



## Green and blue bin items get composted & recycled Black bin contents go to landfill



*Help protect the environment. Please put all compostables in your green bin and all recyclables in your blue bin.*

**W**hen you are about to toss something away, please remember this simple fact – all trash goes somewhere.

In that brief moment before we throw a coffee cup or other item out, we as individuals determine if our discards will have another life. Toss food scraps in your green bin and you destined them to become compost that will go onto a farm or vineyard. Throw empty bottles in your blue bin and you send them to Recycle Central, the big recycling plant on San Francisco's Pier 96.

Please try to avoid tossing things in your black bin or a public litter can. Materials dumped in trash bins, such as your black bin, go to a landfill.

You should only use your black bin for things that cannot be recycled or composted. Examples include dirty diapers, potato chip bags, latex gloves, and boxes containing juice, soup, and soy milk.

Items you toss in your black bin get collected by neighborhood route trucks, dumped into a concrete-lined pit, compacted, and transported to a landfill.

Please place all materials that can be composted in your green composting bin. Examples include: vegetable peelings, coffee grounds, all food scraps, and food-soiled paper, such as used paper napkins and paper towels.

San Francisco's green-bin program accepts cooked meat that is too old eat, such as spoiled lunch meat. The green bin

also accepts bones, such as chicken and steak bones, and crab and oyster shells. Bones and shells add calcium, a mineral, to the compost.

Please toss all materials that can be recycled in your blue recycling bin. San Francisco's blue-bin program accepts bottles, cans, clean paper, cardboard, and hard plastics, such as molded plastic packaging and plastic cups.

**It is very important that all materials that can be recycled go in the blue recycling bin.**

**All materials that can be composted should go in the green composting bin.**

If you are unsure whether a piece of plastic should go in the blue bin, try this test. Hold it out from your body and drop the piece of plastic. If it is hard plastic, it will make a noise when it hits the ground. Please put all hard plastics in your blue bin. If it is soft plastic, it will not make a noise. Do not put soft plastics, also known as film or flimsy plastics, in the blue bin. Plastic bags, a form of film plastic, can be recycled in designated containers at grocery stores.

Following San Francisco's three-bin system makes recycling easy and convenient. Please do not allow the black bin to become a default receptacle. By recycling and composting correctly you help keeps materials out of landfills and help give your discards another life.



*Martha Troncoso sorts recyclables at Recycle Central.*

## Constantly moving

They work in a large warehouse most people will never visit, and they're proud to help the City make progress in our collective quest to achieve zero waste.

They are the sorters who work at Recycle Central, the large recycling facility on San Francisco's Pier 96. Officially titled "classifiers," they perform dozens of tasks to sort 600 tons of mixed recyclables delivered to the plant daily by neighborhood collection trucks.

If you put something in your blue bin, it goes to Recycle Central. The sorters staff two shifts inside the plant. The first shift starts at 4 a.m.

"We sort out the trash and separate paper, plastic, cardboard, and aluminum," said Ayanna Banks. "It's hard, but it goes by fast because you are constantly moving."

In addition to conveyor belts, Recycle Central has other modern machinery. Spinning disks temporarily suspend gravity and separate paper from bottles and cans. A powerful magnet pulls steel cans off the line. Another device flips aluminum cans into a steel cage. An optical sorter separates hard plastics. Solar panels on the roof help power the plant.

The machines are cool, but it's people who make Recycle Central work. Mechanics labor through the night to make sure everything is working for the day and swing shifts.

Like the Recology drivers who wheel bins to their collection trucks, empty and then return them to the curb, the classifiers who sort recyclables have a tough and dirty job. But Banks notes there is an unexpected benefit:

"It's good exercise for your upper body to keep you arms in shape. No flab."



# Use sorting stations for discards at S.F. events

“San Francisco? It’s not a town, it’s a no-host cocktail party.” Jim Murray, who won the Sportswriter of the Year Award 14 times, wrote that line long ago. Murray’s comment remains true today.

On most Saturdays and Sundays half a dozen events – street fairs, concerts, 5K and 10K runs, festivals, farmer’s markets, and more – take place in San Francisco. Outdoor gatherings include large attractions such as Chinese New Year, Gay Pride, and Carnival parades as well as international competitions like America’s Cup.

All these activities now offer recycling and composting. “We always go to the Bernal Heights Street Festival, and my kids and I were really happy when they set up nice recycling stations. It’s also great that they position them at central locations so they get a lot of usage,” said Ingermarie Davis, a longtime resident.

Recology and the San Francisco Department of the Environment co-host seminars assisting event coordinators on how to reduce waste and increase recycling and composting. These services become essential functions at events that attract hundreds to thousands of people.



Blue and green bins at public functions make it easy for people to recycle and compost.

In San Francisco more events are including sorting stations with both recycling and composting collection bins. These stations prove especially popular with San Franciscans because recycling and composting have become second

nature to people who live and work here.

We recycle and compost at home, so naturally we look to recycle an empty bottle or compost a used paper napkin when enjoying a beverage and street food at a weekend outing.

## Nice to know

### Old clothing and textiles

What 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.

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.

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.

### Extra yard trimmings



Spring has sprung. For many customers that means extra yard trimmings. Please put all plant cuttings in your green composting collection bin. If you have extra yard trimmings, you can put them in large paper bags available at local hardware stores. If you have extra branches, you can bundle and tie them with string. Standard composting collection rates apply.

### Cardboard boxes



As online shopping increases, so does the use of cardboard boxes most items are shipping in.

A coalition of San Francisco businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, the City, and Recology encourage people to shop local whenever possible.

A trip to the farmer’s market generates zero cardboard boxes, especially

when you bring your own canvas carry bags.

However, if and when you have cardboard boxes and want to recycle them, please break them down before putting them in your blue recycling bin. Another option is to flatten cardboard boxes, cut or fold pieces into 2-foot by 3-foot sections, stack and tie them with a string, and lean them up against your blue recycling bin.

### Household batteries

We recommend rechargeable batteries. Residential customers who want to recycle expired household batteries can place them in a clear, sealable plastic bag and put the bag on top of their black bin.

Your Recology service provider will pick them up and place them in a special bucket on the side of the collection truck. We send batteries to companies that specialize in recycling them.

Please be sure to place tape over the contact points of lithium batteries. Car and motorcycle batteries are not accepted in this program.

