

CALIFORNIA WASTE AND RECYCLING LAWS

California leads the nation in diverting waste, increasing recycling, and reducing greenhouse gases. Athens Services is here to help you navigate through these state mandates and ensure you have compliant waste and recycling programs.

SB 1383 (2016) SHORT LIVED CLIMATE POLLUTANT REDUCTION

SB 1383 targets the reduction of methane emissions from landfills. The law establishes targets to achieve a 75% reduction in the level of the statewide disposal of organics waste from the 2014 level by 2025. In addition, businesses are required to recover and donate the maximum amount of edible food that would otherwise be sent to landfill.

As of January 1, 2022, all businesses, multi-family complexes, and single-family home residents are required to subscribe to an organics collection service and must separate into their green organics container ALL of their green waste, food scraps, and food-soiled paper (100% fiber based).

In addition, Edible Food Generators (considered Tier 1 and Tier 2) must recover the maximum amount of edible food that would otherwise be disposed of, arrange for food donation and collection through contracts or written agreements with food recovery organizations or services, and maintain food donation records. For more information, please visit LA.AthensServices.com/Reuse.



TIER 1 BUSINESSES

Required as of January 1, 2022

- Food distributors
- Wholesale food vendors
- Food service providers
- Grocery stores and supermarkets (10,000 square feet or greater)

TIER 2 BUSINESSES

Required as of January 1, 2024

- Hotels with at least 200 rooms and an on-site food facility
- Restaurant facilities (5,000 square feet or larger, or seating more than 250)
- Local education agencies with an on-site food facility
- Healthcare facilities with an on-site food facility and 100+ beds
- Large venues (including shopping centers and malls) and events with 2,000+ daily visitors

ACCEPTABLE ORGANICS WASTE:



GREEN WASTE

- Flower & hedge trimmings
- Grass clippings
- Leaves & branches
- Lumber, scrap wood, & plywood (not painted or treated)
- Weeds



FOOD SCRAPS

- Bread, rice, & pasta
- Cheese & dairy
- Coffee grounds & filters
- Fruits & vegetables
- Flowers & herbs
- Meat, bones, & poultry
- Pet food (non-medicated)
- Seafood & soft shells



100% FIBER-BASED, FOOD-SOILED PAPER*

- Food-stained paper
- Paper egg cartons
- Paper napkins & kitchen towels
- Pizza boxes
- Plates
- To-go boxes (no coating)
- Wooden & fiber-based utensils

**Must be 100% fiber-based. NO materials with bio-plastic, wax, or petroleum-based plastic coating, liner, or laminate.*

AB 1826 (2014) MANDATORY COMMERCIAL ORGANICS RECYCLING

This bill requires businesses and multifamily buildings (of 5 or more units) that generate 2 cubic yards or more of solid waste per week to arrange for organics recycling services. As of January 1, 2022, all businesses are required to follow the SB 1383 regulations.



Athens' composting program is an integral part of the recycling loop. By processing local organics waste, we can create nutrient rich, soil amendment that can be reused in the communities we serve.

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR ORGANICS

Athens recycles organics waste at our American Organics composting facility. Through composting and mulching, Athens helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions by limiting the amount of methane gas generated from the decomposition of organics in a landfill.

AB 341 (2011) MANDATORY COMMERCIAL RECYCLING

To further California's recycling efforts, AB 341 established a statewide recycling goal of 75% by 2020. This law requires California commercial or public entities that generate four or more cubic yards of solid waste per week, and multifamily dwellings of five or more units, to arrange for recycling services. As of January 1, 2022, all businesses and multifamily dwellings (of all sizes) are required to follow the SB 1383.

AB 827 (2019) COMMERCIAL AND ORGANICS WASTE: RECYCLING BINS

Businesses subject to AB 341 and AB 1826 must provide customers (required as of July 1, 2020) front-of-house access to collection bins for recycling and organics (including food scraps) alongside trash. All three bins must be grouped together, easily accessible and visible, clearly marked with signage on what "can or cannot be placed into each bin," and properly serviced for recycling and composting.

All commercial food service establishments that provide food for purchase and immediate consumption on site must comply with AB 827. "Full-service restaurants" are exempt as long as they provide organics and recycling bins in the back of house for their employees. Full-service restaurants are defined as those where all the following are true:

- Customers are escorted or assigned to an assigned eating area.
- Customers' food and beverage orders are taken after being seated.
- The food and beverage orders as well as any other requested items are delivered directly to the customers.
- The check is delivered directly to the customer at the assigned eating area.

WHAT IS CONTAMINATION?

Intentionally or unknowingly placing unacceptable items in your mixed material and/or organics container is considered contamination and may be subject to fees or non-collection of your container.

Why is it Crucial to Avoid Contamination?

- Contamination poses a safety risk to waste workers, can lead to equipment damage, and may result in the loss of recyclable or compostable material.
- Preventing contamination ensures an efficient recycling process and reduces negative environmental impacts.
- Businesses not in compliance may be subject to Notice of Violations and contamination fees.



Updated March 2025