

# City of Encinitas Organics Recycling Program



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Residential Organics Recycling Program

### General

**Q: What is considered "organic waste"?**

A: Organic waste is a renewable natural resource. It mainly comes from yard and kitchen waste from homes, and food waste and scraps from industrial and commercial operations.

**Q: What is SB 1383?**

A: In September 2016, Governor Brown signed into law SB 1383, establishing methane emissions reduction targets in a statewide effort to reduce emissions of short-lived climate pollutants in various sectors of California's economy. SB 1383 establishes targets to achieve a 50 percent reduction in the level of the statewide disposal of organic waste from the 2014 level by 2020 and a 75 percent reduction by 2025. The law grants CalRecycle the regulatory authority required to achieve the organic waste disposal reduction targets and establishes an additional target that not less than 20 percent of currently disposed of edible food is recovered for human consumption by 2025.

This means everyone, including all residents and businesses, is required to recycle organics.

[Find out more information here.](#)

**Q: How will SB 1383 affect my current waste and recycling program at home or at my business?**

A: The City of Encinitas has an exclusive solid waste franchise agreement with EDCO Waste and Recycling (EDCO), who is responsible for solid waste, commingled recyclables, and green waste. Beginning in June 2021, they will expand their current green waste services to include food scraps, making it a comingled organics recycling program.

Other than placing food scraps in the comingled green organics cart instead of the grey landfill cart, there are no changes to residents' collection guidelines, pick-up frequency, or collection day. EDCO will also provide each Encinitas resident with a small container or caddy for the convenient collection of food scraps and other organics in their home kitchens. The caddy is dishwasher safe as well as odor and bug resistant. It can be easily stored under the sink or on the kitchen counter. When the caddy is full, simply empty it into the green cart, and it will be serviced on your regular collection day. For more information on how to reduce food waste at home, please visit the [San Diego Food System Alliance website](#).

## Rates

### **Q: If I don't know the size of my cart, how do I know what my new rate will be?**

A: To determine the size of your cart, you may look at your bill to see what you're paying now and compare it to the rate table presented on the [rates webpage](#). Please note, the waste hauler, EDCO, bills residents every two months, so divide your trash bill total by two (2) to calculate the monthly total.

### **Q: Why is the proposed rate increase so much higher than in the past?**

A: The rate increase includes a new organics collection fee for a new program required by SB 1383. EDCO, the City's Waste hauler, built an Anaerobic Digestion facility to process food waste with green waste to help the region meet these new state requirements. The proposed rate also includes an increase to the franchise fee from five (5) to ten (10) percent to fund the City's current solid waste programs, such as street sweeping and environmental education, and to provide new funding for required SB 1383 programming. To cover the costs of initiating a curbside organics collection program for residents, a temporary special fee of \$0.94 is proposed to be billed to residential customers for a period of 12 months. This fee covers the distribution of kitchen caddies and paper bags for residents to transport food waste from the kitchen to the green cart.

## Changes to Service

### **Q: Will I get a new cart?**

A: If you have a green waste cart, you will not likely need a new cart for the organics recycling program. All food scraps and other organic waste can be placed in addition to yard trimmings in the comingled organics green cart. If you do not have a green cart, you will receive one to collect your organic waste.

### **Q: What if I don't have a green cart?**

A: To obtain a green cart, please contact EDCO by completing a [Contact Us form](#) or calling (760) 436-4151 to obtain a green cart.

### **Q: What if I live in an apartment complex?**

A: Apartment complexes will be contacted mid-year in 2021 to begin the process of voluntarily implementing a commercial organics collection services with full SB 1383 mandated compliance as of January 1, 2022.

### **Q: How do I transfer my kitchen scraps to the green cart?**

A: EDCO will be providing each Encinitas resident with a kitchen caddy for the convenient collection of food scraps. Residents can expect caddies to be delivered to their homes mid-to-late May.

### **Q: I already compost my food scraps in another way. Am I able to opt out of EDCO's program?**

A: The City of Encinitas supports and encourages those who compost at home or through community compost programs. Residents will not be able to opt out of EDCO's program, however, EDCO's program will allow residents to recycle additional organic materials such as meat, bones, dairy, and food soiled paper (such as greasy pizza boxes and paper-based takeout containers) that are not well suited for traditional composting.

**Q: I participate in Solana Center’s FoodCycle program. Will I be able to continue doing so?**

A: Yes, residents may still participate in community composting programs such as Solana Center’s FoodCycle program.

**Q: What if I have more organic waste and yard trimmings than will fit in one cart?**

A: If you find this is occurring regularly, contact EDCO by completing a [Contact Us form](#) or calling (760) 436-4151 to order a larger or additional cart. Up to 3 carts are available to residents for no charge; additional carts will be available for a nominal fee. Do not place yard trimmings outside of the bin; they will not be picked up.

**Q: Will I be charged for additional green carts?**

A: Up to 3 carts are available to residents for no charge; additional carts will be available for a nominal fee.

**Q: What if I don’t need a kitchen caddy? Can I return it?**

A: If you would like to return your caddy, you may do so by dropping it up at the designated drop-off area in the courtyard at City Hall located at 505 S. Vulcan Ave. or in front of the Public Works Facility, located at 160 Calle Magdalena (behind In-N-Out).

**Q: Will this change the pick-up frequency or collection day?**

A: There will be no changes to pick-up frequency or your collection day.

