

GARAGE SALES

Freecycling: A Sale Alternative

Freecycling is a movement that has grown up to help people find things they do need and rehouse things they don't — all for free. You can post offers for items you want to give away or requests for things you need. Local freecycling groups can be found all over social media.

Freecycling can be a great way to clear out your clutter in lieu of a garage sale or a plan for what to do with your garage sale leftovers, especially if you have plenty of room for storage.

Here's how you get started.

ABOUT

The Freecycle Network, one of the largest freecycling groups in the world, started in 2003 in Arizona. Since then, it's grown to more than 5,000 local groups with more than 9 million members keeping more than 1,000 tons of garbage out of landfills across the world every day. It's a registered nonprofit in Arizona and is run by volunteer mod-



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erators and members to keep items in hands that can use them and out of landfills.

RULES

While each group differs, there are some common rules, says TrashNothing.com. These are:

- No buying, selling, trading, bartering or requesting money.
- No alcohol, tobacco, weapons or prescription drugs.
- No services or jobs.
- No promotions or advertising.

- No real estate, rentals or housing.
- No coupons or vouchers.
- No spamming.

Freecycle groups are usually run by volunteers, so keep that in mind when posting and give administrators some grace. Local groups may also

have rules about reselling items, about animals and about reposting. Most groups, for instance, forbid reselling items you get while freecycling, unless you disclose your intent to resell items upfront.

FINDING A FREecycle GROUP

You can start by finding one of The Freecycle Network-affiliated groups by looking to Freecycle.org or also just try searching social media with terms like your town's name and freecycling, upcycling or free items. Ask to join, then get to clearing out the clutter. Just like if you were selling the item, give a clear description and take good photos in bright lighting. Be honest about missing parts and accessories and have the item in the condition in which you would like to receive it. That is, clean, sanitized and ready for its new home.

Just like with any other social media exchange, set up meetings in public, well-lit spaces. Some police departments or sheriff's offices even have special parking for people selling and buying merchandise. Bad actors can be in freecycling groups just like in sale groups. Don't invite people into your home and always tell someone exactly who you're going to be meeting, why you're meeting them and where you're meeting at.

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SELLER'S TIP

Freecycling Etiquette

Remember that these networks aren't just for scoring fabulous free goods. They're also for disposing of your own clutter. It's good etiquette that you also post items for free and not just take them. If you're posting items, don't post things like, "first person here gets it." This can lead to confrontation. Instead, consider picking someone at random from the list of interested parties and arrange pick-up with just that person.

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