

Mandatory Organics Recycling for Business

It's the Law in California

Effective starting in April 2016, California law began requiring California businesses to recycle their landscape cuttings and food waste depending on the amount thrown away per week. This law is administered by CalRecycle, the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery. CalRecycle defines organics as food waste and food-soiled paper waste, green wastes such as landscape and pruning waste, and non-hazardous wood waste.

Organic waste is the single most disposed of material in landfills. Organic materials such as yard clippings and food scraps are recyclable through traditional methods of composting and mulching. Organic materials can also be recycled to produce renewable energy and fuel through technical processes like anaerobic digestion. About 1/3 of the 30 million tons of trash produced each year in California is organic waste that could be recycled.

It is an unfortunate truth that edible food items are a large portion of the organics that currently end up in the landfill, when much of this food could help to feed hungry people. Business donation of surplus, edible food items to local food banks is strongly encouraged as the highest and best use of surplus food. If your business regularly or occasionally discards edible food items, you can find out more about food donation programs available in Huntington Beach and Orange County from the Waste Not OC Coalition, a public/private organization dedicated to feeding hungry people. Visit their website at <https://www.wastenotoc.org/>.

Implementation Dates and Thresholds

Recycling requirements are phased in over time, based on weekly amounts and types of waste produced. If you need assistance in determining how much of your weekly waste is organics, please contact Rainbow/Republic Services at 657-845-6111.

Now: Businesses generating four (4) cubic yards of organic waste per week must arrange for organic waste recycling services.

January 1, 2019: Businesses generating four (4) cubic yards or more of any type of commercial solid waste per week must arrange for organic waste recycling services.

Summer/Fall 2021: If CalRecycle determines statewide disposal of organic waste in 2020 has not been reduced by 50 percent compared to 2014 levels, organics recycling requirements will expand to cover businesses that generate two (2) cubic yards or more of commercial solid waste per week.

If your business meets one of the above thresholds, please contact Rainbow/Republic Services to start an organics recycling program: 657-845-6111

For more information on this state law and how to comply, visit CalRecycle's website at <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/recycle/commercial/organics/>.