



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Curbside Recycling Tips (FAQs)

Q. What can I recycle in the blue bin?

A. A lot of things can be recycled in the blue bin. Most paper products, including newspaper, office paper, cardboard, food boxes (including clean frozen food boxes), magazines, and advertisements. Paper products must be free of food waste, pet waste, oil or excessive dirt. Empty glass bottles and jars are recyclable, along with their lids and empty metal and aluminum beverage and food containers can be recycled, as can disposable aluminum bake ware and clean foil. Remember that an aerosol can that had contained hazardous waste cannot be recycled. If empty, dispose in the trash. If it contains product, it must be disposed as hazardous waste.

A lot of plastics can now be recycled. In addition to the old favorites—bottles, jugs and jars—you can now recycle clean plastic food packaging containers, including round yogurt and dairy tubs, clear PET #1 clamshell plastic, drink cups, deli trays, and berry baskets. All containers must be clean and contain no food waste or trash. Accepted non-food plastics include plant pots and garden trays, along with rigid plastics such as buckets, toys, and containers that held non-hazardous household products such as detergent or pet litter. Other non-food plastics include large items such as plastic crates, totes, laundry baskets, pallets, and lawn furniture. These types of items must usually be broken down to fit into the blue recycling carts. If they are jammed into the carts or protruding out of the carts, the recycling truck may not be able to empty residences' recycling cart

For those who want more details, see the flyer at

www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/recycling/pdf/101112yesno.pdf

Q. What types of plastics can I recycle in the blue bin?

A. You can recycle a lot more! We are now able to take all clean rigid plastic food packaging, including dairy tubs, clear clamshells, cold drink cups, deli trays and berry baskets. You can also recycle plastic buckets, plant pots, tubs and even toys! **No Styrofoam, plastic film, bags, or utensils.**

Q. Do food and beverage containers such as bottles and cans have to be washed out for recycling?

A. It is not necessary to wash out your glass bottles and jars or aluminum and steel cans. Just make sure that any excess product is removed by dumping it out scraping off the sides if necessary. However, plastic food containers should be rinsed clean. Remember to reduce water consumption by using the clean-up water after washing your cooking utensils.

Q. Should I remove the labels from containers for recycling?

A. No, there is no need to remove the labels. They will be removed as the materials are processed for manufacturing.

Q. We get every-other week recycling collection from the City, and because so much of our waste is recyclable, we overflow our blue bin on a regular basis. How can I get another recycling container?

- A. City residential trash customers can choose from two recycling container sizes: 64- and 96-gallons. Two ways to get an additional blue bin or trade a smaller blue bin for a larger size is to 1) have it delivered to your home for a \$25 delivery fee, or 2) pick it up yourself at Collection Services at no charge. Call ESD Customer Services at 858-694-7000 to place your request. Residents may have a maximum of three recycling containers per home unless special authorization for more is granted.

If you will be picking up your bin you will need to bring proof that you live in the city of San Diego. If your driver's license shows a different address, a utility bill or water bill, along with a picture ID will be sufficient. You will be responsible for safely securing your container if you are using an open bed truck. The bin will be picked up at Collection Services, 8353 Miramar Place, San Diego, CA 92121, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Closed on holidays.

- Q. Are the bottle caps and jar lids recyclable?

- A. Yes! All metal and plastic lids can now be recycled. The lids should be put back on the containers for recycling.

To recycle food container tops from cans, stick them back down into the container. The sharp edges can be a hazard for recycling workers and the lid's flat profile can cause the lid to slip between belts and gears and damage the processing equipment. Try leaving a small part of the top attached to the can and then fold it into the can.

- Q. Are there types of paper that I should NOT recycle in the blue bin?

- A. Soiled paper is not accepted in the blue bin. Also, chemically treated paper such as photographs, blue prints, and NCR (No Carbon Required) paper are not accepted. Sticky notes cannot be recycled.

- Q. Can I recycle advertisements that come in the mail and with the newspaper?

- A. Yes, recycle all junk mail and advertising. Be sure to remove any compact disks or product samples that might be enclosed.

- Q. Can I recycle gift wrapping paper?

- A. Yes, gift wrap made of paper is recyclable. But metallic or plastic wrapping paper should be kept out of the blue bin.

- Q. Do I have to remove things like staples, paper clips, and plastic windows to recycle paper?

