



ecology center

Plastic Recycling for Berkeley Residents



Berkeley residents can now recycle more plastic containers in their blue curbside carts. This expanded collection will help Berkeley meet its Zero Waste and Climate Action goals. Berkeley residents can help meet these goals and prevent plastic pollution. **Use less. Recycle more.**

Recycle these rigid plastics in your blue curbside cart: (Please rinse out food residues)

- ✓ Dairy tubs (like yogurt)
- ✓ Plastic bottles and jars with lids attached
- ✓ Cups and trays
- ✓ Clamshell (take out) containers
- ✓ Food storage containers
- ✓ Planter pots

Guidelines to follow:

- ✓ Containers must fit easily into the recycling cart.
- ✓ Check the bottom of the container for the triangle recycling symbol. It can be any rigid plastic #1-7, except compostable plastic.
- ✓ Place the empty and clean plastic container into the recycling cart, along with metal and glass containers.

Plastic items that are NOT accepted at the curb: (See reverse side for how to dispose of these items)

- ✗ Large items, such as buckets, crates, and plastic furniture items
- ✗ Bioplastics labeled #7 (PLA compostable)
- ✗ Plastic bags, plastic wrap, film plastic, or bubble wrap
- ✗ Aseptic packaging (juice boxes, soy milk type container)
- ✗ Styrofoam containers, blocks, and peanut packaging
- ✗ Fruit baskets (unmarked strawberry type container)
- ✗ Small items, such as coffee cup lids, utensils, straws, and pill bottles
- ✗ Loose lids and bottle caps
- ✗ Toys

Resources:

- For how-to tips on cutting back on plastic use visit ecologycenter.org/plastics
- Berkeley Recycling Center accepts large plastic items for drop off. 669 Gilman Street, Berkeley (510) 524-0113
- ACCRC (Alameda County Computer Resource Center) accepts any electronic device. 620 Page Street, Berkeley (510) 528-4052
- El Cerrito Recycling Center accepts plastic bags, aseptic packaging, and styrofoam for drop off. 7501 Schmidt Lane, El Cerrito (510) 215-4350
- StopWaste.org has a recycling wizard to look up where to recycle items in Alameda county. 1-877-STOPWASTE www.stopwaste.org

Plastic Recycling

factsheet

Plastic Recycling (continued)

Why certain items are not accepted, and what to do with them:

Large Items, such as Buckets, Crates, and Plastic Furniture

Items too large to fit easily in the recycling cart are not accepted. If they can't fit easily in the recycling cart, they are too large for compaction equipment on the recycling trucks.

- ➔ The Berkeley Recycling Center located at 669 Gilman Street, accepts large, rigid plastic items such as buckets and planters, large plastic toys or furniture, etc. as drop-off items. (510) 524-0113

Bioplastics Labeled #7 (PLA Polylactic Acid)

Being plant-based, PLA needs to be processed by a composting facility and is handled separately.

- ➔ Clearly marked compostable plastic items are accepted in the residential kitchen scrap program and can be placed into yard debris container (green bin). www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/PlantDebris

Plastic Bags, Plastic Wrap, Film Plastic, or Bubble Wrap

Plastic bags cannot be recycled with rigid containers because they often get tangled in machinery, causing equipment to malfunction. Plastic bags and films melt very quickly compared to rigid containers and therefore cannot be recycled in the same process.

- ➔ Plastic bags can be reused, and most grocery stores still have recycling bins near the front door for plastic bags as well. Instead of using a plastic bag, try using durable canvas bags on your next shopping trip!

Aseptic Packaging (Juice Boxes and Soy Milk Type Containers)

Aseptic packaging is a composite of metal, plastic, and paper that is hard to separate. They are not accepted for recycling in Berkeley because they are multi-material and have uncertain end-markets.

- ➔ Aseptic packaging is accepted for recycling at the El Cerrito Recycling Center located at 7501 Schmidt Lane, El Cerrito, CA 94530. (510) 215-4350

Styrofoam Containers, Blocks, and Peanut Packaging

Styrofoam breaks down rapidly during normal handling and processing, creating small bits of debris which are difficult to contain and recycle. Also, due to the light weight and large volume of a typical block of styrofoam, it becomes a storage and transportation burden for a low value material.

- ➔ Clean block styrofoam is accepted for recycling at the El Cerrito Recycling Center located at 7501 Schmidt Lane, El Cerrito, CA 94530. (510) 215-4350
- ➔ Packing Peanuts are accepted by some packaging stores or businesses for reuse. UPS Store located at 2342 Shattuck Avenue will take packing peanuts and sometimes bubble wrap. (510) 843-8288

Fruit Baskets (Unmarked Strawberry Type Containers)

These containers have mixed resin composition, making recycling very difficult.

- ➔ Locate your nearest farmers' market vendor that may be able to clean and reuse these baskets for similar products. If unable to find a reuse option, discard these items in your normal refuse container.

Small Items, such as Coffee Cup Lids, Utensils, Straws, Pill Bottles

Small items are too tiny for sorting staff to pick out of the other materials, making them a contaminant and causing equipment failures, added maintenance costs, and downtime.

- ➔ Discard these items in your normal refuse container and make efforts to replace them with reusable items.

Loose Lids and Bottle Caps

Once separated from the container, small lids and caps are too small for sorting staff to pick out of the other materials, making them a contaminant and causing equipment failures, added maintenance costs, and downtime.

- ➔ Keep caps and lids on the container when recycling. For bottles, the best way is to remove the lid, flatten the bottle, and screw the lid back on. www.plasticsrecycling.org/faqs/caps-on-faq

Toys

Toys are difficult to handle in our curbside collection program due to their odd shapes and sizes. They are either too large to fit in bins and equipment or too small to sort rapidly. Mixed resins in toys makes recycling difficult.

- ➔ The Berkeley Recycling Center located at 669 Gilman Street accepts plastic toys as drop-off items once any extraneous items, such as batteries and metal parts, are removed prior to drop off. (510) 524-0113