

County of San Diego Customers

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Sustainability in Action

California Recycling Laws for Businesses

Recyclables: Assembly Bill (AB) 341 makes recycling mandatory for businesses that generate 4 or more cubic yards of waste per week and multi-family properties with five or more units. Under AB 341, businesses and properties must recycle paper, boxes, cans, bottles and containers, as well as recyclable items that are unique to their operations. Senate Bill (SB) 1383 expands on this requirement, making recycling of clean paper and cardboard mandatory at all businesses and multi-family properties, regardless of size.

Organics: Under SB 1383 and AB 1826, California businesses are required to reduce the volume of organics sent to landfills. Under these laws, organics include food scraps, food-soiled paper and yard



trimmings. All businesses and multifamily properties should now be participating in organics recycling programs.

Customer Recycling: Under AB 827, limited-service restaurants in California must now provide customers with visible, clearly marked and easily accessible containers for recyclables and organics (uneaten food scraps, soiled paper and similar items) adjacent to trash bins. Full-service restaurants need to provide separate bins for use by employees. This law also applies to food courts and other businesses that sell food for on-site consumption.

Packaging: Senate Bill (SB) 54 requires producers of single-use packaging and plastic food service ware to take responsibility for the materials they place into the marketplace. Under SB 54, producers must reduce plastic packaging by 25% by 2032 and ensure that 65% of plastic materials sold, distributed or imported in California are recycled. By 2032, all covered packaging and food service ware must also be recyclable or eligible to be labeled as compostable. This law shifts responsibility upstream to producers and is designed to significantly reduce packaging waste and increase recycling across the state.

For Assistance: You can learn more about these requirements at CalRecycle.ca.gov/recycle/commercial.

Understanding Self-Hauling Options in San Diego

San Diego has specific requirements for residents and businesses who choose to handle their own recycling, organics and trash. Self-hauling is allowed, but properties must first register with the County in order to waive subscription to service with a franchised hauler. Once registered, participants must provide proof of ongoing recycling, including facility receipts. Properties may be subject to inspections to confirm that recyclable and organic materials are properly separated from solid waste. For more information about registration and program requirements, contact San Diego County at Recycle@sdcounty.ca.gov or call **858.694.2456**.

Republic Services at Work in San Diego

- **Operation Clean Sweep** – On August 22, 2026, Republic Services will sponsor the San Diego coastal cleanup hosted by San Diego Working Waterfront as part of Operation Clean Sweep. Roll-off dumpsters will be provided at multiple cleanup sites, and volunteers will work together to remove litter and debris from local waterways and surrounding areas. The event begins at 7:30 a.m. and supports ongoing efforts to protect San Diego's coastal environment.



- **Compost Giveaways at Otay Sustainability Park** – Republic Services will be giving away free compost to customers residing in the City and County of San Diego at the Otay Sustainability Park, 1700 Maxwell Rd., Chula Vista 91911. Upcoming giveaway dates are July 11, September 12 and November 14 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., or until compost runs out. Customers should bring their own shovels and containers or buckets to fill with compost. To receive free compost, residents must provide proof of an active Republic Services account in the form of an invoice or online app documentation, along with a photo ID. For more information, contact Otay@RepublicServices.com or call **619.421.9400**.



- **Tours at the Otay Sustainability Park** – Republic Services offers free guided tours of the Otay Sustainability Park in Chula Vista. Participants can learn about landfill operations, composting, construction and demolition recycling and other innovative waste management processes taking place at the facility. To schedule a tour or learn more, email Otay@RepublicServices.com or visit OtayLandfill.com.

Download the Republic Services App

Republic Services gives you one simple tool to manage your account needs. Visit RepublicServices.com/Account/login to sign up or download the app.



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Organics Recycling in San Diego

California Senate Bill (SB) 1383, signed into law in 2016, aims to reduce methane emissions by keeping organic waste out of landfills. The law established a statewide goal of reducing the amount of organic waste disposed of in California landfills by 75% by 2025. SB 1383 builds on and expands the requirements of Assembly Bill (AB) 1826, which affect businesses that generate 2 or more cubic yards of waste per week and multifamily properties with five or more units. Under SB 1383, all residential properties and all businesses, regardless of size, are required to participate in organics recycling programs. Organic waste includes food scraps, food-soiled paper and yard trimmings, materials that can be composted rather than buried in a landfill.

