

# In space, trash can't go to the curb

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Taking out the trash is no simple chore on the International Space Station, where some junk is carefully hurled into the Earth's atmosphere to burn.

"It's really only a measure of last resort," Nicholas Johnson, head of NASA's orbital debris program told USA Today of the space trash technique. "We don't want to create debris even if it's short-lived, unless it's overwhelmingly necessary."

USA Today reported that in April, astronaut James Reilly is scheduled to toss five sun protection covers into space during a spacewalk. Later this year, astronaut Clay Anderson is scheduled to throw a storage tank into space, the newspaper reported.

Such disposal takes careful planning and good aim so the trash doesn't hit the space station or a visiting shuttle. The debris should burn within weeks or months.

Tossing trash into space is "a lot of fun," astronaut William McArthur told USA Today. He threw out an electric-charge sensor in 2005.

"Maybe it's like the first time you ever parallel-park a car," he told the newspaper. "Until you've actually done a physical task, there are doubts."

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