

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MANDATORY ORGANICS RECYCLING IN THE CITY OF VICTORVILLE

What is the new residential organics recycling program in Victorville?

The City and Victorville Disposal (Burrtec) are working on plans to implement a state-mandated residential organic recycling program. “Organic” material includes food scraps and garden trimmings such as grass clippings, leaves, weeds, and tree trimmings. Residents will receive a third GREEN cart to use for recycling organics.

When will I get my organics container and when will collection begin? Will my organics be picked up the same day as my trash and recycle?

Organics recycling carts will be distributed to single-family houses beginning the week of December 4, 2023. It will take approximately four weeks for all houses to receive the green organics recycling carts. Organics recycling service will start on your normal service day, the week after you receive your green cart. Organics will be collected on the same day as trash and recyclables.

When will organics recycling start for residents of multi-family homes and apartments?

Beginning in January 2024, organics recycling for multi-family housing units will be implemented. Multi-family units that use carts will be started first. Then the program will be expanded to multi-family complexes that use dumpsters for trash.

Why is the City starting residential organics collection?

Recycling garden trimmings and food scraps will divert these useful materials from landfills and deliver them to composting operations to create soil products or to digesters which create and capture natural gas that can be used to heat homes or fuel vehicles. Redirecting these resources to composting and digesting operations will save landfill space, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfills, generate energy, and create valuable soil amendments that will be distributed to farmers and other agricultural users.

CA state law senate bill (SB) 1383 (Short-Lived Climate Pollutants) required all CA jurisdictions to implement organic recycling programs. This law was adopted in 2016 and went into effect in 2022. Organic materials (food scraps, yard/green waste, etc.) make up almost half of the State’s waste stream. Getting these materials out of the “trash” and diverting them from landfills will be a big part in reducing the state’s greenhouse gas emissions.

How will the new organics recycling program affect residents?

Residents will receive a 65-gallon green cart to use for organics collection. The cart will have a permanent label on the lid which clearly explains what materials can and cannot be placed in the green container. Materials that will need to be separated for recycling include food waste and garden trimmings. Residents will also still have the option to take garden trimmings to Burrtec’s composting facility under the Drop-Off Collection Program as an additional means of yard waste recycling.

How do I know what can and can’t be put in the green organics recycling cart?

The green organics recycling cart will have a permanent label on the lid that lists what materials can be recycled. In addition, residents will receive fliers listing how to properly sort materials when the new

green cart is delivered. Information will also be available on the City's website: www.VictorvilleCA.gov/Recycle. (Click on the "Organics Recycling" button.)

What materials should go in the green organics recycling cart?

Acceptable organic materials are food scraps such as fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, grains, baked goods, eggs/eggshells, meat, bones, seafood, leftovers – any food waste material. Yard/green waste such as grass clippings, leaves, branches, and trimmings may also be placed in the container. Food scraps must be placed in plastic bags and tied shut, while garden waste should be placed into the cart loose. Bags do not need to be compostable or biodegradable.

Is there a charge for the new program?

Although the State is imposing these requirements on jurisdictions, unfortunately, it is not providing the funding needed to cover all the costs to implement the program. Therefore, the cost for organics recycling programs is included in your monthly solid waste services fee. Solid waste rates increase in November 2023. Part of the reason for the increase was to cover the new costs for the organics recycling program including additional collection vehicles, drivers, approximately 32,000 new organics carts, material processing, and administrative costs for ensuring compliance with all obligations under SB 1383.

What if I already compost my food waste and/or generate little to no food waste?

You can continue to compost food waste in your home or on your property. The City's program will accept other organics that are not recommended for backyard composting, including larger branches and certain food wastes like cooked food. While these are not recommended for backyard composting, they will be processed for composting by Burrtec Waste. SB 1383 does not allow residential exemptions.

How should I collect food scraps?

To collect food scraps in your kitchen, get some sort of reusable container—it doesn't have to be too big, since you will probably want to empty it daily. Possible containers could be a plastic pail, tub, or pitcher. Put a plastic bag in the container, and then put food scraps in the plastic bag. Once the bag is full, or whenever you want to empty out the container, just tie the plastic bag shut (or use a rubber band), then put the bagged food in your GREEN organics recycling cart.

You can put your food scrap container on your counter or under your sink or even in your sink, wherever is most convenient.

I'm concerned about potential odors or bugs from food waste. What can be done about these potential impacts?

- Put food scraps in a plastic bag. Tie or close the bag shut before putting it in your green cart.
- Avoid putting excess liquids in the containers.
- Keep the lid to the green organics cart closed at all times and store in a shady area if possible.
- Set your green organics barrel out every week.
- Some people find it helpful to put bagged food waste in the freezer, until the night before collection.

How do we prepare materials for collection?

Food scraps should be placed in a small (2 gallons or less is suggested) plastic bag. The bag should be

tied or closed shut then placed in the green cart. Garden trimmings should be placed into the cart LOOSE.

What kinds of plastic bag should I use for food scraps?

We suggest a bag of 2 gallons or less. Bread bags or cereal bags would work, or old zip lock bags you were going to discard. You could also use bags from retail stores. Please do NOT use paper bags because they will disintegrate, and food will fall out and end up getting mixed with garden trimmings.

Do I need to use biodegradable bags?

No. The bags do NOT need to be “biodegradable.” In fact, once the materials are delivered to the compost facility, the bagged food waste will be separated from garden trimmings. Then the food will be “debagged”, and all the bags will be discarded.

Why are we being asked to put food waste in bags, but to keep garden trimmings loose?

