

# Welcome to the Mountain View Recycling & Zero Waste Virtual Outreach Table!



The Mountain View Zero Waste team missed out on meeting residents and talking about recycling and composting at our outreach table this year as community events were cancelled due to the Shelter in Place order. Since we are all still staying safe at home, we would like to welcome you to our virtual summer outreach table! We've compiled answers to our most frequently asked questions and put together some zero waste resources for reducing waste at home.

Need more information? Contact staff at [recycle@mountainview.gov](mailto:recycle@mountainview.gov) or visit [mountainview.gov/recycle](http://mountainview.gov/recycle) to stay up to date on program and service changes.

Who do I  
contact with  
service  
questions?

What  
plastics are  
recyclable?

## Virtual Table of Contents

**Page 2 | Program and Services Overview**

**Page 3 | What Goes Where & Recycle Right**

**Page 4 | Food Scraps Composting**

**Page 5 | Zero Waste Resources**

## What happens to my trash and recycling after it's picked up?

**Recology** hauls Mountain View's trash, recycling, and compost to the **SMaRT Station in Sunnyvale**. The SMaRT Station is the materials recovery and refuse transfer facility shared by the Cities of Mountain View, Palo Alto, and Sunnyvale. In addition to providing CRV redemption and drop-off services, the SMaRT Station processes Mountain View's residential and commercial trash, recyclables, and compost.

At the SMaRT Station, recyclables are sorted to remove as much contamination as possible, then baled and processed for market. The compost is sent to an off-site composting facility, where it is screened for contaminants, and afterwards sold as organic compost (some is brought back to the SMaRT Station and is available for free pick-up by residents). The trash is sorted for recoverable recyclables and the remaining trash (sometimes called 'residual') is sent to landfill.

## What other disposal services are available to residents?

**Household hazardous waste**, or HHW, (items like paint, fluorescent bulbs, garden chemicals, and batteries) cannot be disposed in the trash because they are harmful to the environment. Never place these items in your trash cart. Free HHW drop-off events are available throughout the year in various locations in Santa Clara County. View a full list of accepted items and make an appointment at [HHW.org](http://HHW.org).

Eligible residents with curbside service can make three free **On Call Plus appointments** each year. On Call Plus is a free curbside collection cleanup service for residents, scheduled by appointment, to set out extra trash, recycling, or compost PLUS up to three bulky goods, such as appliances or furniture. Learn more about this service and other bulky item disposal options [here](#).

## Who do I contact with service or program questions?

### For Recycling and Zero Waste Programs:

City of Mountain View  
Public Works Department  
(650) 903-6311

[recycle@mountainview.gov](mailto:recycle@mountainview.gov)

- Recycling and composting questions
- Resource newsletter
- Community event details

### For Trash and Recycling Collection Services:

Recology Mountain View  
(650) 967-3034

[RecologyMountainView.com](http://RecologyMountainView.com)

- Missed pickups
- Service questions
- Clean up and bulky goods collection services
- Business recycling
- Debris/recycling boxes
- Recycling Center (935 Terra Bella Avenue)
- Larger or extra carts
- Cart Repairs

### For Utility and Trash Billing:

City of Mountain View  
Finance Department  
(650) 903-6317

- Start, stop, or change accounts
- Billing inquiries/rates
- Extra garbage stickers

## How do I recycle right?

Recycling guidelines can vary in different cities because of different processors and collection systems. *The general rules of recycling in Mountain View are:*

1. Separate containers (jars, bottles, cans, tubs) from paper.
2. Empty containers (no need to wash thoroughly, a rinse or wipe will suffice) and replace plastic lids.
3. Keep paper dry and free of food residue. Food-soiled paper can be composted.
4. For plastics, only recycle bottles, tubs, and jugs. Plastic clamshells, wrap, and bags are all trash.

You can view the full What Goes Where guide [here](#) or use the [widget](#) to search for items.

## Why do we need to sort containers and paper?

Mountain View has **dual stream recycling** to maintain a high quality of paper fibers by keeping them clean and dry. This increases the market value of the bales of paper packaged from the material collected from our residents and businesses. Residents are asked to sort paper from containers to keep potentially wet or food-soiled containers separate from paper products.



## Why are certain plastics not accepted for recycling?

**Recyclability depends on market demand.** Plastic bottles, tubs, and jugs are the only recyclable plastics accepted in Mountain View. Mountain View's recyclables containers go to a company located in California that manufactures landscaping products. Other plastic containers, such as clamshells and plastic cups, don't melt down at the same temperature because the thermoforming process used in their manufacturing gives them a more brittle, rigid form. In addition, black plastic produces dis-colored products which are undesirable to manufacturers.

There is also low demand for plastic bags and packaging wrappers because they are often contaminated with moisture or other material and are also difficult to sort at processing facilities.



