



Reduce Reuse Rethink

Burbank Recycle
Center Newsletter

School Organics Collection Launch

The Burbank Unified School District (BUSD) has been working with the City of Burbank on implementing an organics collection program in accordance with the new statewide law, Senate Bill (SB) 1383. A new education and sorting protocol has begun at elementary schools to reduce food waste and to divert food scraps from the trash. Students are now required to separate items during morning nutrition and lunch services at the newly designed disposal areas.

When students approach the disposal stations, they are guided to place items in the correct container:

- DONATION: Unopened items from the school lunch service to share
- LIQUIDS: Remaining beverages emptied
- FOOD: Food scraps and paper napkins
- TRASH: Items that are not recyclable or compostable,

Help Burbank Schools help Earth

step 1: SHARE	 Leave unopened cafeteria food so someone else can eat it!
step 2: LIQUID	 Pour out your unfinished liquids
step 3: FOOD	 Dump your food waste to replenish Earth's soils—NO PACKAGING!
step 4: TRASH	 Dump all the stuff that can't be recycled, composted or shared
step 5: RECYCLE	 Only clean items can be recycled: plastics 1, 2, 5, metal, glass, paper
step 6: TRAYS	 Sort Clean vs Dirty and stack to reduce volume

The new campaign includes prominently displayed instructional signs that show how to properly sort items for disposal.

- such as utensils, cartons or plastic bags and wrappers
- RECYCLING: Beverage bottles, yogurt tubs, etc.
- TRAYS: Empty trays stacked to reduce volume and decrease use of plastic trash bags

Reminders are posted to encourage students to REFUSE waste by taking only what they need and refusing unwanted sauce packets and optional utensils or milk.

The collected food scraps are composted and education was included on why the material should be free of plastics and other contaminants. The next phase is bringing it to the middle schools. Recycle Center staff worked with BUSD and Luther Middle School to launch a sorting and food scrap collection pilot in March. This effort will provide a model for expanding the program at Dolores Huerta and John Muir middle schools in the fall. This way, the elementary students trained with the lunch sorting protocol will have consistency as they advance to middle school.

New Burbank Policy Moves to Reduce Dining Waste



Burbank is the latest city to adopt a food ware policy, called the Waste Reduction Regulations Ordinance. The City Council voted unanimously for the policy that aims to reduce waste with a foam ban, dine-in reusables requirement, supporting "bring your own" acceptance, and restrictions on certain non-recyclable take-out ware for restaurants, food trucks and other food service businesses. (This policy now moves into the planning stages for implementation later in 2024.)

One-time packaging and products drive our economy, culture, and most notably, the disposal system. But it wasn't always this way. Disposability is a modern creation that shifted costs and responsibility from the company (producers) to the consumers (ratepayers), who now pay to manage discarded packaging and other types of single-use waste. There are obvious benefits to disposable packaging from a convenience and performance standpoint, notably it is cheap to produce and ship. Yet, "cheap" has hidden and not-so-hidden environmental costs that can no longer be ignored. California is looking to adopt more "reduce and reuse first, then recycle" policies that focus on reducing single-use items and disposability. Here are a few ways that California is rethinking waste in food service.

Assembly Bill 1276: This law requires businesses to make food ware items, like utensils, condiment packets, and napkins, available only if the customer asks for them. This saves businesses money and changes consumer consciousness, leading to the elimination of needless waste. This policy joins existing "upon request" policies, such as those for straws and water at

sit-down restaurants.

Local Jurisdiction Policy: Cities around the state and in Los Angeles County have gotten ahead of the food ware waste problem by adopting local ordinances that restrict certain types of packaging — most notably, polystyrene (foam) containers. The other goal is to move toward reusables for dine-in service at restaurants. The City of Burbank recently adopted a local policy that encourages this shift, including for food trucks.

Bring Your Own: Businesses are realizing the need to shift and are experimenting with new ways to reduce disposability actions by allowing "bring your own" containers for leftovers, takeout, and cups. Coffee cup waste, in particular, leads to excessive disposal, and many local coffee shops and large chains, like Starbucks, now allow customers to bring in their own cups. Public health departments have worked with businesses to ensure the goals of public health are prioritized but with more sensible policies that allow the public to bring in their clean containers.

Keep up to date on the latest food ware policies, including Burbank's Waste Reduction Regulations Ordinance at BurbankRecycle.org.

