

# Sustainability Update

## Recycling & Waste Newsletter for the City of San Diego Businesses



Sustainability in Action

SPRING 2025

RepublicServices.com/SanDiegoRegion

619.421.9400

## Free Compost Available for San Diego Residents

Compost creates healthier soil by adding back nutrient-rich organic matter and improving soil structure. Healthy soil uses water more efficiently, allowing available water to flow toward your plants' roots, storing water in the soil longer, and reducing runoff and erosion.

Republic Services will be giving away compost to customers residing in San Diego City and County for free on Saturday, July 12, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. (or until compost runs out) at the Otay Sustainability Park, 1700 Maxwell Rd., Chula Vista 91911. Please bring your own shovels, containers or buckets to fill with compost. Join us for our next giveaway! For more information, contact [Otay@RepublicServices.com](mailto:Otay@RepublicServices.com).



Credit: Cat\_Chat | iStock | Getty Images Plus

To receive free compost at this event, residents must provide proof of active account ownership in the form of an invoice or online app documentation, as well as a photo ID. For more information, contact Republic Services at **619.421.9400**.

## Simple Steps for Organics Recycling Success at Home

### Single-Family Homes

- Separate food scraps and food-soiled paper from the recycling and trash in your kitchen.
- Put scraps into a container with a lid to reduce odors. If you wish, you can freeze or refrigerate the scraps.
- Do NOT bag scraps in plastic, compostable or biodegradable collection bags. You may use paper bags or wrap scraps in newspaper to absorb liquids.
- Place loose food scraps and food-soiled paper into the green organics cart with yard trimmings.
- Keep the curbside cart cleaner by placing cardboard, leaves or other yard clippings in the bottom, adding food scraps and then layering more yard clippings on top. You can also sprinkle baking soda at the bottom to reduce odor.
- Place all organic materials inside your cart, and close the lid — no material should be sticking out of the top or sitting on the ground.

### Multi-Family Units

- Separate food scraps and food-soiled paper from the recycling and trash in your kitchen.
- Put scraps into a container with a lid to reduce odors. If you wish, you can freeze or refrigerate the scraps.
- Place loose food scraps and food-soiled paper into the green organics cart or dumpster.
- Place all organic materials inside your cart or dumpster, and close the lid — no material should stick out of the top or sit on the ground.

## See What Happens to Collected Organics

Instead of going to landfills, collected organics are now turned into compost, mulch and renewable energy, creating beneficial products and reducing methane emissions. If you'd like to see how this process works, we can help. Republic Services has videos about how residential and commercial organics are processed after collection. Check them out!

- Residential Organics – [Bit.ly/3vW07Ci](https://bit.ly/3vW07Ci)
- Commercial Organics – [Bit.ly/3ZjbT70](https://bit.ly/3ZjbT70)



## Commercial Edible Food Generators

### Tier 1

- Supermarkets**  
A full-line, self-service retail store with gross annual sales of \$2 million or more, and which sells a line of dry grocery, canned goods, or nonfood items and some perishable items.
- Grocery Stores**  
Grocery store with a total facility size equal to or greater than 10,000 square feet.
- Food Service Providers**  
An entity primarily engaged in providing food services to institutional, governmental, commercial, or industrial locations of others based on contractual arrangements with these types of organizations.
- Food Distributors**  
A company that distributes food to entities including, but not limited to, supermarkets and grocery stores.
- Wholesale Food Vendors**  
A business or establishment engaged in the merchant wholesale distribution of food, where food (including fruits and vegetables) is received, shipped, stored, and prepared for distribution to a retailer, warehouse, distributor, or other destination.



### Tier 2

- Local Education Agency**  
A local education agency is defined as a school district, charter school, or county office of education, with an on-site food facility, that is not subject to the control of city or county regulations related to solid waste.
- State Agencies**  
State agencies with a cafeteria with 250 or more seats or a total cafeteria facility size equal to or greater than 5,000 square feet.
- Restaurants**  
Restaurant with 250 or more seats, or a total facility size equal to or greater than 5,000 square feet.
- Hotels**  
Hotel with an on-site food facility and 200 or more rooms.
- Health Facilities**  
Health facility with an on-site food facility and 100 or more beds.
- Large Venues**  
Large venue means a permanent venue facility that annually seats or serves an average of more than 2,000 individuals within the grounds of the facility per day of operation.
- Large Events**  
Large event means an event including, but not limited to, a sporting event or a flea market, that charges an admission price, or is operated by a local agency, and serves an average of more than 2,000 individuals per day of operation of the event, at a location that includes, but is not limited to, a public, nonprofit, or privately owned park, parking lot, golf course, street system, or other open space when being used for an event.



