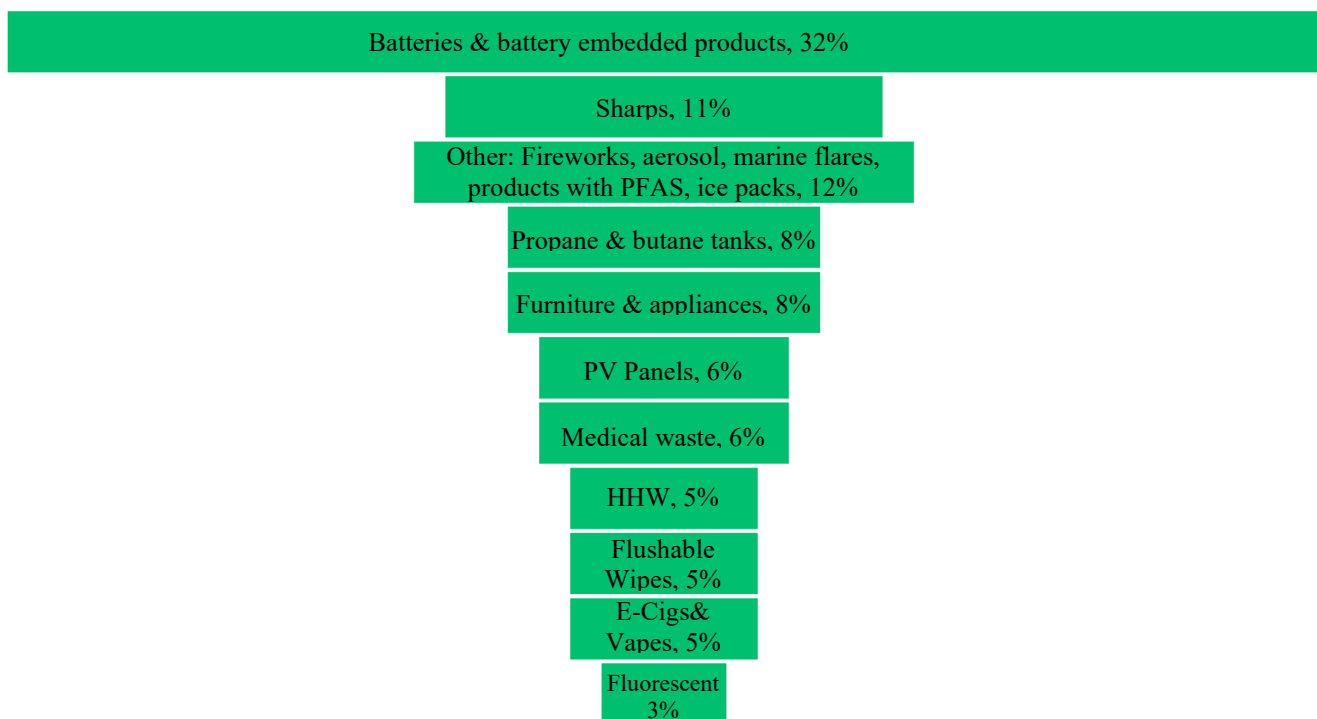


Figure 2. Frequency analysis for critical incident reporting for products posing significant health risks

Examples of open-ended responses coded for the quantitative analysis included:

- Post-consumer carpeting with disposed razor blades rolled inside from installers
- Medical waste dumped into residential trash bins
- Damaged and broken lithium batteries are always a risk
- Large appliances are costly to manage and their bulk and size pose risk of injury when handling
- Products containing PFAS compounds (Teflon or others), no disposal site that would not contribute to other environmental problems
- Used needles and batteries illegally dumped as litter along roadways, parks, and other recreational areas; poses immediate and long-term health concerns
- Embedded Lithium Ion batteries still pose a fire safety concern. Batteries continue to be concealed and separation of them for disposal creates risks

COVID-19 Impacts on Waste Management Workers

CPSC felt it necessary to include a question that addressed the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic is dynamically impacting the waste and recycling industry. As Waste360 reports from a recent survey of waste industry employees, “Nearly 70 percent of respondents indicated they saw changes in specific waste streams, with residential waste expectedly undergoing the largest increase.” [Link](#) CPSC sought to get more details on what changes were experienced by solid waste managers in California.

