



## How to recycle old clothes and other textiles

**W**hat do tote bags, oven mitts, chair cushions, carpet padding, and rugs have in common? They can all be made from recycled clothes and other textiles.

Many cities, including San Francisco, are making new efforts to collect old clothes and other textiles for recycling. Items that are in good condition go to thrift stores and can be worn again. Post-consumer textiles that are threadbare or damaged can be made into other practical products, such as rags for commercial and residential use and insulation for automobiles and homes.

Why is it important to donate and recycle clothes and other textiles? Just like recycling bottles, cans, and paper and composting food scraps and plant cuttings, recycling textiles keeps materials out of landfills and incinerators.

The U.S. generates 25 billion pounds of textile waste per year; that's about

82 pounds per resident. On average, each person donates or recycles 12 pounds of clothing discards. It is within our power to change that for the better.



Wearable items, recycled through a textile collection program, are worn again. This ensures that the energy which once went into making the product is respected and optimally used.

Increasingly, environmentally minded fashion designers use recycled textiles to create handbags, place mats, drink coasters, and coin purses. One enterprise remakes old work shirts into adorable dresses for little girls. Others invent stylish skirts, baby shoes, and fun neckties. At least one designer has turned white T-shirts into a wedding dress.

How can San Francisco residents add to these efforts? Please fold old clothes and other textiles, put them in an open-top cardboard box, and schedule a special pickup with Recology. Send us an email through the "contact us" form on [RecologySF.com](http://RecologySF.com) or call (415) 330-1300.

These simple steps help San Francisco get closer to zero waste, an initiative set by our city to help protect the environment. In this way, recycling textiles — like reducing waste, practicing reuse, and participating in the blue and green bin program — is an opportunity to be part of the solution.

## The first and second "R" words — reduce, reuse

### WAYS TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE

Someone once said, "It's better to bring too much food to a picnic than not enough."

That may be true, but it is also the case that we waste too much food. Here are three tips for handling food more responsibly:

- 1 Purchase less so less goes to waste. One method is to shop more frequently and buy only what you are going to use.
- 2 Organize food in the fridge by what needs to be eaten first. Move these items to the front of the top and middle shelves.
- 3 Place all food scraps in your green curbside compost collection bin. Composting coffee grounds and vegetable peelings is easy. Take the next step and compost bones, spoiled lunch meat, moldering vegetables, expired yogurt, and too-old takeout.

Follow these steps and you will be amazed at the small amount of material in your trash bin. For more useful tips, go to [sfenvironment.org/love-food](http://sfenvironment.org/love-food).

**S**an Franciscans recycle and compost and are encouraged to continue placing discarded materials in their blue and green bins. It's a good, green habit.

We are also encouraged to remember the first two words in the guiding phrase — reduce, reuse, recycle, and rot (compost).

Reducing the amount of trash we generate and reusing things represent highly effective ways to help protect the environment.

How can we reduce the amount of trash we produce?

One of the best ways is to choose products when shopping that have little or no packaging. Doing so sends a powerful message to the marketplace because you are speaking with your consumer dollars.

Another way to reduce waste is to only buy what you need. Consider, briefly, what quantity you really need before purchasing. That step will reduce waste and save you money at the cash register.

Our options to reuse items, another powerful way to avoid making trash, are constantly increasing. New metal water bottles keep liquids warm or cool for many hours. Containers that snap

together or fit inside each other allow us to pack a lunch without producing any waste.

Coffee shops and other stores sell stylish metal mugs for coffee and tea. It is satisfying to utilize a reusable mug instead of a paper cup and plastic lid when purchasing hot beverages. The mug not only keeps the beverage warm, it doesn't end up in the trash.

Bringing one or more canvas tote bags to the grocery store is another great example of reuse. People who bring totes eliminate use of plastic and paper bags. Some grocers give small discounts to people who bring their own totes.

Taking steps to reduce waste and reuse things is practical and presents a strong example to others. It says we care about the environment and we are taking personal responsibility to make things better.



