

Retooled recycling plant best in nation



PHOTO: Sven Eberlein

Recycle Central, the 200,000-square-foot recycling plant on San Francisco's Pier 96, completed a major upgrade in November and is running full speed.

The improvements, which included the latest technology and engineering standards, increased throughput capacity at Recycle Central by 170 tons per day.

The new line also gives San Francisco the flexibility to adjust to changes in the number and type of materials in the City's recycling stream. Improvements completed include:

- An advanced metering system for inbound materials.
- A presort line with 14 sorting stations, the longest in the U.S.

- Modern equipment that mechanically separates cardboard and glass bottles from other materials.
- Two new lines of spinning disk screens that separate paper from plastic containers.
- New high-tech optical sorters that separate different types of plastic.
- An advanced glass-cleaning system.

"These units allow for system-wide recovery of a multitude of plastics and different material types at a very high efficiency level," said Kevin Brogan of Van Dyk Recycling Solutions, which designed the modernized system.

"With this state-of-the-art equipment, Recycle Central and the sorters who work here will recycle more material and send

less to landfill," says Mark Arsenault, Regional Vice President for Recology operations in San Francisco.

Recology and the Department of the Environment urge all San Francisco residents, businesses, and visitors to take steps to reduce, reuse, and recycle more.

"Thanks to Recology's continued innovation and infrastructure improvements, our city is now ready to capture more of the recycled material that comes into our homes and businesses," said Debbie Raphael, Director of the City's Department of the Environment. "We each can do our part to reduce waste by making sure we place all of our recyclables in the blue bin every day."

Now is the time to recycle more

With a new year ahead and a newly retooled recycling plant capable of sorting an additional 170 tons of recyclables per day, residents and businesses are urged to be more attentive to recycling.

Toss all empty bottles, cans, paper, and hard plastics, such as plastic tubs or molded plastic packaging, in blue recycling bins at home and work. The contents of those blue bins go to Recycle Central, which now houses the most advanced sorting line in North America. It's a recycling behemoth that thrives on our discards.

Cities around the world are engaging in the zero waste movement, and San Francisco, along with Recology, continues to help lead the way.

If we all do our part, we will keep a significant amount of material out of the landfill, save trees and other resources, and help create local jobs (see story on page 2).

Opportunities to recycle are definitely increasing. Many residents have switched to a larger blue bin, and businesses across the city are setting up new recycling receptacles in common areas and at work stations.

Let's continue to help our City make progress toward achieving zero waste. Always look for the blue bin when it's time to recycle bottles, cans, paper, and hard plastics.



On the job at Recycle Central

Recycling creates 10 times more jobs than landfilling or incineration, and Recycle Central, the recycling plant on Pier 96, continues to employ 173 workers. The facility upgrade completed in November augments the existing workforce and allows San Francisco to recycle more material and, thereby, send less to landfill.



Ayanna Banks

Sorting out recyclables is a tough and dirty job. Accordingly, workers at Recycle Central earn a living wage and receive health and welfare benefits. "With this job I was able to put my daughter through college. I'm able to send my youngest daughter to extracurricular activities, and I'll be able to put her through college too," said Ayanna Banks.

Representatives from 85 countries have come to San Francisco in the last five years to learn firsthand about local efforts to achieve zero waste, to send nothing to landfills or incinerators.

Guests love to tour Recycle Central. They learn the magic of the plant includes efficiencies achieved in combining hand-sorting by recycling workers with very modern recycling equipment to recycle more materials.

Other jobs at Recycle Central include loader and forklift operators, scale masters, and mechanics who keep the equipment running.

Recycling workers in San Francisco say they take great pride in their work because green jobs benefit them, their City, and the planet.



Nice to know



Recology provides signs and other resources to assist customers.

See the sign, and recycle and compost

Recycling facilities are being upgraded big time in San Francisco. And property and office managers are installing recycling and composting receptacles in common areas.

Now it's our turn. Whether you are at work or out and about, please use the correct bins if you need to discard something.

Our City is a leader in the effort to send nothing to landfills or incineration. The movement is called zero waste.

Every day more buildings install recycling stations and improve signage showing which materials can be recycled and which can be composted. These setouts follow San Francisco's color scheme: blue for recycling, green for compost. Some receptacles include bin openings that are shaped to indicate one opening is for bottles, cans, and paper, and another is for compostable material.

We as individuals ultimately decide where our discards go. Toss something in a trash bin and it will be buried in a landfill. Items placed in a blue recycling bin get sorted, baled, and sent to manufacturing facilities where they are made into new products. Materials deposited in a green composting collection bin are turned into compost that improves soil health on local farms and vineyards.

Our City and many local property managers have set the stage for us. Let's all do our part to reduce, reuse, recycle, and compost and to help San Francisco continue to lead the nation in recycling.

Website redesigned to better serve you

To further assist customers, we redesigned our website to make it a bit easier to find information and connect with us. Check it out at [Recology.com](https://www.recology.com).

To see information about programs and services available in your location, you can take these simple steps.

When arriving at the home page, click on the blue box titled "MY LOCAL RECOLOGY" and enter your zip code.

Once there, you'll see five navigation boxes designed to get you where you need to be quickly. The boxes are labeled Popular Choices, All Services, In My Community, Helpful Resources, and Nearby Locations. Hover your cursor over a navigation box and simple pop-up menus open.

The redesigned site makes it easier for visitors to view sorting guidelines, holiday schedules, and learn more about what's going on in our community. Other features include online Bulky Item Recycling requests, online bill pay, and contact forms.

We hope you find the redesigned website helpful. Keep checking back because we will update the site frequently to make the most current information available to our customers.

San Franciscans love to compost

Twenty years ago San Francisco's curbside compost collection program did not exist.

Today many people are surprised to learn that curbside composting has surpassed curbside recycling in San Francisco.

That's right. San Franciscans send 650 tons of compostable material per day to local compost facilities. That compares to 625 tons per day of recycling that they place in their blue curbside bins.

Across the city residents and businesses have embraced curbside composting. People find it is both easy and satisfying to place food scraps, yard waste, and food-soiled paper in their green bins.

Composting achieves numerous environmental benefits. Keeping materials out of landfills and returning nutrients, in the form of compost, to local farms is just the beginning. To find out more, go to [RecologySF.com](https://www.recology.com).



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

