

A Greener El Cerrito

COMMERCIAL EDITION

News from the City of El Cerrito Operations + Environmental Services Division

November 2021 | Volume 11

www.ecenvironment.org | 510-215-4350

Happy Holidays
from the El Cerrito
Recycling +
Environmental
Resource Center!

Our upcoming holiday hours: The Recycling Center will be closed on Nov. 11, 25, 26, and Dec. 24, 25, 31 (beginning at noon), and January 1. Curbside collection will occur as normally scheduled.



El Cerrito Recycling Center Hours

Tuesday - Friday:
8:30am to 4:00pm
Saturday: 9:00am
to 4:45pm

El Cerrito Recycling + Environmental Resource Center

7501 Schmidt Lane
El Cerrito, CA 94530
green@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us

Mandatory Composting and Proposed Expanded Foodware Ordinance

Recycling & Green Waste Collection Services Required

In 2016, California Senate Bill (SB) 1383 was signed into law by Governor Brown and establishes state-wide targets to reduce the disposal of organic waste and edible food. The regulations become effective on January 1, 2022, and apply to all businesses and households that generate organic waste, with a limited number of exceptions. As a part of this new law, all businesses and residents must be enrolled in organic waste or “green waste” collection services.

In addition, all businesses and residents will be required to sort materials for disposal properly, placing organics in the green waste cart, recyclables in the recycling cart, and only garbage in the cart intended for the landfill.



The City Council is scheduled to consider adoption of a new ordinance requiring organic waste and recycling service for all customers on November 16, 2021, and establishing other requirements to ensure compliance with SB 1383. The City is mandated by the State to both establish and enforce this ordinance.

For more information visit el-cerrito.org/MandatoryOrganicsRecycling

Proposed Expanded Foodware Ordinance

In support of the City’s goal to keep more materials out of the landfill, the City of El Cerrito is also proposing changes to the 2013 Foodware Ordinance – which prohibited Expanded Polystyrene Foam (“Styrofoam”) containers and has required foodware to be packaged for takeout in reusable, recyclable, or compostable containers. The newly proposed changes would phase out single-use plastic foodware items within the City of El Cerrito.

Single-use foodware includes all containers, bowls, plates, trays, cartons, cups, lids, utensils, forks, spoons, knives, straws, and other items that are designed for one-time use and disposal. If approved, all food providers in the City would be required to procure and use reusable or compostable foodware. The City will assist food providers by providing resources, training, technical support, and will continue to build public awareness to support a smooth transition.

Changes to the Foodware Ordinance were planned for 2020 but were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the impact of the pandemic on local businesses, the City is planning to phase implementation of the proposed ordinance, with enforcement drafted to begin January 1, 2024. The City Council is scheduled to consider adoption of this ordinance at the November 2, 2021 regular meeting.

For more information on the proposed expanded Foodware Ordinance, visit: el-cerrito.org/foodware



Best Practices for your Green Curbside Container

Organic or “green” waste makes up more than two-thirds of trash that is sent to the landfill. By effectively using your green waste container, these materials can instead become useful nutrient-rich soil amendments in just a few short months. Here are some best practices to help the City’s green waste program deliver good clean compost back to residents, farmers, and gardeners. Acceptable items to put in your green bin include plant debris, all food scraps (including meat and bones), and food-soiled paper (like paper plates and pizza boxes). For more information on accepted items, please visit recyclemore.com/what-to-do/green/



Things Not to Compost

It is best not to compost milk cartons and biodegradable plastics.

Milk cartons and other food grade containers most often are coated with a non-biodegradable plastic film that should be kept out of compost. While there are some truly biodegradable plastics, many are not. These plastics are hard to distinguish from other plastics and are often pulled from the compost in the normal screening process, unnecessarily adding time and expense to the process. Please do not add the following to your green waste bin: Ashes; Bamboo, Ivy, or Palm; Concrete, Dirt, Rocks, or Sand; Dead Animals; Diapers, human or pet waste; Glass; Lawn Sod; Liquids; Manure; Metal; Milk Cartons (plastic-coated); Plastic of ANY kind; Biodegradable plastics (utensils, plates, bowls, cups, etc.); Wood that has been treated, coated or painted.

How Your Green Waste Becomes Compost

After you put organic waste in your green bin, it is transferred to a processing facility where it goes through a series of steps to become compost. Following grinding and processing, the materials are hauled to the compost pile area and placed in piles on top of perforated pipes, which force air into the piles to keep them properly aerated and to control the temperature of the pile. After the piles are constructed, they are covered with a minimum of six inches of finished compost material to control emissions and odors. Composting piles are actively treated on the aeration pad for approximately three to five weeks in order to kill pathogens. They are then moved to a curing area, where the compost can further mature. Curing allows for adequate time to create a consistent material that will be ready for market. Once desired maturation is reached, the curing piles will be screened into finished compost. The finished product is periodically available during the City's free compost giveaway events. For more information, contact the City's Waste Prevention Specialist, Laureteen Brazil at lbrazil@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us or (510) 559-7686.

Do You Need Labels for Your Waste Containers?

Are you or your employees confused about what goes in the recycling, compost, or trash bin?

If so, please contact the City of El Cerrito’s Waste Prevention Specialist, Laureteen Brazil, at lbrazil@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us to receive bin labels that include graphics to make recycling and composting easier.



The City can also provide posters for your trash enclosures and can conduct a presentation for your employees. A small number of indoor waste containers for sorting are also available. For more information visit el-cerrito.org/1298/Sustainable-Business or call (510) 215-4350.

Safely Dispose of Your Household Hazardous Waste

California State and Federal law requires all businesses and industries that generate, store or accumulate hazardous waste to comply with regulations for proper treatment, storage and disposal of these wastes. Generators of small quantities of hazardous waste may be conditionally exempt from many of these regulations if they ensure the waste is delivered to permitted hazardous waste management facilities or to temporary collection facilities. El Cerrito businesses generating less than 27 gallons or 220 pounds of hazardous waste per month may participate in the Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator Program (CESQG) at the West Contra Costa Permanent HHW Facility located in Richmond. Fees apply. Fill out the form at the link below or call 1-888-412-9277 for more information about the program: recyclemore.com/hazardous-waste/commercial-hhw