## How to Use the Green Cart

**Q: What will go in the green cart?**

A: If it grows, it goes! All organic material should go in the green cart. Examples include apple cores, banana peels, moldy bread, coffee grounds and eggshells. Meat, bones, and dairy should also go in the green cart, along with food-soiled paper and cardboard, such as paper napkins and greasy pizza boxes. Additionally, natural fiber materials made such as Popsicle sticks, sawdust, toothpicks, wooden chopsticks, and untreated wood should also go in the green cart.

**Q: What’s not allowed in the green cart?**

A: No compostable or biodegradable plastics (bags, utensils, cups, etc.), these belong in your trash cart. Also, no plastic, metal, or glass; these belong in the recycling cart.

**Q: What about meat, dairy, and animal bones?**

A: Yes, meat, dairy and bones are all a form of food waste. EDCO’s organics collection program will include the recycling of animal products.

**Q: Why can’t compostable or biodegradable plastics be composted in the anaerobic digester?**

A: “Compostable or biodegradable” plastics require a long time to break down. EDCO’s anaerobic digester (AD) will process materials in approximately two weeks, which is not enough time for the compostable plastics to break down.

**Q: Will I be able to put food waste in plastic bags? What about compostable plastic bags?**

A: Plastic bags, compostable plastic bags, and biodegradable plastic bags cannot be processed by the AD facility, and therefore, cannot be placed in the green cart.

**Q: Can these items go in the cart: Pet waste, menstrual products, diapers, cat litter, dryer lint, textiles? Human/pet hair? Animal bedding?**

A: NO – Pet waste, menstrual products, diapers, cat litters, textiles; dryer lint, human/pet hair. No animal bedding.

**Q: How do I use my caddie?**

A: Keep your caddie in a convenient location in your kitchen, such as on the countertop, under the sink or in the fridge/freezer. While cooking or cleaning up, place leftover food scraps and food-soiled paper into your kitchen caddie. Empty the contents of your kitchen caddie into your green cart when it's full and before you set out the cart each week.

For further information on how to use your caddie, please visit [www.edcodisposal.com](http://www.edcodisposal.com). Enter your zip code then select Resource Center from the above and click on Videos. You will then be directed to view *Wrap the Scraps*.

## About the Organics Recycling Program and Anaerobic Digestion Facility

**Q: Why recycle food waste?**

A: Organic waste accounts for over 40% of the material in California's waste stream. Organic material cannot break down when buried in a landfill, as it would in nature or in a compost pile. Instead, it decomposes without oxygen, releasing methane gas into the atmosphere. Organic material (food scraps and yard waste) will soon be recycled when placed in green carts and then transported to EDCO's AD Facility, where it will break down and convert waste into renewable natural gas and fertilizer.

**Q: What are the environmental benefits of this program?**

A: Environmental and community benefits of the organics recycling program include:

- Turning waste into a valuable resource
- Reducing the amount of waste sent to the landfill, prolonging the life of existing local landfills
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Providing a clean source of renewable natural gas (RNG)

**Q: How will the community be notified about the program?**

A: The City of Encinitas, EDCO, and Solana Center for Environmental Innovation are working in collaboration to conduct a community wide outreach and education campaign on the new organics recycling program. For more information, please visit the City's [Trash and Recycling webpage](#).

**Q: What is anaerobic digestion? Is it the same as composting?**

A: Anaerobic digestion (AD) is the natural process in which microorganisms break down organic materials such as food waste, green waste, fats, oils and greases. AD happens in closed spaces where there is no oxygen, which makes it different from composting.

## How to Keep it Clean

### Caddie

**Q: Can I use liners in my kitchen caddie?**

A: You may Line your kitchen collector with a paper bag or newspaper to absorb moisture and manage odors in your kitchen caddie. NO compostable or biodegradable plastic bags or plastics bags.

**Q: What else can I do to prevent smells and odors?**

A: Try these ideas to prevent odors and smells:

- Collect food scraps in a cereal box or tissue box. Be sure to remove any plastic lining.
- Wrap food scraps in a paper towel or old newspaper.
- Sprinkle baking soda inside of the kitchen caddie.
- Wash your kitchen caddie in the dishwasher or by hand after emptying it into your green cart.
- Try freezing food scraps like meat, poultry and fish in your kitchen caddie or other reusable container or paper bag until it's time to place scraps in your green cart.

### Cart

**Q: Will I need to clean out my green cart? If so, how? How can I keep my cart clean?**

A: Rinse your cart with mild soap and water when necessary and be sure to pour the dirty water onto a lawn and never down the storm drain. You can also sprinkle baking soda in your cart, keep the cart lid closed at all times, set out your cart every week, keep your cart in a shaded area and line the cart with leaves or food-soiled paper.

**Q: Do I need to line my green cart or use bags?**

A: No, you can place food scraps along with yard waste directly in the green cart. Paper bags and cardboard containers are okay.

**Q: How can I reduce odors, moisture, and pests in the green cart?**

A: Here are a few helpful tips:

- Layer your food scraps with yard trimmings inside the cart.
- Place yard trimmings and food scraps directly in your cart. No plastic bags of any kind, please, as they cannot break down in the anaerobic digester. Paper bags are okay.
- Place yard trimmings and food-soiled paper at the bottom of your cart to absorb moisture.
- Keep your food scraps frozen and place them directly in your cart the night before your collection day.