Sustainability in Action

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
GREENFIELD, IN  
PERMIT NO. 220

Republic Services  
8364 Clairemont Mesa Blvd.  
San Diego, CA 92111

# Review Your Sorting Requirements

Organics

✓ YES

- ✓ Flowers
- ✓ Grass cuttings
- ✓ Leaves
- ✓ Weeds
- ✓ Small tree and brush trimmings
- ✓ Yard waste
- ✓ Bones
- ✓ Dairy products
- ✓ Household plants
- ✓ Wood chips
- ✓ Cooked meat
- ✓ Small branches and twigs
- ✓ Food-soiled paper towels
- ✓ Eggs
- ✓ Fruit and vegetables
- ✓ Bread and grains
- ✓ Coffee grounds and filters
- ✓ Cheese
- ✓ Pastries



✗ NO

- ✗ Plastic bags
- ✗ Bamboo
- ✗ Dead animals
- ✗ Dirt, rocks or sand
- ✗ Manure
- ✗ Pet waste
- ✗ Palm branches
- ✗ Treated or painted wood
- ✗ Recyclable materials
- ✗ Burnt material or ash
- ✗ Trash

Recycling

✓ YES

- ✓ Plastic containers
- ✓ Metals: steel, tin, bimetel and aluminum
- ✓ Envelopes and office paper
- ✓ Newspaper and magazines
- ✓ Junk mail and catalogs
- ✓ Paperback books and phone books
- ✓ Brochures, greeting cards and file folders
- ✓ Glass: clear and colored
- ✓ Cardboard



✗ NO

- ✗ Plastic bags
- ✗ Food waste
- ✗ Yard waste
- ✗ Light bulbs
- ✗ Ceramics or dishes
- ✗ Electronics
- ✗ Clothing
- ✗ Polystyrene foam
- ✗ Hazardous waste
- ✗ Garden hoses
- ✗ Construction waste
- ✗ Greasy pizza boxes
- ✗ Pots or pans

Landfill

✓ YES

- ✓ Plastic utensils
- ✓ Packing peanuts
- ✓ Juice pouches
- ✓ Chip bags
- ✓ Snack wrappers
- ✓ Broken dishware
- ✓ Plastic food trays or containers
- ✓ Diapers
- ✓ Pet waste
- ✓ Plastic bags
- ✓ Other trash



✗ NO

- ✗ Batteries
- ✗ Construction materials
- ✗ Hot ashes
- ✗ Fluorescent bulbs
- ✗ Medicines
- ✗ Electronic waste
- ✗ Tires
- ✗ Hazardous waste
- ✗ Medical sharps
- ✗ Used motor oil and filters

# California Recycling Laws for Businesses



**Recyclables:** Assembly Bill (AB) 341 makes recycling mandatory for businesses that generate 4 or more cubic yards of waste per week and multi-family properties with five or more units. Under AB 341, businesses and properties must recycle paper, boxes, cans, bottles and containers, as well as recyclable items that are unique to their operations. Senate Bill (SB) 1383 expands on this requirement, making recycling of clean paper and cardboard mandatory at all businesses and multi-family properties, regardless of size.

**Organics:** Under SB 1383 and AB 1826, California businesses are required to reduce the volume of organics sent to landfills. Under these laws, organics include food scraps, food-soiled paper and yard trimmings. All businesses and multifamily properties should now be participating in organics recycling programs.

**Customer Recycling:** Under AB 827, limited-service restaurants in California must now provide customers with visible, clearly marked and easily accessible containers for recyclables and organics (uneaten food scraps, soiled paper and similar items) adjacent to trash bins. Full-service restaurants need to provide separate bins for use by employees. This law also applies to food courts and other businesses that sell food for on-site consumption.

**For Assistance:** You can learn more about these requirements at [CalRecycle.ca.gov/recycle/commercial](http://CalRecycle.ca.gov/recycle/commercial).

