

City of San Diego Recycling Ordinance

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What is the City Recycling Ordinance?

The City Recycling Ordinance is a mandatory policy requiring the public to separate and recycle mixed recyclables and organic waste materials at residences, businesses, mixed use facilities and permitted special events. Click [here](#) to read the full recycling ordinance.

Who is affected by the ordinance?

All single-family and multifamily residences serviced by the City; and privately serviced businesses, commercial/institutional facilities, multifamily properties, mixed-use facilities and City-permitted special events are required to recycle.

Commercial facilities are buildings that people do not live in and include, but are not limited to, industrial or manufacturing, restaurant, retail, office, hotels, shopping centers, theaters, non-profit organizations, churches, private schools and some government entities (those not considered State agencies) and non-profit organizations.

Multifamily properties are apartments and condominiums with two or more residences on a single lot.

Mixed-use facilities which have most of its square footage devoted to residential uses will comply with residential requirements.

Mixed-use facilities which have most of its square footage devoted to commercial uses will comply with commercial facilities requirements.

What materials must be recycled?

The ordinance requires recycling of plastic and glass bottles and jars, paper, newspaper, metal containers, cardboard, rigid plastics including clean food containers, jugs, tubs, trays, pots, buckets and toys and organic material including yard trimmings, non-hazardous wood waste, food scraps, and food-soiled paper.

Am I required to recycle food scraps under the ordinance?

Yes, all residences, businesses, mixed-use facilities and permitted special events must recycle food scraps.

Why has the City of San Diego adopted this ordinance?

The City adopted the ordinance to

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions that includes the short-lived climate pollutant methane
- Meet the state recycling requirements
- Increase the recycling of materials
- Meet [zero waste](#) goals

How do I sign up for recycling and/or organic waste recycling service or change my containers?

Commercial facilities, multifamily properties serviced by a private hauler, and permitted special events should select from Franchise Haulers and Certified Recyclable Material Collectors (CRMC) who are authorized to operate in the City of San Diego for collection service needs.

-  [Franchise Hauler Directory](#)
-  [CRMC Directory](#)

City-serviced residential properties will receive weekly organic waste recycling service in 2023. Advance notice of the organic waste collection service will be sent to the address on file.

To request collection service assistance or additional blue recycling containers, please contact Environmental Services at 858-694-7000, trash@sandiego.gov or by submitting a [GetItDone request](#). Visit [Trash Collection Schedule webpage](#) to search your address and check if your property is serviced by ESD Collections.

To find out how to dispose of waste items not accepted in the trash or recycling (such as light bulbs, batteries and other hazardous waste), please visit WasteFreeSD.org.

What if I don't have space to add new containers?

Contact ESD at 858-694-7000 or sdrecyclingworks@sandiego.gov to request a consultation to discuss your space constraints. A Recycling Specialist can discuss container configuration options and may schedule a site visit appointment to assess your collection area.

If you are serviced by a franchise hauler, you may want to consider sharing recycling and/or organic waste recycling containers and service with a neighboring property with their permission and approval. The responsible persons (the individual or entity responsible for the management of solid waste for disposal or recycling) must ensure the full suite of trash, recycling and organic waste recycling services are provided by the same franchise hauler.

Are there any exemptions to the City Recycling Ordinance?

Multifamily residential facilities, commercial facilities, and mixed-use facilities that generate 0.001 cubic yard or less of solid waste per week are exempt from City Recycling Ordinance requirements. The property owner

can submit an exemption request with supporting documentation by emailing sdrecyclingworks@sandiego.gov or mailing:

Environmental Services Department
Attn: City Recycling Ordinance Enforcement
9601 Ridgehaven Ct, Ste 320
San Diego, CA 92123-1636

What if I don't need a collection container because I self-haul or backhaul my recyclables and/or organic waste materials?

This is not an option. All privately serviced residences, businesses and mixed-use facilities are required to have the full suite of trash, recycling and organic waste recycling services provided by one franchise hauler. Self-hauling recyclables, backhauling recyclables or having collection service provided by a certified collector can be done in addition to these services.

City-serviced residences will have trash, recycling and organic waste recycling collection service provided by the City of San Diego and must follow all City Recycling Ordinance requirements.

What will happen if I don't follow these requirements?

The responsible person(s) at the facility will be held accountable if a property is found to be out of compliance with the ordinance. A responsible person is the individual or entity responsible for the management of solid waste for disposal or recycling.

- A written warning (Notice of Violation) will be sent to the responsible person(s) and a City of San Diego Code Compliance Officer will determine a follow-up date and the amount of time needed to reach compliance.
- Free assistance will be offered to ensure the responsible person(s) understand the ordinance and any actions they must take in order to comply.

If non-compliance continues, the responsible person(s) may be subject to enforcement actions including but not limited to criminal prosecution, civil injunction, administrative abatement, civil penalties, revocation of permits, recordation of the notice of violation and withholding of future municipal permits.

The Code Compliance Officer may:

- Issue an administrative citation. First offense citation fees begin at \$50.
- Issue a new follow-up date in accordance with the administrative citation.
- Continue to coordinate technical assistance with a City Recycling Specialist.
- Continue to issue administrative citations not to exceed \$500 for each subsequent offense should compliance not be met on the code officer's follow-up visits.
- A \$100 re-inspection fee will be issued for each inspection beginning with the third inspection.

Additional information on how the law will be enforced can be found [here](#).

What resources and support are available to help with compliance for my business, apartment or condo property, or special event?

Environmental Services can provide free help to set up or improve your facility's recycling program, help educate your employees and tenants about recycling requirements, assess any space or container setup constraints and assist you with correcting a violation.

Contact sdrecyclingworks@sandiego.gov or customer service at 858-694-7000 for assistance.

Visit recyclingworks.com for more information on the City of San Diego Recycling Ordinance, how to comply, exemption criteria, educational signage and lists of franchise haulers.