

An important tool for composting success

One of the very best things we can do to help protect the environment is to compost food scraps, coffee grounds, paper filters, tea bags, and plant cuttings. When we place these materials, as well as vegetable peelings and plate scrapings, in our green curbside composting bins we ensure they will be turned into nutrient-rich compost, which is delivered to local farms and vineyards.

In addition to keeping materials out of landfills, curbside composting through San Francisco's green bin program supports soil health on local farms. The nutrients in the finished compost feed the microbial colonies in the 14 inches of topsoil.

Healthy soils equal healthy fruits and vegetables, which support the good health of you and your family. This healthy cycle starts in our kitchens. That's where we cut up our vegetables, make our coffee and tea, and return dishes after taking our meals.

In homes across San Francisco most residents now keep a small pail on the

kitchen counter. Many people line their kitchen pail with a paper towel, certified "compostable" bag, or a little newspaper. A good trick is to toss in a used paper napkin, which will absorb moisture.

Using this system eliminates odors. That's because you isolate any scraps or plate scrapings that might smell in one small container. When you do this, the rest of your discards are dry.



Many different styles of kitchen compost pails, from basic to more elegant, are readily available. They are sold at hardware and retail stores and online. And Recology will give you one at no charge. Visit our office, 900 7th St., or call and arrange for a pail delivery on your collection day.

WANT TO SLEEP BETTER? COMPOST.

Before you go to bed dump the contents of your kitchen compost pail into your green composting collection cart. Doing so achieves immediate and long-term benefits.

Your kitchen will be clean all night and you will start each day fresh.



By participating in San Francisco's composting program you will keep compostable materials out of landfills, where they would produce methane and other greenhouse gases.

Scientists have calculated that if we built more compost facilities and applied half

an inch of compost to farms and grazing lands across the state, we could offset more than half of California's carbon emissions.

Knowing these things and actively participating in these efforts will make you feel better. And that can help you sleep better at night.

Recycling bulky materials brought in by SF residents & small contractors



Recology sorts and recycles most materials customers haul in.

With summer in full swing, residents and small contractors are engaged in cleanup and renovation projects.

They arrive at Recology San Francisco's Transfer to drop off wood scraps and other construction and demolition debris.

These customers are directed to the Public Reuse and Recycling Area, a large building where self-haulers can drop off large or bulky materials. Examples

include old lumber, cardboard, 5-gallon plastic buckets, metal, broken furniture, and many other items.

Recology workers direct customers to unloading stalls. A tractor operator driving a machine called a front-end loader pushes arriving materials to one side of the building.

If workers spot something in good condition, they remove it from the pile and donate it to St. Vincent de Paul, a

charity that operates a repair facility and a series of thrift stores.

The balance of the material goes across a special sorting line outside the building. Most of the material brought to the PRRA gets recycled. Arriving vehicles are weighed on the way in and again after they unload so customers pay only for the materials they dropped off.

Customers can leave large pieces of Styrofoam here at no additional charge. Recology workers recycle the Styrofoam in a special machine called a densifier.

TRANSFER STATION HOURS

Monday–Friday: 7 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Saturday–Sunday: 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE FACILITY HOURS

Residents: 8 a.m.–4 p.m.
Thursday–Saturday

Small Businesses:
Twice monthly. Call for dates.

WHERE TO FIND US

501 Tunnel Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94134
(415) 330-1400

Easy ways to keep plastics out of our oceans



Thornton Beach, just south of San Francisco

We have a natural connection with water. It sustains us and gives everything life. Earth is the watery planet. But something is amiss in our oceans – plastic.

There are five huge garbage patches, called gyres, in our oceans. Plastic debris and particles appear in significant concentrations in these places as well as along the shoreline, including Ocean Beach in San Francisco.

Let’s highlight things we can do on the land to reduce the chances of plastics getting into the oceans.

First, we can recycle all hard or stiff plastics. Toss them in your blue recycling bin. Examples include plastic bottles and lids, plastic cups, molded plastic packaging, and plastic clamshell containers used to hold deli foods. Clear plastic boxes, such as those that contain pre-washed salads, should also go in your recycling bin.

Reducing plastics is an even more effective step. Plastic bags are light and can blow into waterways and end up in our oceans. We can help reduce the chances of this happening by using a canvas tote when shopping and declining plastic bags whenever possible.

Here is a good choice – paper straws! People around the world are learning about problems caused by plastic straws entering the environment. Companies hip to this problem are now manufacturing straws made from thick paper that are strong enough to hold up in nearly all beverages.

Environmentally minded restaurants are switching to these new paper straws. Customers can also state “no straw please” when ordering beverages.

Lastly, we should talk about the plastic lid on the ubiquitous paper coffee cup. In San Francisco, you can now recycle both the empty paper coffee cup and its plastic lid in your blue bin. A reuse solution is to carry a metal travel mug. That takes the single-use cup and lid out of the equation and reduces plastic.



Compostable straws made from paper by Aardvark.

Let no bottles, cans, paper, or cardboard go to landfill

San Franciscans do a good job of recycling and composting through the blue and green bin programs, but we can easily do better. Look in a trash bin. It is not unusual to see plastic water bottles or other materials that can be recycled or composted. The black bins are not sorted. Think of them as a direct portal to the landfill.

There are more recycling and compost collection bins in San Francisco than black trash bins. At all kinds of locations, such as cafes, office buildings, and schools, property managers increasingly set up recycling stations that include all three options: recycling, composting, and trash.

We must break our impulse to use the black bin as the default bin. Look for recycling and composting bins, and look for signs and stickers on and around the bins. They show iconic pictures of which materials go in the three different bins.

With a little effort we can all reduce landfill disposal and recycle or compost most of our discards. Once you get in the habit, it’s really easy.



Nice to know

Can I put cheese and cooked meat in the green compost cart?

In San Francisco the answer is yes, and steak bones too. While such materials would be difficult to compost in a back or side yard, Recology’s modern composting facilities can easily compost expired meat, cheese, and bones.

What are the best things to compost?

Coffee grounds and fish bones are two of the best things to compost. Both are rich in nutrients and minerals and both compost in a short period of time. That makes the nutrients quickly available to the microorganisms in topsoil. And healthy soil supports healthy plants which, through photosynthesis, return carbon and nitrogen to the soil.

What is the proper way to recycle large items, such as broken furniture?

Recology’s Bulky Item Recycling program. Program guidelines are listed on BulkyItemRecycling.com. Book an appointment online or call us at (415) 330-1300.

How do I recycle household batteries?

Place them in a clear, sealable plastic bag and put it on top of your black bin.

What goes in the black bin?

Not much. Cat feces; they contain ammonia. Potato chip bags; they are metal on the inside, printed with bright inks, and coated with layers of polyethylene. Rubber gloves and disposable diapers.

Do I have to wash out my recycling?

People are encouraged to to rinse or wipe out food-soiled containers. Please pour any liquids out of bottles and cans before tossing them in your blue recycling bin. Please do not toss jars if they still have food. It is not appropriate to put food of any kind in your blue bin. If condiments are no longer edible, please empty container contents into a kitchen compost pail and then recycle the empty jar or bottle. Doing these things protects the integrity of our recycling program.

RECYCLING, COMPOST, AND TRASH COLLECTION:

Recology Sunset Scavenger (415) 330-1300	Recology Golden Gate (415) 626-4000	Debris Box Service (888) 404-4008	BulkyItemRecycling.com (415) 330-1300
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