

City of San Diego



Guidelines for Recycling Containers and Signage for Recyclable Material Collection Services Provided by City Solid Waste Collection Franchisees and Recyclable Materials Collectors

These guidelines are issued by the Environmental Services Department (Department) pursuant to the City Recycling Ordinance (SDMC §§ 66.0701, *et seq.*) to ensure the provision of adequate and convenient recycling containers so the City will continue to meet the state mandate under Assembly Bill 939 to divert at least 50 percent of its waste from landfill disposal. These guidelines specify the necessary amount, type, and location of recycling containers to comply with the City Recycling Ordinance, as well as the requirements for legible and understandable signage related to the storage and collection of recyclable material.

Definition of “ Container” – Container means a receptacle for collecting and storing materials pending collection and includes, but is not limited to, cans, dumpsters, chutes, enclosures, automatic lift containers, bins, roll-offs, and other receptacles. A “Recycling Container” refers to a Container for recyclable materials. A “Solid Waste Container” refers to a Container for solid waste.

I. Minimum Required Recyclable Container Volume Ratios

The responsible person for a Residential, Commercial, Multi-Family, Hotels/Motels, or Mixed Use Facility shall ensure compliance with the following minimum Recycling Container volume ratios (measured by total Recycling Container(s) volume capacity compared to total Solid Waste Container(s) volume capacity, factored by the weekly collection frequency for the Container(s)).

Type of Facility	Minimum Required Ratio of Recyclable Material to Solid Waste Capacity
Multi-Family & Mixed Use Facilities with majority sq. ft. being residential	
50 units or more	40% recycling to 60% solid waste
Less than 50 units	30% recycling to 70% solid waste
Commercial & Mixed Use Facilities with majority sq. ft. being commercial	
10,000 sq. ft. or more	40% recycling to 60% solid waste
Less than 10,000 sq. ft.	30% recycling to 70% solid waste
Single Family Residence/Residential Facility	Minimum of one Recycling Container of equal capacity to each Solid Waste Container

II. Standards for Recycling Containers

All persons responsible for providing recyclable materials collection services for Residential, Commercial, Multi-Family, Hotels/Motels, and Mixed Use Facilities shall ensure the provision of on-site Recycling Containers for the collection and storage of recyclable materials that meet the following standards:

A. For Recycling Containers Pending Final Collection (i.e. automatic lift containers, dumpsters, roll-offs):

1. **Container Features** – The responsible person shall ensure that all Recycling Containers are equipped with close-fitting lids, are leak-proof, and rodent-proof.
2. **Container Location/Placement in Waste Disposal Areas Outside Buildings** – The responsible person shall ensure that Recycling Containers in waste disposal areas outside Commercial, Multi Family, Hotels/Motels, and Mixed Use Facilities are placed in convenient locations. A convenient location means the following:
 - Adjacent to each Solid Waste Container or disposal area; or
 - As close as possible to each Solid Waste Container or disposal area.

B. For Recycling Containers Not Pending Final Collection:

1. **Container Location/Placement and Capacity** – For Commercial, Multi-Family, Hotels/Motels, and Mixed Use Facilities, the responsible person shall ensure that Recycling Containers not pending final collection are placed adjacent to each Solid Waste Container and are an equivalent volume capacity to the Solid Waste Container that they are placed adjacent to. All restrooms are exempt from this requirement.
2. **Additional Requirements for Commercial or Mixed Use Facilities with Overnight Guest Occupancy (such as Hotels/Motels, Assisted Living Facilities, and Certain Healthcare Facilities).** - The responsible person shall either: (1) place a Recycling Container in each guest room; (2), place Recycling Containers on each floor by each set of stairs, at each elevator, at all ice machines and in hallway corners; OR (3) place Recycling Containers in accordance to a “placement plan” that has been approved by the Environmental Services Department.

III. Signage Requirements for Recycling Containers

- A. **Container Signage:** The responsible person shall clearly identify all Recycling Containers as a Recycling Container and shall display a list and/or pictures of the recyclable materials that may be deposited into the Recycling Container.
- B. **Storage Area Signage:** The responsible person for Commercial, Multi-Family, Hotels/Motels, or Mixed Use Facilities shall post and maintain one sign in each area where recyclable materials are collected and stored. The sign shall display a list and/or pictures of the types of recyclable materials that may be deposited into the Recycling Container. If recyclable materials are collected inside enclosures or chute rooms, the responsible person must also post a sign on the exterior of

the enclosures and/or on the entrance to the chute rooms indicating that recyclable materials can be deposited inside.

IV. Exemptions to these Guidelines

- A. Express Exemption:** Pursuant to San Diego Municipal Code section 66.0713(a), Multi-Family, Commercial and Mixed Use Facilities that generate solid waste (including recyclable materials mixed with solid waste) in an amount less than the threshold amount currently designated by the Department are exempt from these Guidelines. This exemption does not require submittal of an exemption application. The current threshold amount is available on the Department's website at: <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/environmental-services/pdf/recycling/crobchure.pdf>
- B. Other Exemptions:** Pursuant to San Diego Municipal Code section 66.0713(b), the Department Director's designee may grant an exemption to all or some of the requirements of these Guidelines. Applications for exemptions may be granted upon consideration of the following factors:
- Available markets for recyclable materials;
 - Available space for Recycling Containers;
 - Alternative recycling efforts; and
 - The amount and type of solid waste or recyclable materials generated.

Subject to approval of an exemption application the responsible person may be exempt from the requirements of Section II.B.1 for the following Solid Waste Containers that are not pending final collection:

- A dumpster or bin that is securely locked and not in use.
- A dumpster or bin of limited use for overflow of solid waste only.
- A dumpster or bin that is "on call", meaning it is not for everyday general use or is for seasonal use only.

To apply for an exemption, the responsible person must submit a written application to the Department, on a form approved by the Department Director, together with a cost-recovery processing fee. The Director's designee shall review the application and, if approved in writing and not revoked earlier, the exemption shall be effective for one (1) year. The responsible person may re-apply for the exemption on an annual basis.

If an exemption is denied, the responsible person may appeal the decision to the Department Director, whose decision shall be final.

The Director's designee may revoke the exemption at any time if one or more of the factors justifying the exemption no longer exist, or any other change in circumstances warrants its revocation.

Note: These Guidelines may be reviewed semi-annually and are subject to change when deemed warranted by the Department Director or designee.

Revision Date: 09/7/16