## What are some other commonly wish-cycled items?

“**Wish-cycling**” refers to when we wish something was recyclable so we put it in the recycling in hopes that it might sneak into the recycling process. Unfortunately, when recycling is contaminated this can lower the quality of actual recyclable items and reduce their value. In addition to plastic clamshells and plastic wrap, other common offenders are frozen/refrigerated food boxes (trash), ceramics and glassware (trash), and food-soiled paper (compost). Learn why these items aren't recyclable at [mountainview.gov/dirtydozen](http://mountainview.gov/dirtydozen).

## How do I compost my food scraps?

If you have *curbside cart service*, you can compost your food scraps and food-soiled paper with your yard trimmings in your compost cart. Contact Recology if you do not have a compost (formerly yard trimmings) cart and they will deliver one free of charge, as well as a kitchen pail kit (pictured right). Food scraps and food-soiled paper can be loose or bagged in paper or compostable bags (no plastic) in your cart.



What food can be composted? **ALL food!** This includes bones, shells, spoiled food, dairy, as well as food-soiled paper such as napkins, paper plates and cups, and greasy cardboard food boxes. See a full list of [what goes in the compost here](#) and get tips to keep your kitchen and cart clean [here](#).

If you have *shared bin service*, the City is currently implementing a multi-family food scraps program to expand composting Citywide. If you would like your complex to be put on the interest list, please email [recycle@mountainview.gov](mailto:recycle@mountainview.gov). If you do not currently have compost service at your residence, you can sign up for a free drop-off program to take your food scraps to the Mountain View Recycling Center. More information about the drop-off program and the multi-family food scraps program can be found [here](#).

## Why should I compost my food scraps?

Keeping food scraps and food-soiled paper out of the landfill reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Compared to landfilling organics, which doesn't allow them to break down with oxygen, composting is an aerobic process that minimizes the release of methane during organic matter breakdown. Methane is 26 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas and is a significant contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions. **Landfills are the third largest source of human-caused methane gas.**



In addition to reducing greenhouses gas emissions from the landfill, composting your food scraps and yard trimmings produces **organic compost for landscape growers** in the Central Valley. Using compost conserves water, prevents erosion, reduces the need for fertilizers, and enriches the soil.

There are many benefits of composting, and a new State law to reduce the amount of organics in the landfill will come into effect in 2022. Among other new requirements for the City, residents, and businesses, this law (SB 1383) will make composting mandatory, at which time food scraps composting will be expanded Citywide. If you have individual curbside service, you can start composting today! Visit [mountainview.gov/foodscraps](http://mountainview.gov/foodscraps) to get started.

## Why isn't compostable plastic accepted in the compost?

Food scrap materials are spread into long rows ("windrow") piles to decompose over 12 weeks. Microorganisms break down the materials and heat the pile to very high temperatures. In about 3 months, the microorganisms transform the piles into an earthy, soil-like material called compost. "Compostable" plastic food ware is not accepted in Mountain View's compost program because it does not biodegrade within the 12 weeks' time that makes composting economically feasible.

## Zero Waste Resources

➤ The concept of Zero Waste goes beyond the “end-of-the-line” treatment of waste and promotes not just the three “R’s” (reduce, reuse, recycle), but a systems approach to the use of resources including composting and conservation. Learn more about the City’s Zero Waste Policy & Plan [here](#).

➤ **Environmental benefits.** In addition to reducing litter in streets and waterways and material in the landfill, zero waste practices help to save resources from manufacturing and shipping disposable items.

➤ **Social and economic benefits.** Reducing waste that must be disposed in the landfill saves the City money, and high-value recycling is collected and sold and offsets residents’ rates. Landfills can also be a source of pollution that can impact nearby communities. Keeping unnecessary waste out of the landfill and recycling properly can reduce costs as well as reduce impacts on vulnerable communities.

### ➤ Tips for reducing waste during shelter in place:

- When you order takeout, make sure to request no utensils or condiments if you already have what you need at home.
- Reduce your trips to the store by using up everything in your fridge. Looking for recipe inspiration? Use [myfridgefood.com](http://myfridgefood.com) to get ideas to use those obscure items in the back of your fridge.
- Fight food waste further by checking out these [food storage and preparation tips](#) to keep your food fresh.
- Make sure you’re [recycling and composting right](#) as you might be getting more takeout and online orders while at home.
- If ordering from Amazon, choose the [Frustration Free Packaging Program](#). This program ships qualified items in their original packaging with no extra box. The resultant packaging is easier to open and uses recyclable content.

Check out more Zero Waste tips [here](#).

➤ **Do you pick up litter when you go to the beach?** Join the Ocean Conservancy and participate in a citizen science project to protect the ocean by using the Clean Swell app to record the trash you clean up. The data you collect will instantaneously upload to Ocean Conservancy’s global ocean trash database. These data deliver a global snapshot of ocean trash, providing researchers and policy-makers insight to inform solutions. Learn more and download the app [here](#) – the ocean life will thank you!



➤ Challenge yourself to a [Plastic Free July](#) (and beyond) with a [pledge](#) to avoid single use plastics.

