

Think Before You Recycle

For most people one of the easiest ways to help the environment is to recycle. Each year San Diego residents place more than 68,000 tons of material in their blue recycling bin. Over the years, the list of materials that can be recycled in the blue bin has increased to the point where many residents believe if it fits in the bin someone will figure out how to recycle it. This has been dubbed “wishful recycling.”

“Wishful recycling” is when residents place diapers, batteries, toasters, garden hoses, liquids and food into their blue recycling bin thinking these items can somehow be recycled. Unfortunately, wishful recycling contaminates paper and cardboard materials that could have been recycled had they not been contaminated. This has resulted in more than 10,000 tons of material needing to be sorted out at Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) annually. MRFs are where recyclables collected at the curb are sorted and processed prior to being shipped to end markets.

For years, overseas end markets removed any remaining contaminants shipped in with recyclables and disposed of the excess trash. China, one of the biggest markets for recycled materials, has imposed strict limits on contamination over the past year, going from 2% to .5%, allowed in recyclable material entering the country.

To meet these stringent standards, MRF operators have had to increase equipment and labor, which increases the cost to process material. While this has helped to clean up recyclables, it results in more material being classified as contaminated and being disposed in the landfill.

The City’s curbside recycling program offers residents a quick and easy way to recycle glass, metal and plastic containers, as well as, paper and cardboard. Items that aren’t accepted in the blue recycling container such as electronics, batteries, textiles and clothing and plastic bags should be donated or recycled at an e-waste recycling event or visit WasteFreeSD.org.

The City of San Diego’s Environmental Services Department needs your help in reducing contamination in the blue container by “Recycling Right”.

“Wishful recycling” (i.e. diapers, batteries, toasters, garden hoses, etc.), and the placing of liquids and food in the blue bin, which contaminates paper and cardboard need to be removed.

Keep these contaminants out of your recycling bin.



“Recycle Right”

Empty, Clean, Dry & Loose

- 1 Empty** - ensure recyclables are free from any liquids
- 2 Clean** - ensure recyclables are free of any food residue
- 3 Dry** - ensure recyclables are dry before placing them in your bin
- 4 Loose** - PLEASE DO NOT bag your recyclables. They must remain loose in the bin to be properly sorted (only shredded paper should be bagged)

By using “Recycle Right” as a guide, we can all help the City of San Diego reach its goal of Zero Waste by 2040.

Watch these videos at RecyclingWorks.com:

How to recycle at home



What happens to recyclables



Backyard Composting



Composting your food and yard waste at home is a great way to add nutrients back into your yard or garden. To help get started, the City offers free backyard composting classes that teach residents how to properly maintain a compost bin. The City also offers discounts on purchasing a compost bin for your home. To learn more, visit RecyclingWorks.com or call 858-694-7000.

Miramar Greenery Compost

The Miramar Greenery is a full-service composting facility that processes more than 100,000 tons of yard trimmings and food waste each year to create compost that can improve your yard and garden soil.

Compost is decomposed organic matter that adds nutrients to the soil, helps eliminate the need for synthetic fertilizers and helps retain moisture, which helps cut down on your water bill. City of San Diego residents can self-load up to two cubic yards of compost for free or pay a fee to have it loaded into a truck or trailer. To learn more about compost and other Greenery products visit RecyclingWorks.com.

Electronics Recycling

Electronic equipment and batteries are not accepted in your black trash or blue recycling container. These items should be donated or recycled at community recycling events that are held by private companies throughout the City of San Diego or taken directly to their drop off facility. For more information about companies that recycle these items visit WasteFreeSD.org or RecyclingWorks.com.

Paint and Hazardous Home Product Recycling

PaintCare is a state-wide program that makes it is easy to recycle extra or old unwanted paint. PaintCare is a network of paint retailers that accept old paint during their normal operating hours. To find a drop-off location near you visit www.PaintCare.org or call your local paint store to see if they are part of the program.

For other hazardous household products, such as solvents, weed killer and other poisonous or dangerous materials, City of San Diego residents can make an appointment to drop off these materials at the Hazardous Waste Transfer Facility (HWTF) at the entrance to Miramar Landfill. To make an appointment or to learn more about what is accepted at the HWTF visit the City's website at www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/ep/hazardous.

Batteries Are Hazardous

While cell phones and other electronic devices like laptops, tablets and cameras are part of our daily lives, how to discard of their lithium-ion battery has become a major safety concern. It is estimated that in 2017 more than 175 million pounds of lithium-ion batteries were sold in the U.S.

What makes lithium-ion batteries so efficient in powering electronic devices also makes them potentially dangerous. In the past few years lithium-ion batteries have been the cause of major fires on trash and recycling trucks as well as at recycled material processing facilities.

While these batteries are designed to hold a lot of energy to power devices, even when they are considered no longer useful they can still hold enough energy to create a spark, if their terminal scrapes against metal.

When a spark happens and paper or fiber dust is present a major fire can quickly start and set off other batteries, which can feed the fire, especially in a recycling plant.

In California, batteries are classified as a hazardous waste. It's against the law to dispose of them in the trash and they should not be placed in your blue recycling container.

To find out where to recycle lithium batteries, visit Call2Recycle.org for a list of drop-off locations by zip code. For all other batteries, visit RecyclingWorks.com and click on "Batteries".



NEW HOURS

Miramar Landfill, Miramar Greenery and Miramar Recycling Center

Miramar landfill has new hours and is now closed on Sunday. The new six-day a week operation will reduce equipment expenditures, as well as improve staff coverage and customer service during the new Monday through Saturday schedule:

Monday – Saturday 7 A.M to 4:30 P.M.
Sunday Closed

Closed on the following holidays – New Years, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas.



WHAT GOES WHERE?

Recycling



Don't Bag Recyclables



All jars, glass and plastic bottles



Aluminum and metal cans



Wrapping paper



Clean plastic food containers and cups



Mail, magazines, newspapers and phone books



Cartons



EMPTY aerosol cans



Clean aluminum foil and trays



Styrofoam™ packaging and clean food and drink containers*



Paper or frozen food boxes



Cardboard



Paper bags, Shredded paper (bagged and tied)



Plastic buckets, tubs, pots, trays and toys

Trash



Plastic wrap

Plastic utensils and straws



Glassware



Compostable products



Pet poop



Napkins, paper towels and tissue



Snack bags and wrappers



Diapers

Home Composting Bin



Shrub and tree trimmings



Leaves



Grass clippings



Food scraps



Take yard waste to



5180 Convoy Street

Household Hazardous Waste - Please call 858-694-7000 for disposal options.



Toxic products



Electronic waste



Paint



Bulbs



Batteries



Motor Oil



Needles and syringes



Propane and helium tanks

Return to Retailer



Plastic bags



Styrofoam™ peanuts

Donate Reusable Items



Small appliances



Clothing, textiles, toys, sporting goods and more!



* If service provider is not the City of San Diego, check if your hauler accepts Styrofoam for recycling.

Detach and Save