# Avoid Contamination and Overages

Keep your containers free of contamination and make sure the lid stays closed.

## Can trash contaminate my recycling or organics?

By eliminating materials that don't belong, you help ensure recyclables and organic materials are properly handled and processed. If a recycling load contains trash or non-recyclables, the load may no longer be valuable and might not be recycled. Similarly, trash or recycling in organics containers may lead to the whole organics load being disposed of as trash. Even trash can become contaminated if hazardous materials are placed inside the container.

## Is there a fee for contamination?

Contaminated bins may incur contamination fees. Please keep your containers free of contamination and make sure the lid closes.

## What is an overloaded container?

Typically, if the lids do not sit flat on the container, it is considered overloaded. Overloaded containers happen when more material is loaded into the container than it can handle.



Credit: SolStock | E+ | Getty Images

## Why is an overloaded container an issue?

Overloaded containers often result in materials not making their way into the truck upon tipping. Materials on the top of the container often end up on the ground.

## Is there a fee for overloaded containers?

Yes, there is a charge per occurrence. Ensuring you have the correct service levels is more cost-effective than

overloading a smaller container or not having the correct frequency of service.

To avoid overloaded containers, the best approach is to make sure your service matches your actual needs. This might mean adjusting your service levels, increasing how much you divert through recycling or organics, or requesting a waste audit from your local team to help "right-size" your setup. For added control, locking devices are also available with dumpster service for an additional fee.

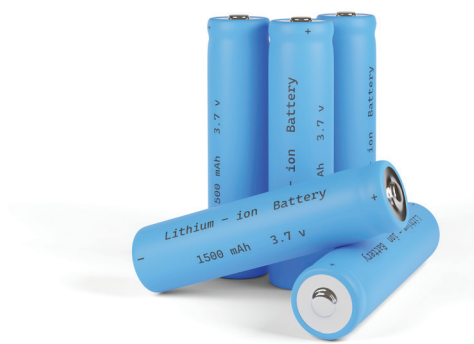


# Keep Drivers Safe from Battery Hazards

Batteries are indispensable in our daily lives, powering everything from our smartphones and laptops to remote controls and children’s toys. These compact energy sources offer the convenience of portable power, enabling us to stay connected and productive on the go. However, despite their usefulness, batteries can pose significant risks if not handled properly.

Batteries, particularly lithium-ion types, can be hazardous when mismanaged. Overcharging, physical damage and improper disposal can lead to serious issues, including fires in the collection trucks and facilities, chemical leaks and costs to repair the damage. When a battery is overcharged or left plugged in overnight, it can overheat, leading to potential explosions or fires. Similarly, physical damage to a battery can cause it to leak harmful chemicals, posing a risk to human health and the environment.

Avoid overcharging lithium-ion batteries by unplugging devices once they are fully charged, and never leave them plugged in overnight. This practice helps prevent overheating and extends the battery’s lifespan. It’s also important to store batteries in a cool, dry place—ideally somewhere between 40 and 80



Credit: jroballo | iStock | Getty Images Plus

degrees. Batteries exposed to extreme heat or cold may degrade faster and are more likely to leak or ignite.

Finally, never throw batteries into your trash, recycling or organic waste streams. These batteries must be taken to a designated hazardous waste facility to be disposed of safely. To make proper disposal easier, local municipalities offer free battery recycling programs or drop-off locations. You can check your city or county website for nearby options. If visiting a drop-off site is not convenient, Republic Services also offers a mail-back program that allows you to safely package and return used batteries from your home. To learn more or request a kit, visit [Packback.RepublicServices.com](https://Packback.RepublicServices.com).

# Unwanted Mattress?

Sadly, too many mattresses are illegally dumped along roadsides or in empty lots. But they don’t have to end up there. In California, the Mattress Recycling Council manages a recycling program that is available to everyone and ensures free and easy recycling. When you purchase a new mattress, the retailer (even online) is required to offer no-cost take-back of your old mattress. Another option is to drop off the mattress and box springs for recycling at the Sycamore or Otay Landfill. Visit [Byebyemattress.com/programs-by-state/california](https://Byebyemattress.com/programs-by-state/california) for more information.