Food scraps and garden trimmings are really two very different types of materials. Food scraps (as everyone knows!) can be very smelly and start to decompose quickly. Garden trimmings are usually relatively dry and can be shredded or chipped into mulch.

Ground up garden trimmings can be screened into different sizes and mulch products. Some garden trimmings can be used directly as mulch, while other garden trimmings are used to blend with food waste to make compost. Not all garden trimmings need to go through a full composting process before they can be used again.

On the other hand, food waste MUST be processed immediately, and ALL food waste MUST be put through a composting or digestion process. The composting or digestion process takes longer and is more expensive.

By bagging food waste, we can separate the food from the garden trimmings at the organics processing facility. That allows the City’s organic waste processor Burrtec to process the materials most efficiently. Some green waste will be used as mulch, and some will be mixed with food scraps to be composted.

If we blend and mix unbagged food waste into the garden trimmings in the green cart, then 100% of the material (garden trimmings and food) from the green carts MUST go through the more time- consuming and expensive composting process.

What materials should NOT go in the green organics recycling cart?

Please do not recycle pet waste, diapers, dirt, or rocks. If you are raking up leaves, please make sure to remove any litter/trash before placing garden trimmings in the green cart. Please also do not include cactus. Cactus thorns do not compost. Please do not put liquids in your green waste container.

I have a BLUE recycle cart and a BLACK trash cart, but my neighbor has a BLUE cart and a GREEN trash cart. Why is this?

The City previously used green carts for trash. For the past 10 years, the City’s contractor Victorville Disposal has been gradually replacing the old green trash carts with black trash carts. When new customers start service, or when an old green trash cart breaks, then the customer receives a replacement trash cart that is black. Eventually, all customers will have black carts for trash. The blue

carts are for recycling and will continue to be for recyclables (cans, bottles, paper, and cardboard).

Note: The new green organics recycling carts will have a large label on the lid, which clearly states that the container is for organics only.

What is SB 1383?

California state law Senate Bill (SB) 1383 was enacted in 2016 and became effective January 2022. It set the goal to reduce “short-lived climate pollutants” and greenhouse gases, including methane.

Specifically, the law established goals to:

- Reduce organic waste disposal to landfills by 75% by 2025 vs. 2014 levels.
- Recover at least 20% of currently disposed surplus edible food and redirect it to people by 2025.

When organic materials decompose in landfills, they produce methane gas—a potent greenhouse gas. In fact, landfills are third largest source of methane emissions in California. Organic waste in landfills emits:

- 20% of the state’s methane, a climate super pollutant 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide.
- Air pollutants like PM 2.5, which contributes to health conditions like asthma.

Organics like food scraps, yard trimmings, paper, and cardboard make up half of what Californians dump in landfills. Reducing Short-Lived Climate Super Pollutants like organic waste will have the fastest impact on the climate crisis.

Methane has more than 80 times the warming power of carbon dioxide over the first 20 years after it reaches the atmosphere. So, reducing methane emissions will have a large and rapid impact than just focusing on CO2 emissions.

SB 1383 regulations put numerous requirements on local governments to implement programs to reduce the disposal of organic waste. Jurisdictions are also required to adopt “enforceable ordinances or similarly enforceable mechanisms to mandate that organic waste generators, haulers, and other entities...comply with the requirements” of the law and regulations.

Who must comply with the new law?

The law affects all California residents as well as commercial entities, schools, hospitals, care facilities, etc. The law requires cities to provide organic waste collection to all properties so that organic materials can be collected separately from other trash and can be diverted from landfill disposal.

Does the City have programs to recycle organic materials from businesses?

The City of Victorville implemented organic waste recycling programs for its commercial customers in response to prior state law AB 1826. As of mid-2022, nearly 300 businesses are recycling food waste, garden trimmings, and/or wood waste in the city. The commercial program uses brown carts or bins for food scraps and green bins for garden trimmings. Industrial customers may also use roll-offs for clean wood waste.

Is recycling of organics also required by the Victorville Municipal Code?

Yes. Victorville Municipal Code (VMC) Chapter 6.36 requires recycling of designated recyclable materials, including paper, cardboard, glass bottles and jars, tin and aluminum cans, and plastic containers. It is a violation of the municipal code to dispose of recyclables in trash container or to place

trash in designated recycling containers.

The City adopted Ordinance No. 2425 in April 2022 which added Chapter 6.37 to the Victorville Municipal Code. Per Chapter 6.37, residents and businesses are required to separate designated organic materials and place them in designated containers. Designated organic materials includes food scraps, garden trimmings, and non-hazardous wood waste. Violation of requirements in Chapter 6.36 or 6.37 could result in notices of violation and citations/fines if violations are not corrected.

SB 1383 required all CA jurisdictions to adopt enforceable ordinances to require the recycling of organic materials. This is why the City adopted Ordinance 2425 adding Chapter 6.37 to the Victorville Municipal Code.

What happens to the organic waste after it is collected by Victorville Disposal?

Organic waste collected from City residents and businesses will be transported to the Victor Valley Compost facility in Victorville and will be processed into compost/mulch material. It is then shipped to farmers to improve cropland. There will also be free compost giveaways for residents.

How can I find out more about SB 1383?

Visit the CA Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) website at <https://calrecycle.ca.gov/organics/slcp/> or call City of Victorville Environmental Programs Division at 760-955-8615 or go to www.VictorvilleCA.gov/Recycle.



City of Victorville Environmental Programs
VictorvilleCA.gov/Recycle (760) 955-8615