



## **City of Laguna Niguel Frequently Asked Questions: Residential Organics Recycling and Senate Bill 1383 (SB 1383)**

### **When can I start placing food scraps in my green cart?**

Since 2019, residents have been able to place food scraps and green/landscaping waste in their green organics cart.

### **Will I be fined if I don't participate in this program?**

SB 1383 requires the city to implement an enforcement mechanism for non-participating accounts. The city has taken an education-first approach in implementing this program and will not issue fines for non-compliance until 2024, when required by state law.

### **When will I get inspected for compliance?**

The city is required by SB 1383 to conduct residential route reviews annually. The city's franchise waste hauler CR&R will conduct audits of a random sample of residential homes. If recyclable materials are found in your trash cart or trash is found in your recycling or green organics cart, CR&R will place a hang tag outlining the appropriate placement for materials.

### **Is everyone required to recycle organic waste?**

Yes. All residential, multi-family properties and commercial businesses across the state must recycle organic waste generated onsite.

### **What if I don't want to participate in CR&R's organic curbside collection of food scraps and yard waste?**

Per SB 1383, residents are required to receive food scraps cart service. Residents may also use backyard, small-scale, and community composting systems to recycle food scraps in addition to their green organics cart.

### **What if I put my food scraps in the trash?**

When residents do not place their organics (food scraps and yard waste) and recycling in the correct carts, this is called contamination. Residents who contaminate will be alerted of their contamination via a hang tag. It's important that residents don't contaminate as it prevents CR&R from being able to recycle items. If you continue to place food scraps and yard waste in the trash cart, then city fines can occur. For more information, you may visit [CalRecycle's webpage](#).

## **Regarding changing cart colors, what type of material should be placed in each container?**

BROWN (current)/BLUE (future) - Recycling cart: cardboard, plastic, and glass containers and bottles, aluminum and tin cans, and paper. These items should be placed loosely in the cart, not in a plastic bag.

GREEN - Organics cart: food scraps, grass clippings, leaves, tree/brush trimmings, weeds, and dead plants. Food scraps include fruit/vegetable trimmings, coffee grounds, egg shells, small bones, leftover cooked food, spoiled/rotten food, and plate scrapings.

BLACK - Trash cart: Styrofoam, chip/candy wrappers, bathroom waste, diapers, pet waste, plastic bags, palm fronds/branches, and other non-recyclable garbage (bag these items).

## **Why are cart colors changing?**

SB 1383 requires uniform cart colors across the state for residential and commercial services. Blue carts will signify recycling, green carts for organics, and black for trash. This consistency will help reduce confusion and contamination of recycling across the state.

## **What will happen to all the food scraps being collected?**

Commingled food scraps and yard waste are collected and transported to the Perris Anaerobic Digestion Facility, where materials are processed into renewable natural gas. This renewable natural gas powers the city's waste hauler's trash and recycling collection vehicles servicing Southern California.

## **Why aren't food scraps collected separately from green waste?**

SB 1383 allows for 3-cart commingled food scraps and green waste or a 4-cart system to collect food scraps and green waste separately. Locally, the 4-cart system has limits in processing, comes at a greater cost, and has a greater environmental footprint (i.e., additional carts and pickups).

## **What kind of food scraps can I place in my kitchen pail?**

If it grows, it goes! Specific examples include fruit and vegetable trimmings (banana peels, squash skin), coffee grounds, egg shells, small bones, leftover cooked food, spoiled/rotten/moldy food, and plate scrapings.

## **Will the city provide kitchen pails for indoor collection?**

The CR&R previously distributed complimentary 2-gallon kitchen pails and educational materials at the beginning of the commingled organics recycling program. If you need another kitchen pail, you can contact CR&R Customer Service at (877) 728-0446 and have one delivered for a small fee.

### **Where do I buy a pail?**

Food scrap countertop pails can be purchased at stores like Walmart, Home Depot, and Amazon. Alternatively, residents can repurpose a container or bowl they have at home to collect food scraps.

### **Will there be a smell in my kitchen?**

There are many ways to alleviate smells. Some people use kitchen pails with closed lids, and some have carbon/charcoal filters. Keeping your kitchen pail or food scraps in your refrigerator or freezer until collection day is an option to alleviate the smell. Dumping your pail out in the green cart and rinsing it out frequently also helps. Kitchen pails provided by CR&R are dishwasher safe.

### **Can I use a plastic bag? Can I use biodegradable bags?**

No plastic bags are accepted in your green organics cart. If you prefer to use a bag, we recommend residents use a brown paper bag or certified BPI compostable bags, which can be purchased at various retailers.

### **What if my green organics cart gets dirty or smelly?**

We recommend rinsing your green cart over your lawn or yard to help mitigate a smelly container. Lining the cart with yard waste before food scraps help keep the carts clean and odor-free. If necessary, CR&R can swap out your cart(s) for free once per year.

### **What about dirty/soiled napkins or towels? Can I place biodegradable cutlery in the green organics cart?**

A minimal amount of dirty/soiled paper napkins or paper towels can be placed into the green organics cart. Biodegradable cutlery **cannot** be discarded into your green organics container. This type of cutlery can only be broken down in a temperature and time-specific composting facility.

### **May I continue to place yard waste in my green container?**

Yes, all yard/grass clippings, gardening, and tree trimmings should still be placed in your green organics cart. Please note that palm fronds and logs/stumps are NOT accepted; place these in your trash cart if they fit.

### **Where can I learn more about organic recycling?**

Please visit the City of Laguna Niguel's dedicated SB 1383 [webpage](#) to learn more about organics recycling. The city also created a video on how to participate in your organics recycling program, which can be viewed on the [city's YouTube page](#).