- A. No. The paper is turned into a watery pulp before it becomes a new product, and while the paper is in a pulp phase, non-fiber material will be removed by skimming, straining, and magnetic screening.

- Q. Can paper and cardboard with tape on it be recycled?

- A. Some tape is acceptable, but excessive tape can gum up production machinery and reduce operational efficiency, so you should try to remove as much tape as can easily be removed before recycling.

- Q. Are pizza boxes recyclable?

- A. Pizza boxes not heavily soiled with grease, cheese and food are recyclable. If the bottom is too soiled, the top might be OK to tear off and recycle.

- Q. Do I have to separate the different types of materials for recycling?

- A. No, do not separate the materials for recycling, with the exception of shredded paper. This needs to be placed in a bag before putting it in the blue bin. A paper bag is preferred, but shredded paper is also accepted in a plastic bag. All other materials should be placed loose in the blue recycling bin.

Q. Why can't I recycle plastic bags in the curbside program?

A. It is cost prohibitive to recycle plastic bags in the curbside program. The recycled bags have little value, and when collected in comingled programs they get badly contaminated, decreasing their value further. There are virtually no markets in the U.S. for curbside recovered plastic bags. A bigger problem with collecting plastic bags curbside is that they get wound up in collection and processing equipment, requiring maintenance that costs money and time, and creates inefficiencies for processing all the recyclables.

Returning plastic bags to your supermarket is the most effective way to recycle them. The plastics stay clean and recyclable. The clean bags are backhauled to the chains' warehouses where they are baled and either returned to the original bag suppliers with whom they have closed loop contracts for the recycling of the shopping bags or sold to other markets such as manufacturers of plastic lumber. Even better is to bring your own reusable bags when you shop.

Q. Can I recycle packing peanuts?

A. You cannot put packing peanuts in your blue recycling bin. However many mail houses such as UPS, Mailboxes, Etc. and FedEx will take them for reuse. Always call a business to confirm their current policy. Also, call the Peanut Hotline at 1-800-828-2214 for additional businesses that take packing peanuts.

Q. What happens to the recyclables after the City collects them?

A. The City contracts with two companies to process and market the materials collected in the curbside program: IMS Recycling Services, www.imsrecyclingservices.com/ and Allan Co., www.allancompany.com/facilityaddresses.htm. These companies operate Materials Recovery Facilities that sort out the comingled materials for recycling through a series of manual and mechanical sorting.

First the material moves down conveyor belts past workers who pull off cardboard for recycling and contaminants for disposal. Then the material moves over a disk screen and air classifier that allows containers to fall through to another conveyor belt that moves to a magnet to take out steel food cans and sends plastics down one conveyor belt where more workers sort the types of plastic into their categories and glass down another line to be sorted by color. The paper gets separated into newsprint and mixed paper and travels on conveyor belts where workers further refine and clean the material. For a virtual tour of the Allan Company facility, visit www.allancompany.com/slideshow/recycleprocess.htm.

The processors market the materials to end users who turn them into new products: paper into new paper products, packaging and furniture; plastic into containers, clothing, carpet, plastic lumber, flower pots, car parts and more; aluminum into drink cans, airplanes, car parts... anything made out of aluminum; food cans into anything that steel is made from, including car parts, machinery, building materials, etc.; glass into new glass containers, decorative tiles, road reflectors, jewelry, tableware, and more. For a guide to many recycled products, visit www.calrecycle.ca.gov/RecycleStore/

For information about:

- **Apartment and condo recycling,**
www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/recycling/ro/residential/index.shtml#apt
- **Backyard composting,**
www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/recycling/composting.shtml



- **Business recycling,**
<http://www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/recycling/business.shtml>
- **Construction and Demolition (C&D) recycling,**
www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/recycling/cdrecycling.shtml
- **Curbside recycling collection,**
www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/recycling/curbside.shtml
- **Energy conservation and alternative energy,**
www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/energy/
- **Household hazardous waste disposal, lead and asbestos abatement, and appliance and electronics recycling,** www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/ep/index.shtml
- **Miramar Greenery,**
www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/miramar/greenerycycle.shtml
- **Sustainable Community Program,**
www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/sustainable/index.shtml
- **Trash collection,** www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/collection/
- **Yard waste recycling,**
www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/recycling/newgreenery.shtml
- **For other environmental, waste and recycling information, please call ESD Customer Service at 858-694-7000.**