



# RECOLOGYSF.com

Recology Sunset Scavenger and Recology Golden Gate, your local recycling companies

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*Recycling collector Miguel Lara, a 20-year employee of Recology Sunset Scavenger, and the other collectors in San Francisco pride themselves on providing great customer service.*

## Recycling at the curb

They used to call us garbage collectors. Someone is going to have to come up with a new name. Maybe it is as simple as recycling collectors or, better yet, recyclers.

We say this because, working with our customers, we have dramatically reduced the amount of garbage San Francisco sends to landfill. Thanks to your efforts, San Francisco now recycles most of the discards it generates.

This success is based primarily on what happens at the curb. We love being out on the route and taking care of our customers. A big part of that is answering questions to help residents better understand what can be recycled and composted.

San Franciscans are into recycling. Customers asked for bigger blue bins, and we switched their 32-gallon blue bins for larger ones.

We encourage customers to put a lot more in their green compost bins, including coffee grounds, eggs shells, all your kitchen trimmings, used paper napkins and towels, and plant cuttings.

We help customers understand what we know — that all refuse goes somewhere and that garbage isn't garbage at all. It is a mix of resources that can be separated and put to good use.

We hustle on our routes and want to do the very best for our customers.

We feel we are part of the neighborhoods we serve. We help keep them clean and be more green.

Whatever you need, let us know. Together we are going to make our beautiful city an even better place to live, and, because all discards go somewhere, we will continue to make all efforts to send less to landfill and recycle more.

## Life's a mess, we sort it out

The recycling collectors on the route bring it in: bottles, cans, paper, cardboard, plastic cups and tubs, and a lot of other hard plastics such as molded plastic packaging.

Then it's our turn. We are the sorters who separate materials you toss in your blue bin. We work in a large plant called Recycle Central on Pier 96 in the Bayview District.

The blue curbside bin makes recycling easy for you and all Recology customers because you can toss all your recyclables in one cart.

When San Francisco upgraded its recycling program in 2001, Recology delivered blue bins, a step up from small tubs, to properties across the city. The combination of larger bins and the ability to toss all recycling in one container resulted in a 30 percent increase in curbside recycling.

At the same time, Recycle Central opened. Every day recycling collection

trucks serving San Francisco neighborhoods pick up more than 500 tons of mixed recycling and then dump it on the tipping floor at Recycle Central. We must sort, bale, and ship it daily to make room for the next 500+ tons arriving tomorrow.

Inside, mixed recyclables are separated using modern equipment and hand sorting, which we provide. A magnet lifts up tin cans; another device repels aluminum cans off the line. Clear plastics go in one big silo, opaque plastics in another, colored in a third.

We take pride in being part of the citywide effort to keep materials out of landfills as we pursue the City's goal of achieving zero waste by 2020.

We are hired from neighborhoods surrounding the plant. In the 10 years since the program upgrade, Recology has created 250 local jobs for San Franciscans. We work at Recycle Central, the iMRF (a construction recycling facility), and an elevated recycling line at the Resource



*Recycling sorter Jenny Trang works at Recycle Central. She started her job at the plant in 2007.*

Recovery and Transfer Station where we sort materials dropped off by small contractors and people doing spring cleaning projects. All three recycling operations are located in San Francisco.

We sorters don't get to meet customers very often, but we share your desire to help protect the environment. Our job is to finish what you start by using your blue bin.



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## Life, not landfill

Let no paper go to landfill. We all know recycling paper saves trees and reduces pollution. Recycling paper also saves energy and water, which all life requires.

By the same token, composting at the curb returns nutrients and minerals to local farms. The compost you help make by tossing food scraps and plant cuttings in your green bin gives farmers a viable alternative to liquid or chemical fertilizers.

What do you get out of composting? Healthy food to support our good health, fewer landfills, and the knowledge that we are helping protect our land, air, and water for our families and future generations.

Place something in a recycle or compost bin and it gets a second life. A glass bottle tossed in a blue bin can be back on the shelf as a new bottle in six weeks. Scraps tossed in a green bin become a nutrient-rich compost that improves the soil and ultimately the quality of the crops produced at local farms and vineyards.

“When you add compost, it’s like stoking a fire in the soil. It makes everything go,” said Nigel Walker, whose Eatwell Farm grows and delivers organic fruits and vegetables to San Francisco markets, restaurants, and homes.

Agronomist and farmer Bob Shaffer praises San Francisco for its leadership in

recycling and composting, the chief reason independent studies consistently report that San Francisco is the “greenest city” in North America. Shaffer encourages San Franciscans to compost all peelings and food scraps, including the biscuit that fell on the floor and the crumbs left on the plate.

“There is nothing that we have available to us in Northern California that makes better compost than recycled food,” Shaffer said, “both because of the large volume of food that is produced in Northern California and because of the high mineral content, protein content, carbohydrates and oils that are found in recycled foods.”

A key moment occurs when you stand in front of the garbage, recycling, and compost bins. If you toss resources like paper and food scraps in the garbage, they go to a landfill and are gone forever. Toss things that can be recycled or composted in your blue and green bins, and a lot of good things happen.

Recology, an employee-owned company born and based in San Francisco, is working to help the City achieve zero waste by 2020. We provide the essential blue-green-black curbside collection program. And we offer 20 additional programs, making it easy to recycle just about anything. For



Nigel Walker of Eatwell Farm ([eatwell.com](http://eatwell.com)) grows heirloom tomatoes and other crops with compost made from food scraps collected in San Francisco.

example, Recology collects and recycles bulky items and household batteries.

“One key is to make recycling easy and convenient for customers. It’s something we work on every day,” said Deborah Munk, manager of Recology’s school tour program.

San Francisco diverts 78 percent of all discards generated in the city away from landfill disposal through source reduction, reuse, and recycling programs. Let’s keep our momentum going. It’s not about what we throw away. It’s about what we save together.



**What  
we save  
together**

In 2001 and 2002 San Francisco upgraded the city’s curbside recycling program by giving people larger blue bins and by adding green bins for food scraps and plants.

How much material has San Francisco recycled in 10 years through the curbside recycling and composting program provided by Recology?

Here are the total tons and new conversion numbers showing some of the ways our efforts to recycle and compost together help protect the environment:

- By recycling 1.2 million tons of paper, we saved 20 million trees.
- By recycling 174,000 tons of glass, we saved enough energy to power the city’s cable car system for nearly three years.
- By recycling 135,000 tons of metal, we saved 19 million gallons of oil.

**RECOLOGYSF.com**

Recology Sunset Scavenger and Recology Golden Gate, your local recycling companies

Useful  
Telephone  
Numbers

Recycle, Compost and Trash Collection:  
Recology Sunset Scavenger, 330-1300  
Recology Golden Gate, 626-4000

Debris Box Service, 888-404-4008  
RecycleMyJunk.com, 330-1300

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Golden Gate  
WASTE ZERO