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Avoid Heating Up the Green

Summertime weather quickly heats up the green container and any organic materials inside. To reduce odors and avoid attracting insects, it is a smart practice to refrain from placing food scraps in the organics (green) cart until your collection service day. The reason is obvious since the inside of our home is more temperature-controlled than the outdoors!

Waiting also allows time to accumulate yard trimmings that can be mixed in and will absorb moisture in food materials. However, if you have a large amount of food scraps and need to get them outside sooner, then keep the worst offenders, such as meat, dairy or seafood products, out of the cart until necessary.

For those with very little yard material or who live in an apartment with a shared organics bin, there are additional ways to keep the inside of the cart cleaner, such as freezing food scraps until the night before your collection day.

Unlined paper products like these can also help absorb moisture from foods:

- Paper bags (plastic bags are prohibited) or food-soiled napkins
- Paper-based to-go containers or egg cartons
- Pizza boxes used to line the inside of the cart

More tips:

- Add a layer of yard waste first, then food scraps and cover with more yard waste.
- Do not include liquids if there is little yard material — too much moisture can accelerate the contents turning putrid.
- Keep the lid closed and the bin in a shaded area.
- After weekly collection, check for anything that got stuck to the bottom, especially wet

material, in order to prevent slime or mold from causing future issues.

While food scraps collection is an adjustment during the warmer months, it is important to pay attention to what items are causing the most problems and experiment with different practices. (And remember, the trash container used to have similar smells and insect problems, too.)



Keep Cool

If you have identified specific foods causing the most problems inside your home or outside in the bin, the freezer or fridge provides an excellent odor and insect prevention strategy. While you may not have much room for all your food scraps, identifying the worst culprits and placing them in a small plastic or paper bag in that appliance can make a huge difference. (Just make sure the plastic bag is either reused or thrown in the trash to prevent contaminating the City's composting efforts.)

Don't Plastic Our Compost



It is vital to the City of Burbank's composting efforts to have quality, plastic-free material. Unfortunately, the organics collection is challenged with too many contaminants, like plastic bags and other packaging. This forces Public Works staff to spend time cleaning up the piles before the material is taken to the compost processing facility. Do your part and remove stickers, packaging and anything that is not organic material (landscape or food scraps). This also includes preventing plastic items marked as "compostable" or "biodegradable" from going in your green container — only organic waste and fiber-based, compostable paper are allowed.

As the saying goes, you are what you eat. Commercial compost facilities supply fertilizer for agricultural use, so help the farms that grow our food reduce unwanted

microplastics from spreading on their fields.



Regular Cart Cleaning Is Recommended

If your carts are getting a little smelly, you can quickly clean them the next time they are empty. Simply attach an automatic shut-off spray nozzle to your hose and use a high-pressure stream to spray the bottom and then the inside walls of the cart. Allow the water to sit for an hour. Then, drain the water out onto your lawn or another landscaped area. Don't drain the water onto your sidewalk, driveway or into the gutter. This prevents putrid water from polluting waterways. Let the cart air-dry in the sun.

Another option is to consider a professional cart cleaning service to provide regular maintenance.



Photo courtesy City of San Diego

Electronic Countertop "Composters"

An electronic countertop food scrap appliance can be an alternative way to manage food scraps in a more controlled manner. In mere hours, food scraps are converted and reduced by as much as 90% by eliminating the moisture content. This process reduces unpleasant odors and helps keep the green organics container cleaner. Keep in mind these units are expensive and very energy intensive, but depending on your needs, they can be an ideal solution in many ways.

However, the claims from many companies that these units are creating "compost" is debatable. The technology often involves speeding up the natural decomposition process by grinding, aerating and heating the organics, resulting in a crumbly dried material. But that is not finished compost since it bypassed the natural microbial

process of bacteria and fungi that convert waste into plant nutrients. Once allowed to go through the natural process, the material will eventually become compost, which takes weeks, not hours. So, it is not recommended to put dried organic materials directly on your house plants, and if placed in garden beds, avoid mold forming at the base of plants by burying this material to allow the natural composting process to finish.

Regardless, the machines can provide a good way to manage organic materials in the green cart for those who need an easy and more pleasant way to deal with the material, especially with shared containers as in apartment settings. Ensure the collection container lid is closed, especially on rainy days when the dried material can rehydrate.

Reduce Food Waste: Deduce Date Labels

If you throw food out based on the dates on the label, you may be surprised that food expiration dates have nothing to do with safety and are only loosely related to quality. They're the manufacturer's best estimate of when the product is at its freshest or "peak quality." Depending on the food and conditions, much will still be good to eat days, weeks, or months after those dates.

