

Compost, Recycling, and Trash Self-Assessment

Customer Name: _____

Customer Service Address: _____

Contact Email: _____ Contact Phone: _____

Instructions:

The following Self-Assessment Form will help you understand the contents of your compost, recycling, and trash containers. Please follow the steps below to complete the self-assessment.

1. Download and print this Self-Assessment Form.
2. Put on some protective gloves and examine representative samples of the contents of your compost, recycling, and trash collection containers. **“Representative Sample”** means that it should be a fairly accurate reflection of the contents of the bin as a whole.
3. Use this form to check off all items you find in the left-hand, or **“Acceptable Materials”** column of this form for each bin. As you do this, try to begin evaluating what percentage of the material falls under this category. Take note of any items in the left column that aren’t present in each bin. This might mean there is some confusion and people are placing these items in the wrong container.
4. As you continue your visual assessment, check off items you find in the right-hand, or **“Unacceptable Materials”** column. These items are considered contamination. As you do this, notice what items could have gone into the proper container. Begin evaluating what percentage of the material falls under this category.
5. Take photos of the acceptable and unacceptable items as you are going through the compost, recycling, and trash.
6. Once you finish your checklist, take a step back and make a final evaluation of the percentages of acceptable or unacceptable materials in the bin, and write the percentage at the bottom of each column.
7. If the Unacceptable Materials percentage levels are above the allowable percentage, then this is considered a FAIL.
8. The final page lists what to do when you have completed the Self-Assessment, as well as resources to improve proper sorting of your compost, recycling, and trash.

Date: ____/____/____

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COMPOST BIN <i>check all that apply</i>	
Acceptable Materials	Unacceptable Materials (Contamination)
<input type="checkbox"/> Food (includes scraps, cooked food, whole produce, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Glass, E-Waste, or Hazardous Waste (Automatic Fail)
<input type="checkbox"/> Napkins/Paper towels/Tissues (soiled or clean)	<input type="checkbox"/> Painted or Treated Wood
<input type="checkbox"/> Soiled Paper (includes wet/soiled cardboard, menus, office paper, clearly-marked Certified Compostable paper cups, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic Film/Bags (either loose or with materials inside)
<input type="checkbox"/> Waxed Cardboard	<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic Utensils/Cups/Dishes
<input type="checkbox"/> Certified Compostable Plastic Containers/Dishes/Flatware (must be clearly marked "Compostable")	<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic Packaging of any kind
<input type="checkbox"/> Certified Compostable Plastic Bags (must be clearly marked "Compostable")	<input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Foil/Trays/Cans
<input type="checkbox"/> Plant or Yard Trimmings	<input type="checkbox"/> Latex Gloves
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Estimate percentage of acceptable materials in the overall Compost volume: ____%	Estimate percentage of unacceptable materials in the overall Compost volume: ____%
If Unacceptable Materials volume is under 5% and does not include glass, E-waste, or Hazardous Waste: PASS	
If Unacceptable Materials volume is above 5% or includes any glass, E-waste, or Hazardous Waste: FAIL	

See below for examples of passing and failing materials:

Compost PASS:



Compost FAIL:



Date: ____/____/____

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RECYCLING BIN <small>check all that apply</small>	
Acceptable Materials	Unacceptable Materials (Contamination)
<input type="checkbox"/> Glass Bottles/Jars	<input type="checkbox"/> E-Waste or Hazardous Waste (Automatic Fail)
<input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Cans/Foil/Trays	<input type="checkbox"/> Food
<input type="checkbox"/> Paper cups (unless marked as Certified Compostable)	<input type="checkbox"/> Wet/Soiled Paper or Cardboard
<input type="checkbox"/> Metal Cans	<input type="checkbox"/> Paper Towels/Napkins/Tissues
<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic Bottles	<input type="checkbox"/> Waxed Cardboard
<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic Cups	<input type="checkbox"/> Liquids
<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic Containers	<input type="checkbox"/> Dishes (glass or ceramic)
<input type="checkbox"/> Cardboard	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood
<input type="checkbox"/> Paper (clean, any type)	<input type="checkbox"/> Styrofoam
<input type="checkbox"/> Cartons (for milk or juice)	<input type="checkbox"/> Latex Gloves
<input type="checkbox"/> Aseptic Cartons (for unrefrigerated soups, non-dairy milks, coconut water, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic Liner Bags/Loose Plastic Film/Plastic Bagged Recyclables (all recyclables must be LOOSE in the bin)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Estimate percentage of acceptable materials in the overall Recycling volume: ____%	Estimate percentage of unacceptable materials in the overall Recycling volume: ____%
If Unacceptable Materials volume is under 5% and does not include E-waste or Hazardous Waste: PASS	
If Unacceptable Materials volume is above 5% or includes E-waste or Hazardous Waste: FAIL	