# Nice to know

## Everyone’s responsibility

Hollywood markets films depicting Earth filled with trash. Whose responsibility is it to make sure we do not trash our planet? Federal or state governments, different organizations, groups, individuals? The answer is all the above.

This observation comes from Mary Beth Horiai, who penned the article “Wasting away our future one bag at a time.” It’s the best article on zero waste we have found this year. To read the full story, type the headline in quotes in your search engine or go to [ReviewJournal.com](#).

## Green bin benefits

San Franciscans are composting 650 tons a day through the green bin compost collection program. That is an impressive total, and public officials, other representatives, and journalists from many countries come to San Francisco to see the compost collection program firsthand.



The benefits we achieve as a city by composting include: keeping materials out of landfills, returning nutrients to local farms, sequestering carbon in topsoil, and helping California save water.

Let’s do more of a good thing. While our compost collection program is off to a strong start, half of the material San Franciscans toss in their black landfill bins could instead be composted. Let no coffee grounds and other food scraps go to landfill.

Our food comes from farms. We should send our food scraps back to farms in the form of compost. Farms use compost to grow healthy crops that come back to San Francisco and then to your table. Help grow delicious tomatoes and other fresh fruits and vegetables. Compost.

## Art made from trash

For 25 years Recology has hosted the Artist in Residence Program at the San Francisco transfer station. More than 150 artists have participated. Works from 43 artists will be on display at the Tides Thoreau Center for Sustainability in The Presidio until Sept. 10, 2015. The gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Admission is free and open to the public; all ages are welcome.



Cart 4, Balls (Blue), 2014, by Jamil Hellu

## Community meetings

Sign up to receive invites to community meetings. Recology hosts community meetings to screen green films and present potential solutions to our environmental challenges. We also email customers brief articles and recycling tips from our customer newsletter, details about compost giveaways we host in San Francisco, and holiday collection schedules.

To receive this information electronically, go to [RecologySF.com](#), look for the photo of the smart phone, and click on the words “Sign up to receive brief articles”.

## Dolores Park

The northern half of Dolores Park reopened to the public on June 18, debuting 6 acres of fresh turf. In an effort to help keep the renovated park clean, Recology established an Eco Pop-up that encourages visitors to recycle and compost their discards. When we go hiking and camping, we are encouraged to pack it in and pack it out. At Dolores Park it’s even easier. Just carry the recycling and compostable materials from your picnic to the Eco Pop-up. Help leave the park clean so it is nice the next time you visit.

# Lifeline rates for eligible customers

Discounted refuse rates are available to low-income households that meet certain requirements. The discounts, known as Lifeline Rates, are based on the number of persons per household and annual gross income. Please see the accompanying chart for eligibility levels.

Lifeline Rates are approved by the City’s Refuse Collection and Disposal Rate Board. All Recology customers get the same high-quality garbage collection and recycling service regardless of what they pay.

In addition to income eligibility, the address on the applications must be where the household lives for more than half the year (not the second home) and the applicant cannot be claimed on another person’s income tax return. For complete details and to get a Lifeline Rate application, go to [RecologySF.com/residentialRates.htm](#) or call (415) 330-1300.

The new rate will appear on your next bill after the completed application is received and your eligibility is confirmed.

No. of persons living in your home	Total gross annual household income (all sources)
1	\$17,655 or less
2	\$23,895 or less
3	\$30,135 or less
4	\$36,375 or less
More than 4	Add \$6,240 for each additional person

32-gallon Trash (black bin)	\$19.43
32-gallon Recycling (blue)	1.55
32-gallon Composting (green)	1.55
Base Charge per dwelling unit	3.87
Projected monthly Lifeline bill	\$26.40

# RecologySF.com

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

Recycling, compost, and trash collection:

Recology Sunset Scavenger  
(415) 330-1300

Recology Golden Gate  
(415) 626-4000

Debris Box Service  
(888) 404-4008

RecycleMyJunk.com  
(415) 330-1300

