

Special Events Waste Reduction Requirements

See how the current local and state waste management regulations impact your event.

City Recycling Ordinance

The City of San Diego Recycling Ordinance ([San Diego Municipal Code §66.0701](#)) requires the responsible person to provide recycling and trash containers throughout the event. If the event generates, distributes, provides or sells food or other organic material (food, food-soiled paper and yard waste), the event must provide organic waste recycling. To comply, the responsible person must:

1. Separate containers for recycling, trash and organic waste (if applicable).
2. Pair each trash container with a recycling container throughout the event – no standalone containers.
3. Organic waste recycling containers must, at minimum, be placed in food production and preparation areas, near food vendors and distributors, and around designated eating areas, and must be paired with a set of trash and recycling containers.
4. All containers set up throughout the event for attendees to use, and all final collection containers (i.e., dumpsters, roll-offs, carts, trailers, etc.) must be **clearly labeled and include images or text listing acceptable items**.



Tips for Success

- ✓ Use containers or lids that are uniquely colored to make it easy to differentiate the containers. Recommended colors are: recycling - blue; organic waste - green; and trash - black, gray or white.
- ✓ Include labeling on the lid or have signage on multiple sides of the container.
- ✓ Use transparent liners for recycling and organics to quickly identify the material and assess for contamination.
- ✓ Train staff and vendors on all requirements and advise them not to move containers.
- ✓ Confirm with your contracted hauler what items are accepted for collection, if bags are allowed and other best practices.



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Visit our website for signage, a list of haulers and other available resources:
sandiego.gov/environmental-services/recycling/ro/events

Single Use Plastic Reduction Ordinance

The Single Use Plastic Reduction Ordinance (SUPRO) **went into effect on April 1, 2023**. The following outlines how to comply:



- Polystyrene foam containers are prohibited from distribution. This includes foodservice ware such as bowls, plates, trays, cups, lids and other similar items.
- The following polystyrene products may not be distributed if not encased within another material: coolers, ice chests, or similar containers; pool or beach toys; dock floats, mooring buoys, anchors or navigation markers.
- For foodservice vendors at special events, single-use plastic (and bio-plastic) straws and utensils may only be provided upon request of the customer or at self-service stations.

For alternatives to polystyrene products or additional information on SUPRO, please visit: sandiego.gov/pf-ban



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Food Recovery

Senate Bill 1383 is California's Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction strategy to fight climate change by reducing food waste and recycling organic waste. Designated edible food-generating organizations must coordinate with a food recovery organization or service and donate their surplus edible food.

Starting Jan. 1, 2024, large events with 2,000 or more attendees per day that charge admission or are operated by a local agency must enter into a written agreement with a food recovery organization or service to collect their surplus edible food.



Tips for Success

- ✓ *Separate all edible food from what would otherwise be thrown away. Food previously served or hot foods held on a mobile food truck or cart cannot be donated.*
- ✓ *Examine food for spoilage and check packages for holes, broken seals or dented/bulging cans.*
- ✓ *Store food safely in sanitary, food-grade containers. San Diego County Department of Environmental Health advises storing hot food at 135 degrees Fahrenheit or above, cold food at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below, and frozen food below 32 degrees Fahrenheit.*
- ✓ *Ensure any food facilities operating within the event comply with all requirements.*
- ✓ *Questions on types of foods that are donatable? Contact San Diego County's Department of Environmental Health and Quality, Food and Housing Division at 858-505-6900 or fhduyeh@sdcounty.ca.gov.*
- ✓ *Liability Protections—Federal and California state laws protect food donors from liability.*
- ✓ *Maintain records of food recovery organization(s) utilized, copies of contracts/agreements, types of food recovered, frequency of donation and total pounds recovered on a per month basis.*



We're Here to Help:

City staff can provide the following free technical assistance to help your event:

- **Guidance on your waste management plan.**
- **Set up a recycling, organic waste and food recovery program.**
- **How to avoid Styrofoam and limit the use of single-use plastics.**



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Contact sdrecyclingworks@sandiego.gov or 858-694-7000 to request assistance or visit our website: sandiego.gov/environmental-services/recycling/ro/events