Consumer uncertainty about the meaning of the dates on the labels of packaged foods is believed to contribute to about 20 percent of food waste in the home, which is all due to a simple misunderstanding about package dates and the variety of terms used with date labels, such as "use before," "sell by," "expires on," and many more. To help dispel this notion, there is a movement made up of regulatory agencies, legislators and food manufacturers aiming to standardize the labeling system related to optimal quality — not safety. For instance, the term "Best if used by" better conveys to consumers that these products do not have to be discarded after the date if they are stored properly.

In California, AB 660, "Streamlining Date Labels" (Irwin), is a bill that would require food manufacturers to use uniform terminology when labeling their products with "safety" or "quality" dates and bans the use of consumer-facing "sell by" dates.

Until the date label issue is fixed, the best thing consumers can do to avoid unnecessarily wasting food is their physical examination and the tried and true "smell test" to make their best judgment.



Food date labels have little to do with safety and are only loosely related to quality. Many foods will still be good to eat well after those dates.

SAVETHEFOOD.COM

For more tips, visit [SaveTheFood.com](https://www.savethefood.com).

From Waste Free Kitchen Handbook by Dana Gunders, 2015. Used with permission from Chronicle Books, San Francisco.



Get a Pail

The City of Burbank Public Works Department provides a convenient tool to help manage your food waste in your kitchen. For a list of pick-up locations or upcoming events go to [burbankca.gov/web/public-works/food-scrap-pail](https://www.burbankca.gov/web/public-works/food-scrap-pail).



Energy-Saving Trees Program

Shade your home or business with shade trees!

For no cost, Burbank residents can select up to 3 trees and Burbank businesses can select up to 20 trees. Adding shade to a building can **reduce air conditioning use by 10-50%**.

RESERVE YOUR TREES NOW
[burbankwaterandpower.com/shade-tree](https://www.burbankwaterandpower.com/shade-tree)



Stormwater Poo-lutants

It is estimated that Burbank has over 27,000 dogs. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the average dog produces approximately 3/4 pound of waste per day. Understanding this math shows that cleaning up after your pet is essential to responsible pet ownership. Pet waste on sidewalks and landscapes needs to be promptly cleaned up, as dog poop is not a natural compost material; it is a serious pollutant with twice the bacteria of human waste. Left on the ground, poop can be washed away by sprinklers or rainwater run-off and enter storm drains, spreading disease and environmental risks like algae blooms. (This is also reinforced by City code [BMC 8-1-1004] that requires the custodian of any animal to clean up waste and properly dispose of it.)

Spread the word to avoid spread-



ing the mess. Remember to bring pet waste baggies when you walk your dog to protect the health of our community and waterways. Scoop it, bag it and place it in the trash (black cart) — never in the recycling or organics collection.

Building the Culture of Refilling!

Studies have shown that access to clean, free drinking water in school leads children to consume more water in place of sugary drinks. Another huge benefit of kids adopting bottle-refilling habits is reducing plastic waste and creating the life-long culture of reducing and reusing. That's why California's new law Assembly Bill (AB) 2638 aims to prioritize water bottle-filling stations in any new K-12 public schools built or those undergoing modernization. Elementary schools in Burbank Unified School District (BUSD) didn't have to wait for major construction projects to begin the conversion of some drinking fountains to bottle-filling "hydration stations" with the help of two separate community initiatives.

The Leadership Burbank Class of 2023 designed their class project, "Reduce, Reuse, Refill," to tackle this issue by raising money to purchase and install bottle-filling stations at 11 elementary schools this past school year. The project was so successful that they were able to expand the donation with additional units for the middle and high schools. Creating more access to water refilling helped to bring more awareness for students, families, and community members to rethink their relationship with plastic.

This past winter, the Burbank Recycle Center added another seven stations at BUSD schools through a grant that aims to reduce the use of single-use bottles. Contributing to this kind of infrastructure effort catapults the ability of the schools to provide this benefit without impacting their budget for other priorities. More access to cool, fresh water encourages proper hydration and creates the culture of carrying reusable

bottles. It's an important lesson and an easy way to be more environmentally conscious.

Burbank private schools that are interested in getting a water refilling station from the Recycle Center can send requests to zerowaste@burbankca.gov.



According to staff research, about 15.6 million single-use water bottles could be removed from the waste system if everyone in Burbank switched to reusable water bottles. Bottle-filling stations, like this one installed at Washington Elementary, promote the use of reusable bottles and will help keep Burbank beautiful with the reduction of plastic litter.

