



Plastic Recycling

for Berkeley Residents



Berkeley residents can recycle some plastic containers in their blue curbside carts. Recycling helps Berkeley reduce litter and pollution and meet its Zero Waste and Climate Action goals. Please note that not all plastics are recyclable. **Use less plastic. Recycle more.**

Recycle these rigid plastics in your blue curbside cart:

- 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:

- Rinse out food residues
- 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:

NO Oversized items, such as buckets, crates, and plastic furniture items

NO Plastics labeled “compostable” (bioplastics labeled #7, PLA)

NO Plastic bags, plastic wrap, film plastic, or bubble wrap

NO Aseptic packaging (juice boxes, soy milk type container)

NO Styrofoam containers, blocks, and peanut packaging

NO Fruit baskets (unmarked strawberry type container)

NO Small items, such as coffee cup lids, utensils, straws, condiment cups, and pill bottles

NO Loose lids and bottle caps

NO Toys

Resources:

For tips on cutting back on plastic usage, visit ecologycenter.org/plastics

El Cerrito Recycling Center accepts plastic bags, aseptic packaging, styrofoam, and more for drop off. 7501 Schmidt Lane, El Cerrito (510) 215-4350

Berkeley Recycling Center accepts oversized plastic items for drop off. 669 Gilman Street, Berkeley (510) 524-0113 info@berkeleyrecycling.org

Computer and Technology Resource Center (CTRC) accepts any electronic device. 620 Page Street, Berkeley (415) 883-1428

RecycleWhere.org is a recycling wizard to look up where to recycle items in Alameda county. (877) 786-7927

Plastic Recycling

factsheet

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

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

Items too large to fit easily in the recycling cart 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, planters, large plastic toys, furniture, etc. as drop-off items. (510) 524-0113

Plastics Labeled Compostable & Bioplastics Labeled #7 (PLA Polylactic Acid)

Being plant-based, PLA needs to be processed by a composting facility and is therefore handled separately. BPI Certified Compostable bags and containers are currently accepted in the green cart. Bioplastics clearly labeled "Compostable" (not just "biodegradable") can be placed into yard debris container. 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. Most grocery stores are required by state law (AB 2449, Ch. 845) to have recycling bins near the front door for plastic bags. While they are required to collect them, it is unclear whether or not they are actually recycled. These records can be made available to the public upon request, as required by law. Ask your local store if they are doing their part, and don't forget to bring your own bag!

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. (510) 215-4350

Styrofoam Containers and Blocks

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. (510) 215-4350

Packing Peanuts and Bubble Wrap

Packing peanuts and bubble wrap are accepted by some packaging stores or businesses for reuse. Call your local store to make sure.

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 landfill 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 landfill 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 loosen the lid, flatten the bottle, and tighten the lid. 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

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