For residents, participation begins in the kitchen, by separating food scraps and food-soiled paper from recycling and trash. Scraps can be collected in a container with a lid to help reduce odors, and some residents choose to refrigerate or freeze scraps until collection day. Plastic, compostable or biodegradable bags should not be used in organics carts. Instead, scraps may be wrapped in paper bags or newspaper to absorb liquids before being placed in the green organics cart with yard trimmings. To help keep the cart cleaner, residents can place cardboard, leaves or other yard clippings at the bottom, add food scraps, then cover them with additional yard clippings. Sprinkling baking soda in the bottom of the cart can also help reduce odors.

Residents living in single-family homes should place loose food scraps and food-soiled paper directly into the green organics cart with yard trimmings. Those living in multifamily communities should place the same materials into the designated green organics cart or dumpster provided at their property. In all cases, organic materials should be fully contained inside the cart or dumpster with the lid closed, and no materials should stick out of the top or be left on the ground nearby.



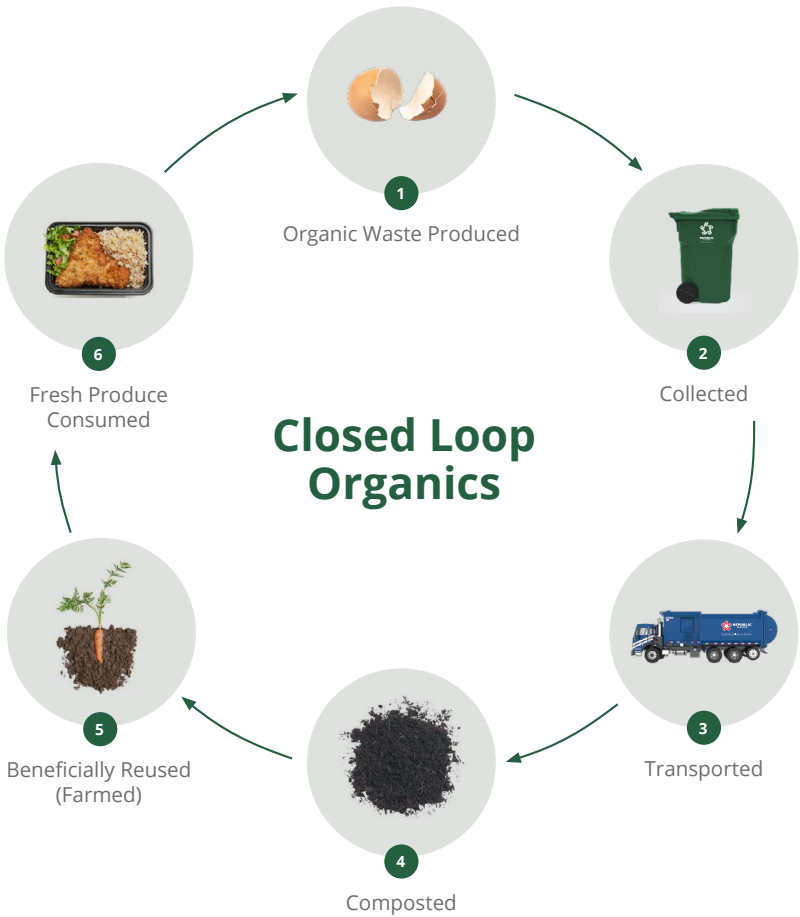
Credit: svetikd | iStock | Getty Images

Edible Food Recovery

To reduce food waste and help address food insecurity, SB 1383 required that California recover or rescue 20% of surplus edible food to feed people in need by 2025. The law directs food-generating businesses to recover the maximum amount of their edible food that would otherwise go to landfills and to maintain records of their food donation activities. SB 1383 places mandated food donors into two tiers. As of January 1, 2024, large food businesses, such as wholesale food vendors, distributors, food service providers and grocery stores, as well as some cafeterias, restaurants and venues, are required to comply. These businesses must establish an agreement with an edible food recovery organization (EFRO) and track the types of food donated, the frequency of food donations, and the quantity of food donated.

Interested in Food Waste-Only Services?