Curb Your Recycling Returns

“Why is the recycling symbol on packaging that’s not recyclable?”

Answers to these questions and more will be provided Wednesday, July 10, when our helpful webinar “Curb Your Recycling” returns. This essential overview shows how the business of recycling works and why modern packaging often isn’t compatible. This basic training is a 90-minute bootcamp version of our popular Waste Warriors program that directs to “reduce, reuse, then recycle.” We will also explain the City’s food scrap collection program and offer tips, as well as answer your questions.

“How do I avoid ‘wishcycling’?”

Stay after for a tour of the Burbank Recycle Center facilities to learn even more about what happens to the material in your blue cart once it goes “away.”

Registration is required: BurbankRecycle.org

WASTE WARRIORS BOOTCAMP

Curb Your Recycling
Understanding Recycling and Waste Prevention

Wednesday, July 10 | 6-8pm
Burbank Recycle Center, 500 S. Flower St.

CITY OF BURBANK PUBLIC WORKS

Have you “bin” confused on recycling and other waste questions? Join the experts from the Burbank Recycle Center for a basic training on what goes where and why.

Event includes a presentation, Q&A session, and then a tour of the Recycle Center facility

- What recycling is (and what it isn’t)
- Recycling realities (when recycling goes “away”)
- Plastics and packaging types
- Electronics and household hazardous waste
- Organics: (New food scrap collection law, SB 1383)
- Waste reduction and prevention tips, including how to use **Where it GOES** our online search tool, Answers at Your Disposal

Advanced Registration Required:

BurbankRecycle.org

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CITY OF BURBANK

ORGANICS
No Plastics

YARD & TRIMMINGS
No Treated Wood

ALL FOOD

SOILED PAPER
Food-soiled & Non-coated

RECYCLING
Clean, Dry and Loose Items

PLASTIC
Only PET, HDPE, LDPE

FIBER
Cardboard or uncoated paper

METAL
Cans, aluminum foil or scrap metal

GLASS
Bottles or food jars

TRASH
No Recycling or Organics

- Ceramics & home glass
- Non-electronic toys
- Hoses
- Pet waste
- Cartons, pouches or wrappers
- Plastic or metallic bags
- Non-recyclable plastics (#3,4,6 & 7)
- Small plastics under 4"
- Foam

When in doubt, find out Where it GOES
Answers at Your Disposal

NO All Require Special Drop Off to Collection Centers

- ORIGINALS & FLAMMABLES
- TANKS
- PAINT
- CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS
- NIOS & SHEDS
- OVERSIZED TIRES
- BATTERIES & ELECTRONIC TOYS
- BATTERIES CAUSE TRUCK FEES

Download or bookmark these helpful flyers at: Burbankca.gov/web/public-works/residential-recycling

Become a Waste Reduction V.I.P

Want to stay up to date on the latest environmental news about recycling, organics and waste reduction? Make sure you follow us on Facebook and Instagram, as listed in the box to the left. You can also receive alerts in your inbox with upcoming events and updates by signing up for the City of Burbank email list at burbankca.gov/email-notifications. Be sure to select the “Recycle Center” and “Special Events” categories.

SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

When it rains, stormwater washes bacteria, trash, and other pollutants into our rivers, lakes, and ocean, harming people and aquatic life. The Safe Clean Water Program helps keep pollution out of our water by funding stormwater capture projects and supporting essential municipal programs for pollution prevention. Learn more on how our city and watershed will keep pollution out of our waterways here: safecleanwaterla.org/about.

If you would like to engage in the planning and implementation of City activities funded by the Safe Clean Water Program, please contact Public Works at wastewater@burbankca.gov or (818) 238-3915. #SafeCleanWater

<p>Public Works Customer Service</p> <p>Public Works Field Services: 818-238-3800</p> <p>Distribution and collection of trash, organics and recycling bins and carts</p> <p>Bulky Item Pickup: 818-238-3800</p> <p>To request pickup of oversized furniture and appliances only</p> <p> Facebook.com/BurbankRecycle</p>	<p>Burbank Recycle Center</p> <p>Recycling drop-off, electronics collection, bottle and can drop-off, composting information</p> <p>500 South Flower Street, 91502 818-238-3900</p> <p>Where it GOES</p> <p>For information on disposal: BurbankRecycle.org Whereitgoes.Burbankca.gov</p> <p> Instagram.com/BurbankRecycle</p>
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