# Safely Dispose of Household Hazardous Waste

Household hazardous waste (HHW) is any product in your home that could be poisonous, flammable or dangerous. Warning labels are often attached to products like automotive fluids, automotive and rechargeable batteries, lawn and garden chemicals, paint-related products, cleaners and solvents. These products are dangerous and pose a risk to our environment when they end up in the landfill. That is why HHW should never be placed in your curbside trash carts.



Electronic waste, such as televisions, computers, and cell phones, along with universal waste like common batteries and fluorescent lights, also do not belong in trash or recycling carts. These materials can harm collection and disposal workers and create environmental hazards if not handled properly.

There are affordable, safe, legal, and convenient disposal options for hazardous, electronic, and universal waste throughout San Diego County.

### For more information:

- **Households:** Visit [Sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/dpw/recycling/hhw.html](https://sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/dpw/recycling/hhw.html) for details. You can also use the HHW drop-off facilities listed below.
- **Small Businesses:** If you generate less than 27 gallons, or 220 pounds, of hazardous waste each month or 2.2 pounds of acutely hazardous waste each month, call **858.694.2456**.
- **Large Businesses:** Call the County of San Diego Hazardous Materials Division at **800.253.9933**.
- **Seniors (65+) and Disabled Unincorporated Residents:** Limited door-to-door pickups of HHW are available. Call **877.R.1.EARTH (877.713.2784)** for more information.

Look for the FAQs at [RepublicServices.com/SanDiegoCountyCA](https://RepublicServices.com/SanDiegoCountyCA) for more information and resources for mail-back programs and drop-off sites for different materials. Call **877.R.1.EARTH (877.713.2784)** with questions about where to properly dispose of just about anything and for information on scheduling an appointment at your nearest HHW facility.

Used oil, oil filters and electronics can also be recycled at many local businesses. Call the HHW Hotline **877.R.1.EARTH (877.713.2784)** or search [WasteFreeSD.org](https://WasteFreeSD.org) for a location near you.

# HHW Drop-Off Facilities

### Ramona HHW Facility for Unincorporated Residents

- Location: Ramona Disposal Transfer Station, 324 Maple St., Ramona
- Appointments required: Call **877.713.2784** or schedule online.
- Appointments available on the first and third Saturdays of the month, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### Escondido HHW Facility for Unincorporated Residents

- Location: Escondido Disposal Transfer Station, 1044 W. Washington Ave., Escondido
- Appointments required: Call **877.713.2784** or schedule online.
- Appointments available from 12:30 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. only
- City of Escondido residents: Call **760.745.3203**.

### El Cajon HHW Facility

- Location: 925 O’Connor Street, El Cajon (at the Waste Management [WM] Transfer Station)
- Appointments required: Available every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Please call WM to schedule an appointment, using the following steps:

1. Call WM at **619.596.5100**.
2. Say “Household Hazardous Waste” when the virtual assistant asks what you want help with. This will bring you to the Haul Away landing zone.
3. If you are a WM customer, say your address or account number (City of Santee residents and some County residents are serviced by WM).
4. If you are NOT a WM customer, say “No Address” or “No Account.”
5. Say “Residential” when asked if it is a residential, business or contractor address.
6. You will be connected with an agent who can schedule your HHW drop-off appointment.
7. **Please note:** If it associates your phone number with an account for a different facility, such as Temecula, repeat “No Address.”



# Sharps Disposal Options Near You

Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist whether they take back used needles, lancets and syringes. You can also take your used needles, lancets and syringes to drop-off collection sites. Or, you can search for a needle drop-off location closest to your home on the County's waste and recycling database, [WasteFreeSD.org](https://www.wastefreesd.org).

You might also consider using a free "mail-back" service for proper disposal. To sign up, call **844.633.7765** or **888.371.0717**, or order online at [Med-project.org](https://www.med-project.org) or [Safemedicinedrop.com](https://www.safemedicinedrop.com). Each mail-back kit includes a sharps container, prepaid shipping and packaging. Once the kit arrives, use the sharps container as directed, and follow the mail-back instructions to ship the sharps container free of charge with USPS right from your home.