Commercial customers who subscribe to THOR services may place their organic waste in clear plastic bags. Bagging food waste helps prevent odors, rodents and pests by keeping the dumpster clean. In addition, it makes food waste easier to separate by allowing customers to place scraps in a bag and transport them outside with ease. If your business generates a large volume of food waste (such as hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, etc.), please reach out to your account manager for more information.



Can I put “compostable” utensils, coffee cups and materials in my green cart?

“Compostable” items SHOULD NOT go into the green cart.

Organics

Acceptable Items		
 Yard Waste	 Food Waste	Unacceptable Items
 Recyclables	 Plastic Bags & Wrap	 Fats, Oil & Grease
 Construction Waste	 Trash & Pet Waste	 Hazardous Waste

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Safely Dispose of Household Hazardous Waste

Household hazardous waste (HHW) includes products commonly found in homes that can be harmful or dangerous if thrown into the trash. Items such as car and lawn care products, paints and paint thinners, cleaning supplies, solvents and similar materials can pose risks to people, pets and the environment if they are not handled properly. HHW should never be placed in curbside recycling or trash carts. Improper disposal can lead to spills in neighborhoods, injuries to collection workers, or even fires in collection trucks.



Residents in San Diego County have several options for safely managing these materials. Households can learn about local HHW drop-off locations, accepted materials and disposal guidelines by visiting [Sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/dpw/recycling/hhw.html](https://sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/dpw/recycling/hhw.html). These programs help ensure hazardous materials are handled safely and kept out of the landfill.

Businesses also have specific guidelines for hazardous waste disposal. Small businesses that generate less than 27 gallons, or 220 pounds, of hazardous waste per month, or 2.2 pounds of acutely hazardous waste per month, can call **858.694.2456** for assistance. Larger businesses should contact the County of San Diego Hazardous Materials Division at **800.253.9933** for information about proper disposal requirements and available services.

Limited door-to-door pickup services may also be available for certain residents. Seniors age 65 and older and disabled residents living in unincorporated areas of San Diego County may qualify for household hazardous waste pickup services. To learn more about eligibility and scheduling, call **877.R.1.EARTH (877.713.2784)**. Residents can also visit RepublicServices.com/SanDiegoCountyCA for FAQs and additional resources, including information about mail-back programs and drop-off locations for specific materials.

Recycle Your Plastic Bags

When mixed with other recyclables, plastic bags tangle with equipment or other materials at the sorting facility, causing damage and delays. Even worse, they don't get recycled this way. Instead, recycle empty, clean plastic bags, like shopping bags, dry cleaning bags and the plastic wrap from cases of water bottles, at designated take-back bins located in many local retail stores. To find a participating store near you, visit plasticfilmrecycling.org.



Safely Dispose of Your Batteries

Batteries are indispensable in our daily lives, powering everything from our smartphones and laptops, to remote controls and children's toys. These compact energy sources offer the convenience of portable power, enabling us to stay connected and productive on the go. However, despite their usefulness, batteries can pose significant risks if not handled properly.



Batteries, particularly lithium-ion types, can be hazardous when mismanaged. Overcharging, physical damage and improper disposal can lead to serious issues, including fires in the collection trucks and facilities, chemical leaks and costs to repair the damage. When a battery is overcharged or left plugged in overnight, it can overheat, leading to potential explosions or fires. Similarly, physical damage to a battery can cause it to leak harmful chemicals, posing a risk to human health and the environment.

Avoid overcharging lithium-ion batteries by unplugging devices once they are fully charged, and never leave them plugged in overnight. This practice helps prevent overheating and extends the battery's lifespan. Second, store batteries in a cool, dry place, ideally between 40 and 80 degrees. Extreme temperatures can degrade battery performance and increase the risk of leakage or combustion.

When it's time to dispose of your batteries, cover the battery terminals with electrical tape, or place each battery in a separate plastic bag. This step helps prevent accidental contact between terminals, reducing the risk of sparks or short circuits. Finally, never throw batteries into the regular trash. Instead, take your batteries to a designated hazardous waste facility to be disposed of safely. To make proper disposal easier, local municipalities offer free battery recycling programs or drop-off locations. You can check your city or county website for nearby options. If visiting a drop-off site is not convenient, Republic Services also offers a mail-back program that allows you to safely package and return used batteries from your home. To learn more or request a kit, visit Packback.RepublicServices.com.