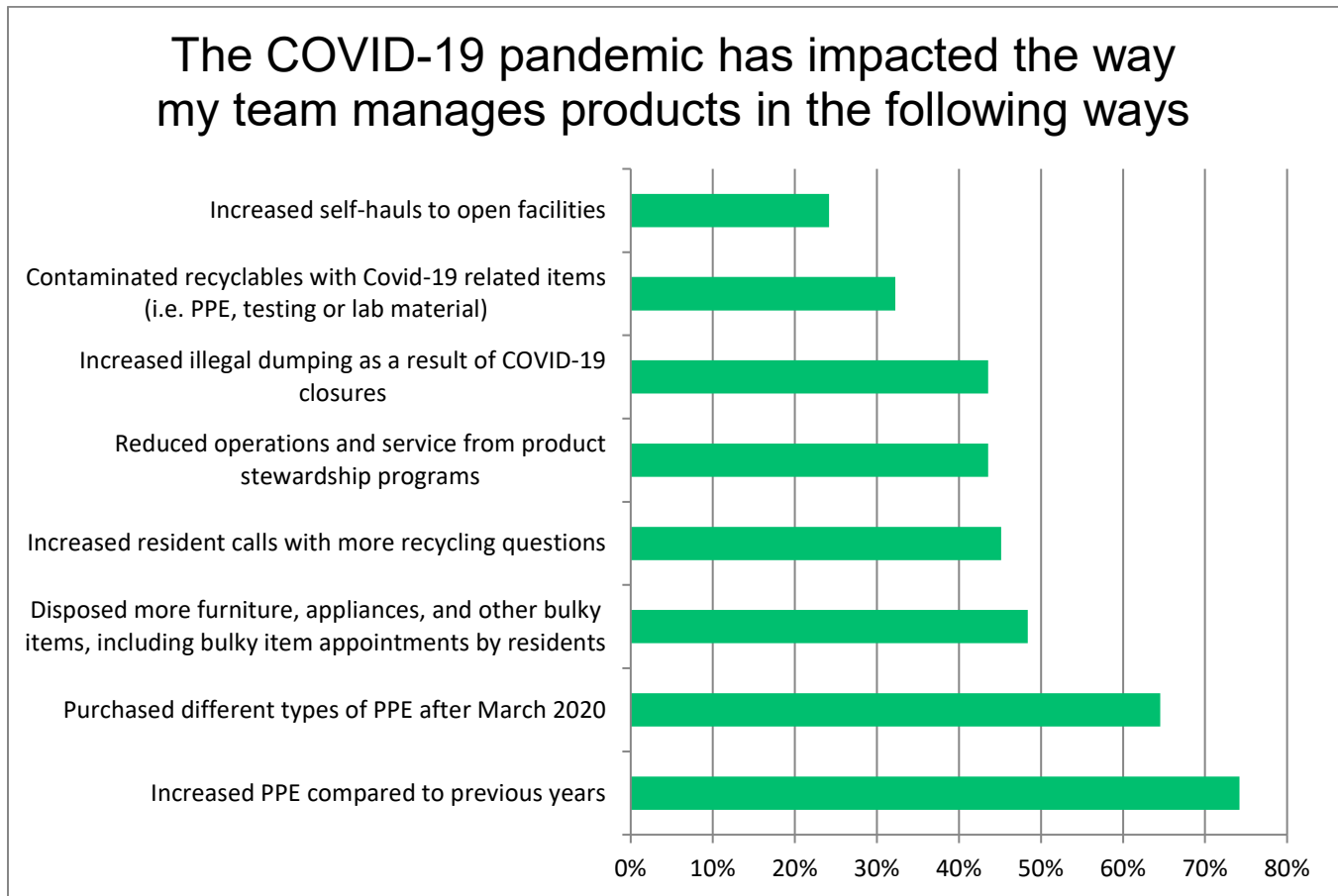


Figure 3. Reported impacts COVID-19 had on waste management

Open-ended responses included:

- Five respondents experienced increased volume at HHW facilities, and within the local trash and recyclable streams and one with an indefinite suspension of their HHW material reuse program
- Four respondents mentioned the difficulties with managing the new COVID-19 protocols, including purchasing and wearing masks, increased costs due to additional staff for sanitation, social distancing, and reduced staff availability
- One respondent experienced contaminated recyclables with non-COVID related items, because of limited space in trash bins
- One respondent explained the difficulties in public outreach and support for the MRF which is open, but other offices are closed
- One respondent mentioned financial impacts from SB 1383 and no current push back on deadlines

Conclusions

Survey results showed which products are currently most difficult to manage and pose human health risks, rating small appliances and electronic waste as the most difficult to manage. Emerging product streams with imposing challenges include PV panels, cannabis waste, and products treated with harmful chemicals, such as Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Open-ended responses revealed the lack of protocol for unique products, such as marine flares and ammunition. Although most respondents marked that they have not experienced an instance in which managing a product posed a significant health risk to their team, the top answer was batteries and battery-embedded products, indicating a need for support and program improvement. The results from this survey provide insight into what products present opportunities for durability, reuse, and reparability, such as electronics, appliances, and textiles.

For information and inquiries on legislative priorities, please contact CPSC at info@calpsc.org

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