Residents of unincorporated communities may take their home-generated medical waste sharps in closed rigid containers no larger than 2 liters (1/2 gallon) to approved residential sharps collection drop boxes at the following locations:

- Alpine Sheriff Station, 2751 Alpine Blvd., Alpine 91901
- Imperial Beach Sheriff Substation, 845 Imperial Beach Blvd., Imperial Beach 91932
- Borrego Springs Sheriff's Office, 571 Palm Canyon Dr., Borrego Springs 92004
- Julian Sheriff Substation, 2907 Washington St., Julian 92036
- Sunnyside Fire Station, 4900 Bonita Rd., Bonita 91902
- Lakeside Sheriff Station, 12365 Parkside St., Lakeside 92040
- Campo Sheriff Substation, 378 Sheridan Rd., Campo 91906
- Pine Valley Sheriff Substation, 28696 Old Hwy. 80, Pine Valley 91962
- Encinitas (North Coastal) Sheriff Substation, 175 North El Camino Real, Encinitas 92024
- Rancho San Diego Sheriff Station, 11486 Campo Rd., Spring Valley 91978
- Fallbrook Sheriff Substation, 388 East Alvarado St., Fallbrook 92028
- Valley Center Sheriff Substation, 28201 N. Lake Wohlford Rd., Valley Center 92082



# Report Illegal Dumping

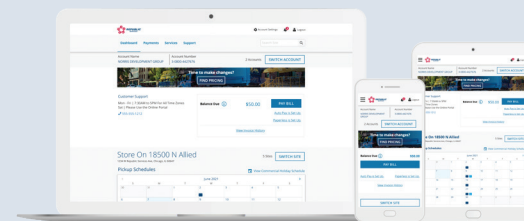


Credit: Credit: Pawel Kajak | iStock | Getty Images Plus

When you spot an illegal dump site, don't ignore it. Instead, note the location, and report it to the County Storm Drain Pollution hotline at **888.846.0800** or email [Watersheds@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Watersheds@sdcounty.ca.gov). If you see someone dumping illegally, do not confront them. If possible, discreetly take a photo of the activity, and write down a description of the person, as well as the vehicle make, color and license plate number.

## Easily Manage Your Republic Services Account

With the Republic Services app, you can schedule a special pickup or report a missed pickup. You can request repairs or graffiti removal from commercial dumpsters. Plus, you can even pay your bill. Visit [RepublicServices.com/Account/login](https://RepublicServices.com/Account/login) to sign up or download the app.



## What to Know About the Foam Ban

To reduce waste and protect the environment, the City of San Diego has placed restrictions on the use and distribution of polystyrene foam and certain single-use plastic items. Most polystyrene foam containers are no longer allowed to be sold or distributed. This includes commonly used food service items like cups, plates, bowls, trays and lids, along with egg cartons and meat trays. Items made from polystyrene foam, such as coolers, ice chests, and pool or beach toys, and flotation devices, like dock floats or buoys, are also prohibited, unless they are completely enclosed in another material.

In addition, businesses can only offer single-use plastic or bio-plastic straws and utensils when a customer specifically requests them. These items are no longer to be handed out automatically. All polystyrene foam products are banned from use on City property, which includes public spaces like parks and beaches.

For small businesses, the automatic exemption from the foam ban has expired as of March 31, 2024. However, businesses may still apply for waivers if they face feasibility-based or financial hardships. There are also exemptions available for those affected by the January 22, 2024 storm. For help with the waiver process or to request an application, businesses can email the City at [Sdrecyclingworks@sandiego.gov](mailto:Sdrecyclingworks@sandiego.gov).

### Republic Services

8364 Clairemont Mesa Blvd.  
San Diego, CA 92111

**619.421.9400**

[ALoskutov@RepublicServices.com](mailto:ALoskutov@RepublicServices.com)

For more information, please visit:

[RepublicServices.com/SanDiegoRegion](https://RepublicServices.com/SanDiegoRegion)

Copyright ©2025

Republic Services, Inc.  
All rights reserved.  
Funded by Republic Services, Inc.



Please recycle after reading.

## Follow Republic Services on Social Media



[Facebook.com/RepublicServices](https://Facebook.com/RepublicServices)



[X.com/RepublicService](https://X.com/RepublicService)



[Instagram.com/Republic\\_Services](https://Instagram.com/Republic_Services)



[YouTube.com/@Republic\\_Services](https://YouTube.com/@Republic_Services)



[Linkedin.com/company/Republic-Services-Inc](https://Linkedin.com/company/Republic-Services-Inc)