Unwanted Mattress?

Sadly, too many mattresses are illegally dumped along roadsides or in empty lots. But they don't have to end up there. In California, the Mattress Recycling Council manages a recycling program that is available to everyone and ensures free and easy recycling. When you purchase a new mattress, the retailer (even online) is required to offer no-cost take-back of your old mattress. Another option is to drop off the mattress and box springs for recycling at the Sycamore or Otay Landfill. Visit Byebyemattress.com/california for more information.



Holiday Collection Schedule

There will be no recycling, organics or waste collection service on these holidays. Collection services will be delayed by one day for the remainder of the holiday week.

- Labor Day – Monday, September 7, 2026
- Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, November 26, 2026
- Christmas Day – Friday, December 25, 2026
- New Year's Day – Friday, January 1, 2027



Trash

Acceptable Items



Styrofoam™



Diapers & Pet Waste



Plastic Bags & Wrap



Toys



Clothing & Bedding



Garden Hoses



Dishes & Mirrors



Non-Recyclable Plastics

Unacceptable Items



Recyclables



Yard & Food Waste



Hazardous Waste



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Summer 2026

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Clear the Clutter This Summer

Summer is the perfect time to freshen up your home and clear out items you no longer need. As you start rearranging storage spaces, take a moment to sort through your belongings before sending anything to the landfill. There are many items you may have that can be reused, donated or recycled instead.

Start by separating items based on their condition and type. Set aside anything that is still usable, anything that may be recyclable and anything that truly needs to be thrown away. Clothes, toys, books and household goods that are still in good condition may be accepted by donation centers or thrift stores, helping extend the life of these items while supporting local organizations. It is always a good idea to check with donation sites ahead of time to see what they are currently accepting.

Some items require special recycling. Electronics, batteries and scrap metal should never be placed in trash carts, because they can damage equipment or create safety hazards. Instead, look for local recycling drop-off locations or community collection events that accept these materials.

If your summer cleaning project includes broken furniture, mattresses or other large household items, check whether your community offers bulk item collection or drop-off services. These programs help ensure large items are managed safely and responsibly. When preparing items for donation or recycling, keep them clean and organized. Bag clothing, box fragile items and keep electronics separate so they are easier to handle during drop-off or pickup.

Keeping San Diego Clean

When you spot an illegal dump site, don't ignore it. Instead, note the location, and report it to the County Storm Drain Pollution hotline at **888.846.0800** or email **Watersheds@sdcounty.ca.gov**. If you see someone dumping illegally, do not confront them. If possible, discreetly take a photo of the activity, and write down a description of the person, as well as the vehicle make, color and license plate number.



Contact Us

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For more information, please visit:
RepublicServices.com/SanDiegoRegion

Sharps Disposal Options Near You

Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist whether they take back used needles, lancets and syringes. You can also take your used needles, lancets and syringes to drop-off collection sites. Or, you can search for a needle drop-off location closest to your home on the County's waste and recycling database, **WasteFreeSD.org**.

You might also consider using a free "mail-back" service for proper disposal. To sign up, call **844.633.7765** or **888.371.0717**, or order online at **Med-project.org** or **Safemedicinedrop.com**. Each mail-back kit includes a sharps container, prepaid shipping and packaging. Once the kit arrives, use the sharps container as directed, and follow the mail-back instructions to ship the sharps container free of charge with USPS right from your home.



Recycling

Acceptable Items

Paper & Cardboard

Plastic & Glass

Metal Cans

Unacceptable Items

Dishes & Mirrors

Carpet & Rugs

Hazardous Waste

Garden Hoses

Tires & Car Parts

Toys

Clothing & Bedding

Construction Waste

Appliances

Furniture

Diapers & Pet Waste

Yard & Food Waste

Plastic Bags & Styrofoam™

REPUBLIC SERVICES

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What kind of meat is accepted in the organics program?

- **Only COOKED meat goes into the organics cart.**
- **Raw meat is not allowed in the organics cart.**

REPUBLIC SERVICES

Sustainability in Action

While commercial organics must include cooked meat only, small resident-generated quantities of raw meat are acceptable in the organics cart.

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