See below for examples of passing and failing materials:

Recycling PASS:



Recycling FAIL:



Date: ____/____/____

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TRASH BIN <i>check all that apply</i>	
Acceptable Materials	Unacceptable Materials (Contamination)
<input type="checkbox"/> Foam Packaging/Styrofoam	<input type="checkbox"/> E-Waste or Hazardous Waste (Automatic Fail)
<input type="checkbox"/> Loose Plastic Bags and Plastic Film	<input type="checkbox"/> Paper/Cardboard (clean or soiled)
<input type="checkbox"/> Diapers/Pet Pads	<input type="checkbox"/> Glass (bottles or jars only)
<input type="checkbox"/> Latex Gloves	<input type="checkbox"/> Metal (cans, trays, foil)
<input type="checkbox"/> Textiles/Pillows	<input type="checkbox"/> Liquids
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed-Material Items	<input type="checkbox"/> Cartons (for liquid of any kind)
<input type="checkbox"/> Treated/Painted Wood	<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic bottles/cups/containers/utensils
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponges	<input type="checkbox"/> Paper Towels/Napkins/Tissues
<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic Liner Bags (CLEAR ONLY)	<input type="checkbox"/> Food
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Estimate percentage of acceptable materials in the overall Trash volume: ____%	Estimate percentage of unacceptable materials in the overall Trash volume: ____%
If Unacceptable Materials volume is under 30% and does not include E-waste or Hazardous Waste: PASS	
If Unacceptable Materials volume is above 30% or includes E-waste or Hazardous Waste: FAIL	

See below for examples of passing and failing materials:

Trash **PASS**:



Trash **FAIL**:



Once you have determined your results, please continue to "Next Steps" on the next page.

Date: ____/____/____

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Next Steps:

If any of your self-assessments receive a failing grade, don't worry—we're here to help. If all assessments pass, great job! The following information and tips can help you improve proper sorting.

1. The best place to start is to spread the word on exactly what materials are being sorted incorrectly. Send out reminders for what bin they *should* be going into. Pictures are always helpful.
2. Take note of any purchasing practices that could be adjusted towards reusable, recyclable, or compostable items. This can help prevent contamination from occurring, and potentially lower your bill. We highly recommend using clear/translucent plastic bags for your trash container(s), to make it easier for you to see if any recoverable (recyclable or compostable) materials are going into the trash.
3. Next, explore the resources provided on our [website](#) including a search tool called WhatBin. It's full of information and you can [download and print PDFs of our posters](#) to hang onsite.
4. Send us an email at customerservice@recologysf.com, or through the [Contact Us](#) form on our website. When you reach out, please attach your Self-Assessment form or provide details on the results. Our customer service team will connect you with a qualified Waste Zero Specialist who can provide help for proper sorting and increased diversion from the landfill. All educational services and outreach materials are provided at no additional cost to you.
5. Waste Zero Specialists can provide multilingual color-coded posters and stickers, conduct multilingual trainings and presentations, or meet onsite to do a walkthrough of the property and identify any opportunities for improved sorting.
6. Once you receive outreach from a Waste Zero Specialist and make some of the suggested changes, consider repeating the Self-Assessment to gauge how much sorting has improved. **If you have an existing Contamination Charge on your bill**, and would like an inspection by one of our Audit Team members, please ensure your Self-Assessment is receiving a PASS on all three bins before requesting a re-inspection. If an inspection by one of our auditors does not pass all three bins, your Contamination Charge will **not** be removed.
7. By doing a better job sorting your refuse, you're helping to protect our environment. Items that can be reused, recycled or composted won't be buried and lost forever in a landfill. Instead, contamination-free compost and recycling ensures your discarded, old materials can be processed into something new.