

Los Altos Quarterly Residential Newsletter



Proud to Serve the Los Altos Community

CALIFORNIA RECYCLING LAWS & BEST PRACTICES

California has some of the most advanced recycling and waste-diversion laws in the country. Understanding these rules helps residents do their part in reducing landfill waste, cutting methane emissions, and supporting a circular economy. This guide summarizes the key laws and best practices for households.

KEY CALIFORNIA RECYCLING LAWS

- **SB 1383:** Requires residents and businesses to separate food scraps, green waste, and food-soiled paper for composting. This reduces methane emissions from landfills.
- **AB 341:** Mandates commercial recycling for businesses and public entities generating significant waste, ensuring recyclable materials are diverted from landfills.
- **SB 343:** Restricts the use of the recycling symbol or 'recyclable' label unless materials are actually collected and processed in California recycling programs.
- **Bag Ban Laws (SB 270, Prop 67):** Bans single-use plastic bags; reusable and paper bags must meet durability standards and often carry a fee.
- **California Redemption Value (CRV):** Consumers pay a small fee on beverage containers, refunded when containers are returned for recycling.
- **Electronic Waste Recycling Act (EWRA):** Regulates electronics disposal and requires manufacturers to support safe recycling of e-waste.

BEST PRACTICES FOR RESIDENTS

- Check your city or hauler's recycling list—rules vary by location.
- Keep recyclables clean and dry; avoid contamination.
- Don't put plastic bags in curbside bins—take them to store drop-offs.
- Separate food scraps and yard waste into organics bins (required under SB 1383).
- Be cautious about misleading 'compostable' or 'recyclable' labels (SB 343).
- Buy less disposable packaging; reuse containers and donate items when possible.
- Dispose of electronics, batteries, and hazardous waste at special drop-off sites.
- Flatten and break down cardboard boxes to save space and prevent contamination.

WHY IT MATTERS

- **Environmental:** Less landfill waste means fewer greenhouse gases and less pollution.
- **Health & Safety:** Prevents harmful chemicals from contaminating soil, water, and air.
- **Economic:** Creates recycling jobs, reduces disposal costs, and avoids fines for non-compliance.
- **Climate:** Helps California meet statewide greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Dos and Don'ts of Plastic Shopping Bags

DO S

- **Reuse them** – for lining trash bins, picking up pet waste, or carrying items.
- **Bring them back to a store drop-off** – most grocery stores and big retailers in California have designated bins for plastic bag and film recycling.
- **Bundle them** – gather multiple bags into one bag before dropping them off.
- **Check for other film plastics** – many drop-off programs also accept clean bread bags, produce bags, newspaper sleeves, dry-cleaning bags, and bubble wrap.

DON'TS

- **Don't put plastic bags in curbside recycling bins** – they jam sorting equipment at materials recovery facilities (MRFs).
- **Don't mix with food waste** – bags must be clean and dry for store drop-offs.
- **Don't burn or compost** – most plastic shopping bags are polyethylene and won't break down safely.
- **Don't assume all 'biodegradable' or 'compostable' bags can go in green bins** – only BPI-certified compostable bags are accepted in some organics programs.

BEST PRACTICE IN CALIFORNIA

Reuse plastic bags whenever possible. Recycle them only at store drop-off locations, never in curbside bins. Switch to reusable bags whenever you can—California law encourages the use of durable bags to reduce waste.

UPCOMING EVENTS



DOWNTOWN LOS ALTOS
A BOO-tiful Downtown Halloween
 October 31st @ 12:00 - 4:00 pm



DOWNTOWN LOS ALTOS
20th Annual Holiday Stroll
 November 14th @ 5:00 - 9:00 pm

DOWNTOWN LOS ALTOS
Small Business Saturday
 November 29th

DOWNTOWN LOS ALTOS
Festival of Lights Parade
 November 30th @ 6:00 - 8:00 pm

DOWNTOWN LOS ALTOS
Holiday Tree Lighting
 December 5th @ 6:00 - 8:00 pm

ENCHANTE BOUTIQUE HOTEL
Pictures with Santa
 December 6th @ 2:00 - 4:00 pm

LUCKY SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT
Los Altos Kiwanis Christmas Tree Lot
 Opens November 28
 (Day after Thanksgiving)



Dos and Don'ts of Waxy Cardboard

DOS

- Check if it's coated or corrugated – waxy cardboard usually has a shiny or waxy surface and often isn't accepted in regular curbside bins.
- Reuse when possible – waxy produce boxes are strong and water-resistant, great for storage, moving, or gardening projects.
- Compost if it's natural wax – some plant-based wax coatings are compostable under SB 1383. MTWS does not accept waxy cardboard in the organics. The paraffin wax is very difficult to strip out via water soaking in order to repurpose for new cardboard or new brown paper.
- Separate from clean corrugated cardboard – prevents contamination of recyclables.
- Bring to specialized recycling facilities – some produce distribution centers have take-back programs for waxy boxes.

DON'TS

- Don't put waxy cardboard in curbside recycling unless your city specifically allows it.
- Don't mix with compost unless confirmed the coating is plant-based. Petroleum-based wax won't break down.
- Don't leave food-soiled waxy boxes in the blue bin – this causes contamination.
- Don't flatten and mix with regular OCC (old, corrugated cardboard) – wax-coated fibers can't be processed the same way.
- Don't assume frozen food boxes are recyclable – most have wax or plastic coatings.



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**Holiday collection
schedule inside!**

H A P P Y H O L I D A Y S !

Mission Trail observes the following holidays:

THANKSGIVING • CHRISTMAS • NEW YEAR'S DAY

Customers may experience a delay in service when a holiday falls on a weekday. During a holiday week, service preceding the holiday is unaffected. Customers whose regular service day falls on the holiday or after, however, will receive service a day late. For example, during Thanksgiving week, only customers with Thursday and Friday service are affected. Thursday customers will have their containers serviced on Friday. Friday customers will have their containers serviced on Saturday.

Contact us:

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